

## Decoding Community in Pynchon's *Vineland*: Problematic Definitions for Readers and Characters

Robert R. Hill

I name, I unname, I rename: so the text passes: it is  
a nomination in the course of becoming, a tireless  
approximation, a metonymic labor.

—Roland Barthes (11)

I want to just show you what my politics are.

—Jack Bruce and Peter Brown

*Vineland* challenges readers to define community, since understanding character and story in the novel hinges on understanding how Pynchon represents relational human qualities. Denoting human groups, “community” associates nationality not only with municipality but also with social class, economic practice, ethnicity and religion. Denoting human quality, “community” explains ordinary life through ownership, legal rights and personal identity (“Community”). As satire, *Vineland* admits and rejects such standard solutions to its community code. Using conventions that blend historical references with politics and culture, Pynchon draws both collective characters, whose experiences in community express their motivation, and separate characters, who influence readers to ignore community as a buzzword or to misinterpret it as an ideal. Pynchon’s references and characters thus represent *Vineland*’s encoded definitions of community in discreet but satirically related contexts.

Itself an informed and informing community, *Vineland*’s audience deciphers Pynchon’s community code with two concomitant reading strategies. First, readers attend to subject placement among the characters in *Vineland*’s communities. Charles Altieri calls this reading style “idealization,” the readers’ valuational identification with fictional characters (133). Second, readers attend to the narrative methods in *Vineland* to recover cultural values in Pynchon’s representation of community. In previous works, Pynchon emotionalizes community by filtering narration through specific characters. For example, the love story of Paola Maijstral and McClintic Sphere in *V.* signals to Raymond Olderman “a counterbalance,” a “small though decidedly communal hope” opposing the twentieth century’s accretive nihilism (139).

Similarly, perspectival narration in *Vineland* allows Pynchon to speculate on characters who counter inhuman governmental power with community loyalty and family love (Rushdie 36–37). Character-modulated exposition mediates what Paul Smith calls “totalizing epistemologies,” the extent and value of knowledge that formal techniques of representation often stratify (135–36).

Via characterization and narration, then, Pynchon transmits both thematic and conventional indices through *Vineland*'s code of community. John Frow points out that, for writers and readers, generic conventions mark “positions of enunciation, authority, and credibility” and form “patterns of strategic interaction” arbitrated by “linguistic and rhetorical options” (78–79). For Pierre Bourdieu, reading is “an act of deciphering” or “decoding” such traditional literary conventions, which are “programmes for perception” that feature “conscious or unconscious implementation of explicit or implicit schemes of perception and appreciation” (2). As items in a culture-code index, character, plot, trope and other conventions constitute a writer's program of aesthetic values for readers to recognize and judge.

Thus, value-fixing representation offers a thematic index for *Vineland*'s community code: a class-power discourse structured by political and cultural references in the novel's twin subplots, the 24fps and PR<sup>3</sup> stories, and in the main plot, Prairie's quest for Frenesi. Furthermore, subject-positing characters connect the community code's thematic index to specific motifs: masturbation and tribalism (both satirically contextualized with 1960s cultural revolution), literal or figurative boundaries and borders, and motion or stasis. Value-fixing representation and subject-positing characterization point up Pynchon's rendition of a societal enigma: the absence or displacement of community, and the consequent need—abiding or transient—to locate, invent and substantiate community.

Some reasonable political readers and characters may ascribe transcendent humanity or dehumanizing repression to *Vineland* communities, but, as journalese, the word “community” invites convenient grouping. Certain groups in the novel illustrate that, as revolutionary or reactionary jargon, common coin of the mass-media realm, “community” lacks significance. Paul Fussell denigrates journalistic misrepresentation as “childish, deformed, rose-tinted,” readily tagging housing developments and universities as “communities.” Most damaging in such misrepresentation, Fussell argues, is the sense of faked togetherness that permits only conditioned, shallow social responses to complex historical events and complicated political issues. Unscrupulous advertisers, politicians and tabloidists communalize whoever or whatever needs instant, superficial

inclusion (108–09). Made meaningless by such chronic misuse, “community” thus initiates false warmth that sentimentalizes diverse individuals into some anonymous mass.

False warmth appears as nostalgia for dubious togetherness in *Vineland* when government communicant Frenesi Gates returns to Sasha’s house to give birth to Prairie. Frenesi recalls her activist film group, 24fps, as an “old sweet community” while she wears the domestic disguises of prodigal daughter returned and new mom recovering from an extreme “postpartum lust” for her infant’s death (VI 292). Radical disguise—as sexual revolutionary, for example—helps Frenesi realize her informant role. Domestic disguise further falsifies her short-lived homecoming, and her nostalgia exemplifies the failure of the guerilla film commune as a cohesive community. That failure resounds in the climax of the embedded 24fps narrative, which Frenesi ends by instigating murder. Yearning for irrecoverable community more broadly betokens social togetherness as an innate urge in human nature, a romance tenet Pynchon compromises by rendering it through the dissembling Frenesi’s nostalgia. Her role as traitor in the 24fps narrative minimizes romanticism’s most durable political ideology: organic community as protest against the urban industrial trampling of natural human unity.

Postmodern Marxists likewise debunk organicism as the perpetuation of a bucolic class consciousness confusing artistic pastoralism with political husbandry. In this vein, Terry Eagleton appraises the politics underwriting the critical method of F. R. Leavis and the *Scrutiny* group: “Organic societies are just convenient myths for belaboring the mechanized life of modern industrial capitalism” (53). Ostensibly, 1990s neo-conservative communal movements stress family instead of ideology. A recent “Communitarian Platform” promotes Judaeo-Christian variations on American ideals like respectful individualism, customary racial and social tolerance, and little government intervention (Creedon 38). Through Frenesi’s radical and domestic masquerades in *Vineland*, Pynchon interrogates exactly that value-sharing hierarchy of kin, neighborhood and nation. Moreover, Frenesi’s 24fps commune attains neither bourgeois pastoralism, nor Soviet solidarity nor traditional-values family order. At its inception, 24fps embraces a mechanical aesthetic but fails as a community in spite of a favorable totem, the pig.

Generally, pigs signify fortune for Pynchon’s preterite masses. While composing *Gravity’s Rainbow*, Pynchon reportedly devoted apartment shelves to “an assortment of piggy banks and several books about swine” (Weisenburger 1). In one episode of *GR*, Slothrop appears costumed as Plechazunga, a porcine symbol of community salvation

(567-69). 24fps's nativity in "the Death to the Pig Nihilist Film Collective" (VI 197), then, seems author-cursed. Furthermore, the 24fps crew dispenses with the name yet appropriates the dissolved collective's centering trope, "to live out the metaphor of movie camera as weapon" (197). Stacey Olster wittily shows that this credo, cinema vérité camera as anti-capital weapons system, refers to several new-left film collectives of the 1960s (120-23). Pynchon extends the tripartite film-reality-nothingness / art-life-death analogy into Frenesi's sexual politics. "It's only a prop," Brock Vond tells Frenesi, showing her the pistol to be used to murder Weed Atman. "Sooner or later the gun comes out" (VI 240). Before a camera or an audience, Vond's gun, like Macbeth's dagger of the mind, changes in the text from prop to weapon. It symbolizes the Weed-Frenesi affair, "the final perversion of the amatory pastoral ideal" of love (Bumas 158). The gun concludes Frenesi's drama of sexual and political betrayal with murder, the goal of Vond's anti-Atman conspiracy and the climax of Pynchon's 24fps and PR<sup>3</sup> subplots. The multiply-plotted narrative scheme, then, turns on Frenesi's misrepresentations of community.

Images of masturbation further depoliticize Frenesi's and 24fps's appropriation of the organic-community myth. As motif, masturbation links Frenesi's manifold deceptions, the cinema-truth group's filmmaking and Hector Zuñiga's movie project. Cinema-related images of masturbation index aesthetic reaction and political revolution in *Vineland*. Pynchon's satire criticizes artistic representations of socializing technology, which supplanted modern industrialism—already replete with class, gender and race prejudice—only to foster a more circuitously conformist inhumanity. Hector tells Zoyd Wheeler that Republican "defunding" (26) canceled the electronic record of Frenesi's existence in the reactionary underground. He touts Reaganomics as the "real revolution," not the sixties' "little fantasy handjob" (27). In a rhetorical question for DL, Frenesi uses the same onanistic vulgarism to describe the error idealized at 24fps's heart: "So what difference did we make? Who'd we save? The minute the guns came out, all that art-of-the-cinema handjob was over" (259). Obviously, Frenesi saved herself by planting Vond's gun, provoking and enabling Weed's murder, then retreating into the reactionary underground. Pynchon underscores the moral speciousness of that isolating salvation when, for the final time, he drags 24fps's communal commitment to cinematic art as truth across Frenesi's consciousness.

Taking a Las Vegas pre-production meeting with Hector about starring in his movie, Frenesi confronts her abject separateness. 24fps's dissolution and her repudiation of its political aesthetic have stranded her "outside . . . back with the rest of the American Vulnerability," no

longer “inside some wraparound fantasy that she was offering her sacrifice at the altar of Art,” and no longer “believing that Art gave a shit” (346). Hector’s film deal offers Frenesi the chance to re-mantle herself in the illusory invulnerability of a coopted, anti-communal artifact. Hector’s movie-mogul aspirations and Frenesi’s immolated-fugitive fantasy both dovetail with Sid Liftoff’s “community service” project, “an antidrug movie,” to work off his conviction for possession of cocaine (338). Thus the deal fulfills Hector’s glitzy dream of Hollywood fame, grants the separative Frenesi her paradoxical wish for sacrificial invulnerability and eases drug-related paranoia in “the film community” (338). Once produced, the movie will aggrandize Hollywood, mindlessly pleasuring that false community with its own sterile art of repressive fetishism. Parodying 24fps’s cinematic truth, the big screen will propagandize Frenesi’s life of lies as film biography.

Throughout *Vineland*, dichotomies mark the familial, sexual, political and artistic sites Frenesi’s actions and portraits occupy: nuclear versus extended, committed or matrimonial versus single or divorced (or deserting), sensuously suppliant versus sensually aggressive (sexually superior versus supine), reactionary informant versus revolutionary activist, and observing recorder versus participating maker. An embodiment of these dichotomies, Frenesi becomes *Vineland*’s least communal character. Narration through multiple perspectives represents her dichotomization, and those characterized viewpoints mediate Pynchon’s authorial omniscience. For instance, Pynchon represents Frenesi’s films for 24fps mainly through Prairie’s perspective, by narrating Prairie’s search of the Pisks’ archives, Frenesi’s films of “events [that] were later reconstructed” (206). Thus two character-chroniclers, Frenesi (filmmaking informer) and Prairie (motherless researcher), document the 1960s flashbacks. Rather than presenting 24fps’s films to *Vineland*’s fictional public, Pynchon reconstructs them for the novel’s readers.

Frenesi’s valueless political and domestic drift through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s brings home the Lost Generation’s ambience of exile (Gray 69–70). Pynchon appropriates this ambience after DL rescues Frenesi from the PREP compound: the two fugitives “[exchange] updates on their broken collectivity” (VI 258), and the narrator recounts 24fps’s fragmentation. Even as she films the halcyon brevity of the People’s Republic of Rock and Roll (PR<sup>3</sup>), Frenesi, the dissembling objectifier, understands that 24fps is “nobody’s anarchist fantasy” (198). She accepts a “24–frame-per-second truth” about community imparted by Vond during their final liaison before Weed’s murder: “‘Can’t you see, the two separate worlds—one always includes a camera somewhere, and the other always includes a gun, one is make-

believe, one is real?’” (241). 24fps’s idealized camera-world prey cannot coexist with Vond’s empirical gun-world predators. Frenesi’s duplicitous character parallels her film group’s failure as a community.

Pynchon ends the 24fps subplot by drawing the film group as an oblivious instrumentality of what Joseph Slade calls “the electronic medium [that] mimics community” (73). This simulation spikes 24fps’s communal aesthetic of verisimilitude, film as truth. No matter how confrontational, genuinely differential politics must legitimize opposition to tyrannical establishments (Jay 47), but not imitate their orders and actions. Special hardware and supplies tie 24fps to a repressive institution that its aesthetic explicitly claims to counter: its institutional Other, network media. The crew records “the last hours of the People’s Republic of Rock and Roll” with state-of-the-art cameras, lights and film pilfered from College of the Surf’s “generously funded Film Arts Department” (VI 247). Unmediated omniscient narration details this meanest failure of 24fps as an opposing-truth community. Even before recounting PR<sup>3</sup>’s actual rise and fall, the narrator ironically foregrounds the 24fps film as “exclusive coverage” (203). The media catchphrase further subordinates a revolution’s record to sanctioned broadcast. 24fps’s dogmatic camera-as-gun method aims to destroy such compromised, programmable half truths, but the crew’s fascination with television technology derides that cornerstone intention.

While 24fps fails as a revolutionary artistic community, the People’s Republic of Rock and Roll fails as a revolutionary political community. Nevertheless, Pynchon deposits most of *Vineland*’s cultural idealism in the nostalgic PR<sup>3</sup> narrative. More tribe than revolutionary cell, PR<sup>3</sup> initially tries to “manage [its] affairs without a central authority such as the state” (Maybury-Lewis 68). Pynchon renders much of the PR<sup>3</sup> collective as a happenstance tribe, compulsively Dionysian, to whom, from a traditionally conservative political or cultural viewpoint, “rationality is irksome and virtue is . . . a burden and a slavery” (Russell 15). Pop culture impels tribal dissent from rationalized, repressive rectitude, so rock and roll, marijuana, uninhibited sex and teach-ins inspire PR<sup>3</sup>’s uprising against state and local police and national armed force. College of the Surf students teach themselves “how deep, how empty was their ignorance. A sudden lust for information swept the campus” (VI 208–09). Pynchon trivializes neither this campus-bound self-education nor hallucinogens and rock as cultural catalysts of rebellion. PR<sup>3</sup> is a flawed but serious 1960s model of social reciprocity: individual expression as cultural insurrection empowered through “communal participation” (Ross x). As indices to *Vineland*’s community code and as realistic references in its flashbacks, idealized tribalism and

unsanctioned irrationality activate PR<sup>3</sup>'s spontaneous, anti-establishment revolution.

The representation of PR<sup>3</sup> assumes, first, that repressive institutions embody and display some version (however corrupted) of human values and, second, that popular culture repressed (however incidentally) by a dominant society may incite an autonomous community within that society to radical political action. These assumptions encompass institutions that strike Gregory S. Jay as "new forms and outworks of representation," including entertainment and broadcast media along with education, business and government. These manifestations stimulate "provisional communities of interest" to assess them (47). Cornel West sees culture, not as "an ephemeral set of behavioral attitudes and values," but as the sum of human aspirations represented in and by institutions, including music as a communications and entertainment medium (19). Whether taking a traditional, radical or provisional stand, an ethically effective critic of institutions must especially demonstrate how their operations "generate belief in themselves" (Williams 199). The PR<sup>3</sup> tale of spontaneous revolt exhibits, appraises and explains how old and new cultural representations galvanize and unify individual students' tribal unreason against rationalized, expressionless institutions.

Indeed, the College of the Surf students become PR<sup>3</sup>'s defining community of cultural revolutionaries. However, to advance a revolt as social representation, institutions of opposition must consolidate and politicize spontaneous tribal unreason. According to Max Weber (referred and alluded to in *Gravity's Rainbow* [81, 325, 464, 579]), institutional imitation refits rather than reforms repression and corruption. In *Vineland*, Pynchon exposes this routinization of transforming potential through the corrupted Frenesi. Filming a Berkeley demonstration, Frenesi intuits (or dreams of) "a mysterious people's oneness" in epiphanies of self-sacrifice (VI 117-18). DL, however, after rescuing Frenesi on Telegraph Avenue, hesitates to call Frenesi's vision of spontaneous tribal heroism "*revolutionary*," because of that word's "wide range of meaning" (117). Even 24fps's "unit chief of security" (196) remains uncertain whether "revolution," as 1960s metaphor, denotes both assault and agenda.

Pynchon references but does not historicize the Berkeley demonstrations. Instead, he typifies campus protests through fictional community colleges. In *Vineland*, countercultural revolution makes certain schools less well-subsidized than Berkeley targets of opportunity for Vond, the novel's fascist bureaucrat. Before College of the Surf's revolt in California, Vond's "roving grand jury," dogged by 24fps,

investigated “subversion on the campus of a small community college” in Oregon (199–200). Vond regards the PREP compound as a specialized community college or prep school. He lures snitch matriculants, infiltrators-to-be, with “the classical postcollegiate Dream of Autumn Return” and then services them with “a full training curriculum that included the use of various weapons” (268). Less directly, the narrator invokes “Vineland Community College” (321) as an educational sanctuary for politically and culturally displaced persons. Perhaps this invocation leads Joseph Tabbi to identify Pynchon’s authorial presence as “an old lefty” trying to share “a positive sense of community with his contemporaries” (91). Partisan political tags aside, Pynchon’s community-college references may imply that higher education for common citizens stimulates grass-roots resistance to any repression, cultural or governmental. *V.* offers an indigenous community, the Maltese, imitating “the indestructibility of their rock” to survive the Second World War (Olderman 142), and *Vineland’s* community colleges emerge as similar models of common endurance. Therefore, some political readers and characters regard the College of the Surf, established to train docile servitors of the rich but reconstituted through political resistance and refitted for tribal accommodation, as a people’s institute. It represents Pynchon’s enabling, community alternative to Vond’s degenerative hegemony.

However, the College of the Surf/PR<sup>3</sup> iconoclasts surrender inclusiveness for dogmatism and thus fail as a revolutionary community. To sustain its least able members’ efforts, a community pragmatically organizes all its members’ basic abilities (McKnight 89) yet allows individuals to evolve reasoned scruples opposing thoughtless “social planning or communal ritual” (Williams 201). To pinpoint the pitfalls of PR<sup>3</sup>’s amoral, impractical inclusiveness, Pynchon gives Frenesi a cynical speech berating the state’s isolating violence, which PR<sup>3</sup> opposes with undifferentiating democracy. She delivers this tirade near the climax of the PR<sup>3</sup> subplot, which resolves in Weed’s murder and 24fps’s dismemberment. Although made before murder, the speech recalls Brutus’s eulogy; its stoic admonitions justify Weed’s murder as political sacrifice. In Frenesi’s coopting philippic, PR<sup>3</sup> had achieved the indispensable but now compromised “100% no-foolin’-around solidarity” and avoided “fuckin’ fascism” by enfranchising “the hypocrites and double agents and summertime outlaws and all that fringe residue nobody else’ll touch. That’s what PR<sup>3</sup> started out as—so did [24fps] for that matter, remember? The All-Nite Shelter. The lighted doorway out in the Amerikan dark where nobody gets refused?” (235). Since, under Vond’s direction, Frenesi easily includes such stage turns in her snitch role, she interprets well the motives of provocateurs,



fellow travelers and moles. Her imagery connects ironically with Hemingway's well-lighted refuge. She shares orthography with Kafka and Abbie Hoffman, who both substitute a *k* for the *c* in *America*. Eventually, Pynchon parodies the speech's nostalgia. The narrator and several characters witness the "great northerly migration" (318) of those displaced persons Sasha Gates calls "'freaks'" (305) to Vineland. Among these migrants are Zoyd and Prairie Wheeler, Frenesi's deserted husband and abandoned child.

*Vineland's* perspectival narration also unveils other revolutionaries as fake communitarians who, as much as bureaucratic Amerikan reactionaries, bring down PR<sup>3</sup>. When "surfer undesirables," bearing marijuana, mingle with "wholesome collegians" (205), their orgiastic drug communion quickly turns, or is turned, into riot. Even if such carnival is a sign of community (McKnight 90), PR<sup>3</sup>'s drug-induced, spontaneous tribalism remains random and male-dominated. Therefore, the democratic values espoused in its revolution remain rhetorical props: "The white kid digs hallucination simply because he is conditioned to believe so much in escape" (Pynchon, J 80). After making drug escapism public policy, PR<sup>3</sup> hardens into an addled, incomplete but steadily institutionalizing bureaucracy that eschews spontaneity for planning and cultural inclusion for political selectivity. Vond's clandestine bureau of the Department of Justice may inspire if not embody "the darker implications of a paper on group theory" that Weed ponders (VI 206). However, as subtext, that paper's thesis may also control Pynchon's exposition of PR<sup>3</sup>'s institutional clampdown. Almost automatically, PR<sup>3</sup>'s burgeoning bureaucracy styles itself after Vond's closed, repressive system. Doctrinaire Marxists, "traveling Movement coordinators," protest a lack of "analysis" that causes the revolt to center on Weed in "a classically retrograde cult of personality" (205). These hard-line anti-Trotskyites know politically disguised hero worship engenders fascism, an axiom ironically implied in Frenesi's inclusive-anarchy speech. More trenchantly, Pynchon portrays Vond as agreeing with the Movement coordinators. Unlike PR<sup>3</sup>'s own cultural rebels, Vond has analyzed PR<sup>3</sup> as an institution, as "'a laboratory setup . . . a Marxist ministate, product of mass uprising'" (212). Like the left-wing coordinators, Vond sees Weed as the ministate's charismatic "'key log[:] pull him and you break up the structure'" (215–16). Rootless, non-communal entities, "roving" grand jurists on the right and "traveling" cadre on the left, coincide in machining a *realpolitik* that spans gulfs of ideology.

Institutionalizing method may link dogmas, but some community gulfs in *Vineland* appear unbridgeable. The war council of PR<sup>3</sup> leaders and members of "BAAD," "the Black Afro-American Division" (230),

illustrates the disparity between communities engaging in cultural revolution on the one hand and those engaging in open civil rebellion on the other. These BAAD-PR<sup>3</sup> contrasts show that African-American activists stake not only cultural preservation but also political, social and literal life on revolution against what Pynchon lists as “basic realities like disease, like failure, violence, and death” (J 78). “BAAD chief of staff Elliot X,” with his telling combination of first- and last-namesakes, refuses to plod institutional racism’s path into an ecumenically white waste land: “‘The Man’s gun don’t have no blond option on it, just automatic, semiautomatic, and black.’” African Americans, he says, have no choice during any revolution: “‘we got to be there’” (VI 231). The narrator guesses that the BAAD contingent “may have been the first black people ever to set foot in Trasero County, certainly the first that many of the PR<sup>3</sup> inhabitants had ever seen” (230). To become politically redemptive allies, BAAD and PR<sup>3</sup> must overcome profound ethnic, cultural and geographical separation.

The fruitless BAAD-PR<sup>3</sup> summit recasts a theme Pynchon first sounded in “The Secret Integration” (SL 139–93) in 1964, and then reprised in “A Journey into the Mind of Watts” in 1966: institutionally enforced as Civil-Rights equality, assimilating integration fails to control or eliminate racism. Kent Amos contends that, for African Americans, “the effects of desegregation and increased mobility” actually hastened “the disintegration of the community and its covenant” of shared racial, spiritual and familial values (82–83). A political contrivance without common causes or shared goals, *Vineland*’s unproductive black-white alliance parodies itself: “The citizens of PR<sup>3</sup> cheered and sang and voted magnanimously to make [Rex’s] Porsche a gift of the community” to BAAD (VI 231). The hackneyed yuppie status symbol does not bind PR<sup>3</sup> and BAAD together to foment cultural revolution in the communal 1960s (*Vineland*’s narrative past), but unites them only in the crassly consumerist revolution of the materialistic 1980s (*Vineland*’s narrative present), “this era of greed and its ennoblement” (231). If true communities encourage non-monetary transactions (McKnight 89–90), then the proffered Porsche as materialistic sign implies that intangible values transact neither through PR<sup>3</sup> givers nor through BAAD receivers. Like the revolutionary art of 24fps, PR<sup>3</sup>’s mission politics are flawed with materialism and bureaucracy generated by dogma.

The PR<sup>3</sup> narrative recontextualizes Pynchon’s major drama of communal rebellion collapsing against repressive, sanctioning bureaucracies: PR<sup>3</sup>’s failure is foreordained by the enfranchisement of “glamorous ex-rebels” and “doomed pet freaks” in the Counterforce of *Gravity’s Rainbow* (713). Pirate Prentice’s contradictory harangue posits the Counterforce as an inverse model of the insidious Firm. To

thwart the “‘They-system,’” Counterforce ideology calls for “‘a We-system.’” The first-person pronoun pluralizes a solipsistic mob that abjures all “‘officially defined’” psychiatric and political realities except those it sophomorically coopts (638). The Counterforce fails, yet its members, “half-suspected but still enjoying official immunity and sly love,” remain “camera-worthy wherever they carry on” (713). Since Prentice’s lexical *We/They* shell game excludes the non-systematic, individual *I*, it mocks the Counterforce while foreshadowing its disintegration.

This *Gravity’s Rainbow* touchstone anticipates the fate of characters and the failure of communities in *Vineland*. Zoyd’s “transfenestration” (VI 7, 11–12), for example, is not transgressive, but a compliant, government-subsidized, telegenic stunt. Frenesi, Vond’s political and sexual “pet freak,” is doomed by her Vond obsession to experience the end of a bureaucracy’s “official immunity” and the death of its “sly love” for her turncoat self: she is deleted—hyperspatially and actually—from the defunded snitch-protection program. In PR<sup>3</sup>, pronominal clubbiness, no matter how *we*-signified, will not hold individuals to a revolutionary course, just as clownish posturing cannot demolish technocratic fascism, and neither secret integration nor public riot transforms ethnic animosity into multiracial harmony. With Weed murdered and Vond invading, College of the Surf’s community counterforce follows its *Gravity’s Rainbow* predecessor. It collapses in “a scattered nightlong propagation of human chaos” (247). PR<sup>3</sup>’s republican rebels separate as individual outlaws, “each . . . isolated in a sea of strangers” (244). Pynchon’s PR<sup>3</sup> parable fits any community failing at revolution. Ideal, empathic diversity, while devoutly to be wished, cannot be consummated in spontaneous rebellion against repressive institutions.

If community synthesizes singularity and collectivism into culture, then the philosophical reader or character may logically assign either conservative rationalism or radical existentialism to specific *Vineland* communities. Thus James Berger reads PR<sup>3</sup> and 24fps, despite infiltration and compromise, as “forms of idealistic, politically committed communal life” (42), of promising but “unrealized . . . community” (43), and of “communitarian vision” (40) that confront 1980s repression with 1960s nostalgia. Nevertheless, through Frenesi’s nostalgic, corrupted perspective, PR<sup>3</sup> and 24fps materialize but darkly as ideal communities. Rather, Pynchon focuses on “the failure of the anarchistic, spontaneous politics and arts of the 1960s,” the fallout from which John McGowan calls “cultural recidivism,” extreme populism “tied to local, community action or to the new social movements” and energized by “decentered, pluralistic visions of untroubled local diversity” (28–29). Utopian or

populist designations diminish traditional differences between political philosophy and literature as discourses of representation (Jay 44).

Signaling and questioning ideal and ideological representations alike, *Vineland's* community code problematizes Pynchon's variegated fictional discourse. Whether defined by location or as concept, Jean-Luc Nancy reasons, community represents an originary human "limit" revealed as "the tracing of the borders upon which or along which singular beings are exposed" (33). Community connotes a social, psychological and spiritual interface (to borrow one of Pynchon's favorite terms)—the common frontier or margin across which systems interact and communicate—between any individual character and any character group. *Vineland's* interface metaphors contour Nancy's "inoperative community," a circumstantial grouping of people whose separate existences reduce only to concentrations of proximity and populace: "[H]ow can the community without essence (the community that is neither 'people' nor 'nation,' neither 'destiny' nor 'generic humanity,' etc.) be presented as such?" (Nancy xxxix–xl). To decipher *Vineland's* fictive representation of inoperative community, readers examine the failed-community stories of PR<sup>3</sup> and 24fps through Pynchon's interface metaphor.

Interfaces join and divide most of *Vineland's* settings and psyches. College of the Surf is simultaneously a geographical and a cultural interface. A radicalized, tribal community on "one edge" of "a military reservation" and "bracketed by the two ultraconservative counties of Orange and San Diego," the college resembles "a border town," "a lively beachhead of drugs, sex, and rock and roll" lodged against "somber military blankness" and reactionary uprightness (VI 204). Weed encounters a more abstract border guarded by dentist Larry Elasmó, who induces free-floating guilt in patients waiting perpetually for pain. Gradually conditioned to this "entirely different order of things," Weed exits "'Dr. Larry's World of Discomfort'" and negotiates "a borderline, invisible but felt at its crossing, between worlds" (228). *Vineland's* Elasmó practices the "psychodontia" pioneered in *V.* by Dudley Eigenvalue, who usurps psychoanalytic theory and practice (V 153). Under Vond's auspices (and following Pointsman's lead in *Gravity's Rainbow*), Elasmó bypasses Freud for Pavlov. The narrator figures operant stimuli as "a currency of pain inflicted, pain withheld, pain drugged away, pain become amnesia" (VI 228). Characters move or fail to move on or across *Vineland's* interfaces, and the communitarian reader deciphers that motion or stasis as an index of the novel's community code.

Contextualized by interface metaphors, political and cultural referents further complement *Vineland's* inoperative communities.

Hector, for example, describes the snitch community as an underground across an interface from conventional life: "a certain kind of world that civilians up on the surface, out in the sun thinkin' 'em happy thotz, got no idea it's even there'" (31). Flash, Frenesi's snitch husband, wants to emerge from the underground, or at least to be granted public, even official recognition. "'Everybody's a squealer,'" he self-servingly generalizes. "Many in the snitch community approved, being long unhappy with the old informant image of weasel-like furtiveness" (74). Pynchon depicts informers Flash and Frenesi disguised as social-surface civilians, and the snitch underground as a proletarian neighborhood. Such character-community interfaces introduce *Vineland's* discourse on contingently democratic class-power orders in late twentieth-century America. To conventionalize this discourse, Pynchon reworks (or recodes) American literature's traditional representations of individual and community.

These representations conform to three characterizing prototypes: the isolated type, depicted as the individual outside community, and two assimilated types, depicted either as the homogeneous individual in consonance with community or as the heterogeneous individual in conflict with it. These character types can act in either of two societal settings dramatized on three natural and social sets: the utopian community, from and through which the individual reclaims or reforms a hostile or indifferent environment (the wilderness or frontier set); and the dystopian community, from or in which the individual confronts an irretrievable environment (the waste land set) and idealizes a lost pastoral environment (the Edenic set) (Baldwin and Kirby xvi). Traditionalists may further schematize the formative metaphors of American romance from the colonial through the postmodern era as "Eden Lost," the "American Adam," the "American Dream" and "the waste land" (Olderman 8). Recoding these metaphors, types, settings and sets to represent problematic community, Pynchon focalizes *Vineland's* class-power treatment through estranged mother and daughter Frenesi and Prairie.

Frenesi first appears in *Vineland* on a temporal interface of social role and class rank. The underground snitch community separates her duplicitous 1960s past as radical activist turned reactionary informer from her proletarian 1980s present "in the older, downtown section of a pale humid Sun Belt city" circa 1984 (VI 68). Within the snitch community, Frenesi can continue "defining moments only, purely, by the action that filled them. Here was a world of simplicity and certainty no acidhead, no revolutionary anarchist would ever find" (72). Subjectively defying time in the fluorescent ordinariness of the sanctioned snitch community, Frenesi abandons her improvisational,

radical-reactionary roles (while apparently remaining on call [70–71]) and adopts the static part of working homemaker. N. Katherine Hayles shows how Pynchon maneuvers Frenesi through partitions of kin and snitches (14–15). Snitch-community life conceals conduct that discredits working-class family values, like Frenesi's "habit . . . of repeatedly anklng every situation that it should have been her responsibility to keep with and set straight" (VI 58). Playing Flash's wife and Justin's mother in her snitch family excuses Frenesi from being Sasha's daughter and Prairie's mother.

Because it devalues operative kinship obligations in favor of power-brokered sex, Frenesi's self-fetishizing obsession with Vond further mitigates her perception of time's effect. Pynchon describes her sense of chronologic suspension, in video-arcade argot, as "a brief time, no longer the time the world observed but game time, underground time, time that could take her nowhere outside its own tight and falsely deathless perimeter" (293). Frenesi's subjective perception of this temporal interface points to an individual-community paradox: "On the one hand the purposes of the community are enforced upon the individual, and, on the other hand the individual, having acquired the habit of viewing life as a whole, increasingly sacrifices his present to his future" (Russell 15–16). To civilize family, community demands that parents subordinate their individual responses to the traditional past and the immediate present to a collective, rationally predictable future for children. However, postcoital intimations of immortality keep Frenesi static on the snitch-civilian community interface—until the federal money dries up.

Turning her back on her nostalgically radical, retrograde past when she abandons Prairie, Frenesi becomes entrenched, as a federally listed "Cooperative Person" (VI 280), in the fabricated materialism of the 1980s neighborhood set. Then, in this artificial, proletarian present, she seems almost willing to cut ties to her snitch family, although Flash and Justin both accompany her to Vineland nevertheless (351–52, 355). Hence, the motivation for Frenesi's tense, quarrelsome homecoming is problematic. Does she buy into Hector's film project after all, or does she feel the overt pull of mother love and want to see Prairie, or is this *nostos* compelled by a sinister sexual fetish? However that may be, Frenesi remains a victim of the same reactionary drive that motivated her previously to sever both biological ties to her family and ideological bonds to her radical community: her apparently inextinguishable sexual obsession with Vond.

Sasha believes she has passed on to Frenesi a genetic predilection for sexual totalitarianism, "a fatality, a helpless turn toward images of authority . . . as if some Cosmic Fascist had spliced in a DNA sequence

requiring this form of seduction and initiation into the dark joys of social control" (83). Sister Rochelle cautions DL that her Vond obsession (a vengeful bloodlust psychoanalysis may see as a displaced form of sexual obsession with a lover's lover), materializing "like a cop cruiser in the dark" (382), threatens to block her life's true path. The S-Gerät of *Vineland*, Vondian sexual obsession influences even the redoubtable Prairie, who surrenders herself to the disappeared prosecutor: "Come on, come in. I don't care. Take me anyplace you want" (384). In Frenesi's case, Vondian sexual obsession compromises the assumed safety of her proletarian present while it reduces the pull of both her biological and snitch families. Images of conflicting family ties, broken ideological bonds, controlling sexual obsession and ambiguous historical sense thus mark a divided and divisive characterization rendered fully as Frenesi's consciousness. Her Vond obsession stimulates Frenesi's illusory escape from death and the productions of time, especially her original family ties to Sasha and Hub, Zoyd and Prairie.

In contrast to Frenesi, Prairie Flower Wheeler, *Vineland's* slacker protagonist, appears first in the novel on an interface of family and epoch. Her mother quest makes Prairie, albeit problematically, *Vineland's* most communal character. She acknowledges and accepts Frenesi's history of obsessive deception, betrayal and abandonment. Just as Pynchon appropriates but does not trivialize piecemeal hippie leftism to depict 24fps and PR<sup>3</sup>, he uses lowbrow vehicles in highbrow forms to tell Prairie's story. Conventionalizing Prairie's characterization through pop-culture references surmounts what Foucault warns is "an ideological barrier" erected by totalitarian traditionalists to maintain "certain allegedly universal moral categories" in unmediated conventions (15). Read as reassessing parodies of standardized fictive and historical narration, pop-culture references also circumvent Bourdieu's "hierarchy of legitimacies" with literary if not social "manifestations of daring and freedom" (88).

Narrating *Vineland's* class-power discourse through Prairie's perspective, Pynchon jokes with tabloid references to princesses, television and UFOs. In a dual figuration of Prairie as alien and alienated, the narrator describes her as extraterrestrial "exiled royalty" who experiences "difficult years marooned down on this out-of-the-way planet" (327). Not surprisingly, Prairie models her family on mass-media images. From "the Tube," her sentimentalized identification fixes on Miss Teen Daughter, one of the "remote and well-off little cookies" whose "moms" teach them "how to cook and dress and deal with their dads" (327). To avoid sanctioned custody, Prairie adopts surrogate relatives. As one such ad hoc family flees Vond's task force, Prairie predictably conjures television stereotypes. Through the magic of

sitcom bromides, she wishfully fashions DL, Takeshi and herself as “only some family in a family car, with no problems that couldn’t be solved in half an hour of wisecracks and commercials” (191). This speculative referencing of television captures “the contingencies of the modern context that help determine the value” in cultural representations (Jay 47-48). To further distance *Vineland*’s indeterminate pop referents from stock, universalizing allusions, Pynchon satirizes Prairie’s teen-girl stereotype, especially its mall-rat version, into mock-epic hero.

To characterize Prairie as a mall rat of legend, Pynchon assigns her the language of the folk saga. Even as parody, this appropriation signifies the archival power of narrative, which preserves history as and conserves culture in community knowledge (McKnight 90). To Prairie, malls are not conveniences of conspicuous capital but communal markets open for barter: “you could always find somebody your age working in the food courts and willing to swap a cheeseburger for a pair of earrings” (VI 326). Pynchon names Ché, Prairie’s best friend, for one of the western hemisphere’s most radical revolutionary soldiers. In malls, the adolescent pals actualize “their star-and-sidekick routine, going back to when they were little, playing Bionic, Police, or Wonder Woman” (327). Ironically, Prairie and Ché’s TV heroines are government-controlled, operated by police or the military to maintain prime-time, world-permeating versions of American idealization. These male-dominated, interchangeable superwomen recall Frenesi the informer. Prepackaged for mass-audience consumption, TV’s feminized hero stereotypes pale beside Pynchon’s mall-rat guerrillas on “the Great South Coast Plaza Eyeshadow Raid.” Ché and Prairie join a band of “two dozen girls, in black T-shirts and jeans, carrying empty backpacks and riding on roller skates,” who pillage a mall for makeup, jewelry and underwear, which they fence “immediately for cash” (327-28). This twisty fable of teen-girl revolt against consumer capitalism ends with the rebels acquiring hard capital. Seamlessly anti-ideological, Pynchon’s account affirms the cultural value of Prairie as mock-epic hero by again doubling her role: youthful explorer and exploited youth.

The antithesis of Frenesi’s rejection of kind and kin, Prairie’s embrace of peers and family proves her desire for and acceptance of community. More important, the folk-saga idiom values that acceptance and valorizes Prairie’s role as epic teenage epitome. Bakhtin insists that the novel’s representing languages contact a relative present, not the epic’s absolute past, and therefore do not routinely characterize cultural abstractions (15). However, reading Prairie’s Telemachiad, E. Shaskan Bumaz canonizes *Vineland* as “a reverse-



gender odyssey" (167). Pynchon's pop-culture references contemporize the lexicon lifted from epic quest and journey saga. For example, the narrator classifies Ché and Prairie as "aboriginal" hitchhikers seeking "malls that often turned out to be only folkloric, false cities of gold" (325). As unmediated allusion, the conquistador image reinforces Prairie's explorer/exploiter characterization. Satirically mediated by the mall image, the same reference signals El Dorado suburbanized, an American icon of fabulous consumerism. In familial and social contexts, folk-saga language still sustains the explorer/exploiter image. Thus parallel characterization suggests Prairie's questing is hereditary: the child Frenesi "loved to explore, must have followed every creek on that whole piece of coast as far up into Vineland each time as she could get" (305). The incremental refrain of Ché's anthem—"children of the freeway," "daughters of the road," "daughters of the freeway" (331)—relates *Vineland's* principal female characters—Prairie, Frenesi and DL—to Sal Paradise, whose sporadic odyssey toward transcendent, democratic possibility gives Jack Kerouac's wistful paean its title. *On the Road* is "one of the great American novels" for Pynchon (SL 7). Ché's jailhouse wisdom (VI 330) and beloved, high-speed automobile romps to no set destination (331-32) gloss her as a debutante Dean Moriarty. The readiest example of Pynchon's refusal to trivialize any of *Vineland's* community-code indices, his pop stereotypes and epic-journey lexias coalesce equally in Prairie's character. Disparate typology and idiom blend in community contexts defined by this mall-rat quester hero.

As title and setting, *Vineland* denotes Pynchon's geographical, historical, political and social representation of the novel's most problematic community, which his narratives, characters and settings encode as the United States. Readers recover this semiotic community by deciphering its coded definitions, but solving that code and reading America as the novel's problematic message do not reveal some final representation of community. In fact, the community code defines America, source and subject, as itself problematic. Any definitive, nationalistic cryptogram identifies *Vineland* as a dialectically emblematic novel that "interrogates not the problems raised but the horizons of the problem . . . implicit in the texts which are its raw materials" (Frow 24). *Vineland's* conventions and motifs assemble an American fiction, but Pynchon's cryptography crafts political denotations or nationalistic definitions of the United States that his text culturally and socially recodes. The novel presents a frequently sardonic but consistently mystical refashioning of the earliest, most problematic American Dream-Visions of exploration and settlement, freedom and home. *Vineland*

remythologizes America. In language borrowed from but reverberating beyond that of exploring and exploiting, Pynchon crafts an act of naming.

Postmodern pioneers on political and social back trails, Zoyd and Prairie hide in and homestead Vineland, the mythic frontier of uncharted North American wilderness. "Half the interior hasn't even been surveyed," Sasha tells Zoyd (305), referring to an unexplored, unexploited version of America. The narrator then describes an "1851 survey map" that labels Vineland Bay "A Harbor of Refuge" for "Vessels that may have suffered on their way North" (316). The cartographic details reflect those of Tickle Cove Bay, Newfoundland, Leif Ericson's probable anchorage. A map of Tickle Cove shows two grassland promontories sheltering a narrow channel from the bay to "the Brook" fed from streams labeled "the Broads." An island lies west of the inlet (Mowat 121). Pynchon's analogous map shows "Vineland Bay, at the mouth of Seventh River," protected "by two spits, Thumb and Old Thumb, and an island out in the bay, called False Thumb" (316). Mark D. Hawthorne observes that the North American coast represented "a distant, romanticized land" for the eleventh-century Norse; landfall signified their "refuge, a haven" from the fierce Atlantic (77). Naming this haven after its bounty, "in keeping with its products," Ericson "called it Vinland" (Mowat 120). Appropriating Ericson's saga, Pynchon narrates the figurative rediscovery of Vinland. Zoyd reiterates as he renames. As "the place to bring [Prairie] and himself after all," this refuge sustains those who endure "the slides and storms to put in here, to harbor in Vineland, Vineland the good" (VI 322). For Zoyd and Prairie as for Viking mariners, Vineland represents a community that interfaces violent, victimizing isolation and secure, collective autonomy.

However, even as Pynchon references Ericson's map, his saga's language and his discovery's name (modernized with *e*), the word "Vineland" equivocates. Bumás (150, 171n1), Mark Robberds (243) and David Cowart all discuss Pynchon's naming of his fictive northern California community. Its name may "make the nominal connection with a town on the other side of the continent" at nearly the same latitude: Vineland, New Jersey (Cowart 9-10). Sure enough, Pynchon's 1990 discourse is not the earliest appropriated recovery or rediscovery of Ericson's Vinland. "When I first projected the colony, in 1861," Charles K. Landis told the New Jersey State Legislature, "what is now Vineland lay before me an unbroken wilderness" (qtd. in Nordhoff 370). Charles Nordhoff describes Landis as "a long-headed, kind-hearted man." A land speculator, Landis colonized the agriculturally unproductive region of southern New Jersey known as "the Barrens," which resemble neither Vinland's grassy ranges nor *Vineland's* redwood

expanses. He purchased property in the Barrens from "a rude and unthrifty population," planned the town site, parceled out the acreage in tracts and marketed them to factory laborers (Nordhoff 366-67, Holloway x-xi).

Thus, through saga, address and novel, the seafarer, the real estate speculator and the artist, respectively, claim and name Vin(e)land, and so reclaim and rename America. In the eleventh century, Leif Ericson discovered a harbor of bountiful refuge and named it Vinland; in the nineteenth century, Landis divided "an unbroken wilderness" into tracts and named it Vineland, a worker's pastoral; in the late twentieth century, Pynchon reappropriates the name Vineland to signify harbor, wilderness and homeland. Rather than metaphorize a country, the artist (perhaps Ericson and even Landis, too) inscribes an alternative, analogical America. In this artistic context, "Vineland" and "America" defy the government-approved label "the United States." At least, Pynchon asserts "his authorial independence in creating his own Vineland" (Bumas 166, 172-73n10). *Vineland's* America-message suggests that wilderness lies in the minds of discoverers and recoverers, that naming and renaming are also acts of those minds, but that home is realized by disenfranchised commoners and valued in displaced community.

At *Vineland's* end, both readers and characters find themselves in equivocal relation to representations of Pynchon's problematic code message: metonymic America as inoperative community. *Vineland's* community code may be broken but not solved by communal readers and characters who find and supply definitions in and to the text. Defining Pynchon's communities is reading *Vineland*. Its characters are ciphers in the community code, which transmits motives as diverse as Prairie's incorruptible need for community and Frenesi's corrupted aversion to it. Pynchon narrates his ciphers' production in social, historical and literary contexts established by popular- and high-culture references. Finally, the coded message of community that is *Vineland*—novel and nation—defines itself through cultural, historical and social interrogations. Applying his art of the novel and accompanied by the independent community of his readers, Pynchon performs (rather than conducts) such interrogations. Readers, characters and possibly the *auctor* himself discover or rediscover answers, at last, around *Vineland*.

—Seminole State College

#### Works Cited

Altieri, Charles. "An Idea and Ideal of Literary Canon." 1990. Richter 131-43.

- Amos, Kent. "Blacks: The Answer Is Tribalism." 1992. *Utne Reader* 52 (1992): 82-83.
- Bakhtin, M. M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P, 1981.
- Baldwin, Kenneth H. and David K. Kirby. Introduction. *Individual and Community: Variations on a Theme in American Fiction*. Ed. Kenneth H. Baldwin and David K. Kirby. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1975. ix-xvii.
- Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. 1970. Trans. Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.
- Berger, James. "Cultural Trauma and the 'Timeless Burst': Pynchon's Revision of Nostalgia in *Vineland*." *Postmodern Culture* 5.3 (1995): 46 par.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. 1979. Trans. Richard Nice. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984.
- Bruce, Jack and Peter Brown. "Politician." 1968. *Wheels of Fire*. Cream. RSO-Polydor, RS-2-30802. n. d.
- Bumas, E. Shaskan. "The Utopian States of America: The People, the Republic, and Rock and Roll in Thomas Pynchon's *Vineland*." *Arizona Quarterly* 51.3 (1995): 149-75.
- "Community." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Compact ed. 1971.
- Cowart, David. "Attenuated Postmodernism: Pynchon's *Vineland*." 1990. Green et al. 3-13.
- Creedon, Jeremiah. "Communitarian Manifesto." *Utne Reader* 52 (1992): 38, 40.
- Eagleton, Terry. "The Rise of English." 1983. *Richter* 44-54.
- Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Trans. Colin Gordon et al. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon, 1980.
- Frow, John. *Marxism and Literary History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1986.
- Fussell, Paul. *BAD, or, the Dumbing of America*. New York: Summit, 1991.
- Gray, Paul. "The Spores of Paranoia." Rev. of *Vineland*. *Time* 15 Jan. 1990: 69-70.
- Green, Geoffrey, Donald J. Greiner and Larry McCaffery, eds. *The Vineland Papers: Critical Takes on Pynchon's Novel*. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive, 1994.
- Hawthorne, Mark D. "Imaginary Locales in Pynchon's *Vineland*." *Pynchon Notes* 30-31 (1992): 77-90.
- Hayles, N. Katherine. "'Who Was Saved?': Families, Snitches, and Recuperation in Pynchon's *Vineland*." 1990. Green et al. 14-30.
- Holloway, Mark. Introduction. Nordhoff v-xi.
- Jay, Gregory S. *America the Scrivener: Deconstruction and the Subject of Literary Study*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.
- Maybury-Lewis, David. "Tribal Wisdom." 1992. *Utne Reader* 52 (1992): 68-79.
- McGowan, John. *Postmodernism and Its Critics*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991.

- McKnight, John. "Are Social Service Agencies the Enemy of Community?" 1987. *Utne Reader* 52 (1992): 88–90.
- Mowat, Farley. *Westviking: The Ancient Norse in Greenland and North America*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1965.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Inoperative Community*. 1986, 1989. Trans. Peter Connor et al. Ed. Peter Connor. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1991.
- Nordhoff, Charles. *The Communistic Societies of the United States, from Personal Visit and Observation*. 1875. New York: Dover, 1966.
- Olderman, Raymond M. *Beyond the Waste Land: A Study of the American Novel in the Nineteen-Sixties*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1972.
- Olster, Stacey. "When You're a (Nin)jette, You're a (Nin)jette All the Way—or Are You?: Female Filmmaking in *Vineland*." Green et al. 119–34.
- Pynchon, Thomas. *Gravity's Rainbow*. 1973. New York: Penguin, 1987.
- . "A Journey into the Mind of Watts." *New York Times Magazine* 12 Jun. 1966: 34–35, 78, 80–82, 84.
- . *Slow Learner*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1984.
- . *V*. 1963. New York: Perennial, 1986.
- . *Vineland*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1990.
- Richter, David H., ed. *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*. Boston: Bedford, 1994.
- Robberds, Mark. "The New Historicist Creepers of *Vineland*." *Critique* 36.4 (1995): 237–48.
- Ross, Andrew. Introduction. Ross, ed. vii–xviii.
- , ed. *Universal Abandon?: The Politics of Postmodernism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1988.
- Rushdie, Salman. "Still Crazy After All These Years." Rev. of *Vineland*. *New York Times Book Review* 14 Jan. 1990: 1, 36–37.
- Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1945.
- Slade, Joseph W. "Communication, Group Theory, and Perception in *Vineland*." 1990. Green et al. 68–88.
- Smith, Paul. "Visiting the Banana Republic." Ross, ed. 128–48.
- Tabbi, Joseph. "Pynchon's Groundward Art." Rev. of *Vineland*. 1991. Green et al. 89–100.
- Weisenburger, Steven. *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion: Sources and Contexts for Pynchon's Novel*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1988.
- West, Cornel. *Race Matters*. 1993. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- Williams, Bernard. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1985.