FROM THE BERKSHIRES TO THE BROCKEN: TRANSFORMATIONS OF A SOURCE IN "THE SECRET INTEGRATION" AND *GRAVITY'S RAINBOW*

Donald F. Larsson

Since the publication of "Under the Rose" and *V.*, Thomas Pynchon has been recognized for his ability to use secondary sources to create a compelling sense of time and place. While his debts to the guidebooks of Karl Baedeker in particular have often been cited, there has been little examination of one source central to Pynchon's last published short story, "The Secret Integration," and to certain sections of *Gravity's Rainbow*. Examination of this source not only illuminates both of these texts but makes the correlations between them more apparent.

In his introduction to *Slow Learner*, the collection of most of his short fiction, Pynchon admits that "The Secret Integration" is really about Long Island, where he grew up, though placed in the context of a different setting:

> I . . . drew a line around the whole neighborhood, picked it up and shifted it all to the Berkshires, where I still have never been. The old Baedeker trick again. This time I found the details I needed in the regional guide to the Berkshires put out in the 1930's by the Federal Writers Project of the WPA. This is one of an excellent set of state and regional volumes, which may still be available in libraries. They make instructive and pleasurable reading. In fact, there is some stuff in the Berkshire book so good, so rich in detail and deep in feeling, that even I was ashamed to steal from it. (SL 21)

The text in question is *The Berkshire Hills*, one volume of the Federal Writers' Project's *American Guide* Series. It *is* still available in libraries, and Pynchon is quite right about its pleasures. The book is structured as a tour of the mountains of western Massachusetts, beginning in the northeast section of the region in the town of Savoy, working south along the eastern edge of the hills, and then wending north along the western edge until the tour concludes in the northeast again, this time in the town of Florida. In addition to economic, demographic and tourist information about most of the towns and cities in the region, the book is filled with anecdotes from local history and legend which are interesting not only for themselves but also for their relevance to Pynchon's works.

The Berkshire of the 1930s, as described by the guide, is an area still rich in natural beauty, political and literary history, and colorful personalities. It shares the economic woes of Depression-era America, but the authors choose not to

dwell on the negative side. Despite their occasional acknowledgment that the region has seen better days, that there is unemployment, and that the natural environment has suffered at the hands of its settlers, these employees of the New Deal tend to maintain a faith in Progress. The General Electric plant in Pittsfield, the ubiquitous paper mills, and the newly paved roads that run through the region are almost always represented in positive terms. With the hindsight of some fifty years, one reads these descriptions with a sense of nostalgia and regret, for beneath these confident reports is the sense of an area on the brink of failure. The authors mention in passing the mills that have closed, the lines that have formed for work or relief; they briefly present the towns and hamlets that have suffered through one disaster or another, economic or natural. In addition, for a modern reader, the book's black-and-white photographs of "modern" Berkshire are relics of a bygone era, a feeling enhanced by the Model T Fords that line the streets and by the bare tree limbs of late autumn, when most of these photographs were taken.

These elements all together--the lively anecdotes and precise descriptions, the eager hopes and the sense of loss--appealed strongly enough to Pynchon for him to choose this region as both the setting of "The Secret Integration" and the home territory of _Gravity's Rainbow_'s major character, Tyrone Slothrop. In "The Secret Integration," Pynchon creates the fictional Berkshire town of Mingeborough, Massachusetts, based partly--as he admits--on his memories of Long Island, partly on hints from _The Berkshire Hills_. Mingeborough is an ironic name, derived from "minges," small biting insects (also known as "midges" or "no-see-ums") common to New England. This community is apparently situated in the center of the region, close to the cities of Lenox and Pittsfield. The name of the black family whose move to Mingeborough prompts the action of the story is "Barrington," probably suggested by the Berkshire city of _Great_ Barrington.

The details Pynchon lifts from _The Berkshire Hills_ for the short story are few, but they provide him with the materials to create a narrative and thematic landscape. For example, one of the projects of "Operation Spartacus," the children's attempt at rebellion against their elders, is to close down the town's paper mill. The guidebook frequently cites the importance of the paper industry to the Berkshires, and at one point describes the need for fresh water at the mills in Dalton: "Until the [18]80's, natural springs afforded sufficient water for the mills. The growing demand for paper finally made this water supply inadequate if the Dalton concerns were to expand. The use of surface water was too risky. Its cleanliness could never be assured, as even a slight summer shower polluted it with mud and silt, the heartbreak of every paper-mill man" (BH 237). From this hint Pynchon creates the incident of Étienne Cherdlu's having "managed to stop the paper mill last year for almost a week by messing up the water it used" (SL 166).

Paper mills in "The Secret Integration" belong to the adult world of work and repression, but the mills are only one element of that enemy world that the children, especially Grover Snodd, wish to subvert. The story is aimed partly at what Pynchon sees as the growing blandness of American life. As his introduction to Slow Learner hints, he thought of that blandness as exemplified by the Long Island on which he grew up; however, he melds his Long Island with the Berkshires of the Federal Writers' guide. This imaginative mixture is seen most clearly in the contrast between Mingeborough's new housing development, named "Northumberland Estates," and the older, mostly abandoned mansions that still surround the town:

> 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. . . . [T]here were mysterious deep eyes fringed in gimcrackery and wrought-iron masks, cheeks tattooed in flowered tiles, great portcullised mouths with rows of dead palm trees for teeth, and to visit one of them was like reentering sleep. (SL 158)

While Northumberland Estates belongs to Pynchon's Long Island, and while the physical details of the mansions belong to Pynchon's imagination, the inspiration for the passage lies in The Berkshire Hills, in particular the section on Lenox, once a fashionable resort area:

> Wherever you go in the town, whatever route you take in entering it, you will see romantic villas and pretentious mansions. Set far back from the public thoroughfares, these houses are like enchanted palaces about which, as though in mockery to the curious, hedges have grown high and close. There is perfection of landscape on every side, but the dominating motif of it all is to conceal.
>
> These "enchanted palaces" have, in the true fairy-tale tradition, turned into white elephants today, awaiting the magic touch of a buyer. . . . With the passing of the heads of many of the old families, houses and gates have been closed and barred. One after another the grand residences are being struck off to buyers who want them for dairy farms and hotels or else to cut up their grounds into a number of lots and sell them to prosperous business men and industrial executives seeking refuge from nearby noisier towns. (BH 125-26)

The high hedges and the motif of concealment mentioned above undoubtedly appealed to Pynchon, as did the references here and elsewhere to the abandonment and sale of these old

castles. As early as "Low-lands," he had begun to indict the openness and exposure and the resultant absence of surprise of modern life--two of his greatest concerns. In "The Secret Integration," the new development lacks the possibilities for surprise offered by the old estates:

> [N]o 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; and behind it, under it, around the corners of its houses and down the safe, gentle curves of its streets, you came back, you kept coming back, to nothing; nothing but the cheerless earth. (SL 158)

The antithesis of Northumberland Estates for the children is the abandoned Gilded Age mansion of "New York candy magnate Ellsworth Baffy" (SL 162), which had passed to the deposed King Yrjö and then ultimately been left to ruin. The grounds of the mansion feature the remnants of Venetian bridges, statues, and a summer house, and the "Big House" itself is marked by "turrets, crenellations, flying buttresses" (SL 163). This property offers exactly the chances for surprise that the children find so lacking in the little houses of Northumberland Estates. Baffy, Yrjö, and the specific architectural features of the mansion are all Pynchon's creations, but they are also extrapolations from The Berkshire Hills' descriptions of abandoned estates in Lenox and elsewhere.

Though they once were vacation spots for the robber baron elite of the Gilded Age, the old estates have an air of adventure and a sense of romance denied in modern tract housing. Just as Ellsworth Baffy's mansion and the other old houses around the town have become part of the children's private mythology, so too have characters from local legend. One such character is Crazy Sue Dunham, described by the narrator as "that legendary and beautiful drifter who last century had roamed all this hilltop country exchanging babies and setting fires," a cult figure and "the patron saint of all these kids" (SL 151).

Crazy Sue, it seems, was real, a well-known figure in the town of Savoy, Massachusetts. Pynchon's description of her is a fairly close paraphrase of a passage in The Berkshire Hills:

> Savoy's most remarkable character was a witless wanderer, "Crazy Sue" Dunham, of whom it was said that "no fairer human being ever blossomed out into maidenhood upon these hills than she, or lass more pretty, pert, and quick witted." Sue lost her sanity while still young, either from religious excitement, study, or a tragic love affair. For fifty years, through the storms and heat, ice and snow, Sue

> traveled the roads of Berkshire, a poor, wild, aimless, and harmless being who recognized no family and no home. . . .
>
> Still and all, Savoy did not really get excited over the antics of "Crazy Sue." If she set a fire, someone put it out. If she "swapped" babies, well, mothers usually recognized their own and "swapped" them back again. If she had a verbal battle with a preacher--why, the preacher was always defeated. Did a preacher good to have the wind taken out of his sails occasionally. (BH 256)

In Pynchon's fiction, it is often hard to determine where invention begins and "reality" leaves off. Ellsworth Baffy's party for James G. Blaine (who never showed up) sounds quite plausible, but it is only one in the long string of decadent parties that occur in almost every one of Pynchon's works, from "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna" through Gravity's Rainbow. Crazy Sue Dunham, on the other hand, sounds too contrived to be real, yet has her origin in actual Berkshire history. Although "The Secret Integration" contains few other details taken from The Berkshire Hills (or, in fact, few other details of geographic description at all), the Federal Writers' Project guidebook allows Pynchon to create a landscape that is partly the guide's and partly his own, partly 1930s New England and partly 1950s and '60s Long Island. It may be that this fictionalized setting gave Pynchon the distance he needed to begin exploring the story's central theme, American racism. The Berkshires exist as a geographic convenience, remote enough not to carry too much symbolic weight for most readers, but close enough to the economic expansion and increasing suburbanization of New York and New England to be a plausible setting for the story's events. In any event, the Berkshire settings would be carried over to and given additional symbolic weight in Gravity's Rainbow.

Places and themes in "The Secret Integration" return in force in Gravity's Rainbow, though their significance is easily lost in the sheer mass of that book. Family and place names in the short story connect with the novel's main character, Tyrone Slothrop. Tyrone is the brother of Hogan Slothrop, who would become a doctor and the father of a namesake son, the reformed juvenile alcoholic of "The Secret Integration." Mingeborough is Tyrone's home town, and lends its name to the section of Gravity's Rainbow titled "The Occupation of Mingeborough" (GR 744). From Grover Snodd, the "boy genius with flaws" of the short story (SL 142), Gravity's Rainbow takes the name for "Snodd's Mountain," the local landmark where Slothrop's witch ancestor, Amy Sprue, sacrificed stolen chickens (GR 329). Crazy Sue Dunham is mentioned in conjunction with Amy Sprue, and King Yrjö is recalled in Mrs. Quoad's dream, attempting to cure her scrofula (presumably before his Berkshire exile) (GR 119). By far, though, the most important carryover from "The Secret Integration" to Gravity's Rainbow is the theme and treatment of

racism. In "The Secret Integration," the portrayal of the black jazz musician, Mr. McAfee, and the children's creation of their imaginary black playmate, Carl Barrington, mark Pynchon's politicization as a writer. Along with his journalistic essay, "A Journey into the Mind of Watts," the story is Pynchon's preparation for the meditations on race evoked by the Hereros and Malcolm X in the novel. Moreover, even minor details from "The Secret Integration" return in _Gravity's Rainbow_. Slothrop, for example, experiments with fake cardboard moustaches similar to those used by Grover and the other boys in the short story. More significant, the children's dream of an uprising in "Operation Spartacus" and their eventual return to their parents' world presages the creation and cooptation of the Counterforce in the novel.

For Slothrop's Berkshire background, as well as other details of _Gravity's Rainbow_, Pynchon not only draws from his short story but also returns to his original source in _The Berkshire Hills_. Sometimes these references emerge in small and otherwise puzzling allusions. (The guidebook is not Pynchon's sole source; it does not mention, for instance, the Aspinwall Hotel Fire. See Weisenburger 29.) For example, the last name of the minor character Webley Silvernail was probably taken from Silvernail House, one of the oldest houses in West Stockbridge, shown in a photograph in the guidebook (BH 99). A fictional comic book character, Sundial, out of Slothrop's Berkshire past (GR 472) may have gotten his name from the pointed reference to a "SUN DIAL" in the center of Pittsfield (BH 64). The obscure reference to the "Chapter 81 work" Slothrop recalls from summers working on road crews also has its origin in _The Berkshire Hills_:

> [T]he one occupation which survives all depressions in the small Berkshire villages is road work. Regardless of bad financial conditions, citizens sidetrack other appropriations to continue voting "to raise and appropriate the sum of --- dollars for Chapter 81 highways," "--- for Chapter 90," "--- dollars for bridge work," and "--- for snow removal." (BH 214)

Road work begins, the authors remark, in April or May with the patching of the highways (BH 216). This is followed by road improvement, called "Chapter 81 work," in May:

> The first operation is scraping the road with a large scraper to remove sod from ditches and shoulders. A second gang follows the first and throws the sod on the banks; a third unit cleans out waterways and ditches with shovels and removes stones the scraper missed. Still another group replaces rotten and rusty culverts with new ones. Brush along the roadside is cut and gravel dumped to fill the mudholes. Any money left over is used to widen sections made dangerous by washouts and floods. (BH 216)

We can see from this passage how Pynchon transforms his original sources. The objective and straightforward account of the guidebook becomes in Gravity's Rainbow the elegiac rendering of a piece of Slothrop's past, evoked as he struggles with the dispersal of his personality:

> He used to pick and shovel at the spring roads of Berkshire, April afternoons he's lost, "Chapter 81 work," they called it, following the scraper that clears the winter's crystal attack-from-within, its white necropolizing . . . picking up rusted beer cans, rubbers yellow with preterite seed, Kleenex wadded to brain shapes hiding preterite snot, preterite tears, newspapers, broken glass, pieces of automobile, days when in superstition and fright he could make it all fit, seeing clearly in each an entry in a record, a history: his own, his winter's, his country's . . . (GR 625-26)

Pynchon enriches his source with his own details of the preterite waste Slothrop has found on these jobs. He amplifies the sense of loss a modern reader feels in The Berkshire Hills, tying it into the imaginary past of his character, a preterite individual from a preterite community.

Slothrop's past and its history and geography are evoked early in Gravity's Rainbow when he is introduced in the novel's fourth episode. Warned that, for Slothrop, "A lot of stuff prior to 1944 is getting blurry now" (GR 21), we are nonetheless given much about his past. We get the family genealogy, from William Slothrop to Constant and his mathematical son, Variable, on through "Mrs. Elizabeth, wife of Lt. Isaiah Slothrop (d. 1812)," and down to "Slothrop's grandfather Frederick (d. 1933)" (GR 27). Moreover, Pynchon makes the history of their home territory, the Berkshires, parallel the family's preterite doom. Slothrop's ancestors "began as fur traders, cordwainers, salters and smokers of bacon, went on into glassmaking, became selectmen, builders of tanneries, quarriers of marble" (GR 27). The family thus becomes associated with the exploitation of the region, typified by the necropolitical marble dust that covers the countryside, and by the "timberland whose diminishing green reaches were converted acres at a clip into paper--toilet paper, banknote stock, newsprint--a medium or ground for shit, money, and the Word" (GR 28).

The details of the Slothrops' Berkshire, a Yankee Yoknapatawpha, are lifted straight out of The Berkshire Hills. Most of the trades and professions the Slothrops tried are mentioned throughout the book; the one significant exception is the "salters and smokers of bacon," an addition by pig-loving Pynchon. The guidebook mentions several of the region's marble quarries and, again, frequently cites the role the paper industry plays in the county's economy. There are pictures of several mills in the book, and particular attention is paid to

the firm of Zenas Crane and Company, which first used the term "bond" for high-quality paper, and which in 1879 won a continuous contract from the Federal government to produce stock for United States currency (BH 238).

The importance of paper to the region also explains a later detail, the sprigs of hemlock worn by the "Slothrop Regulators" who patrolled the Hills on the side of Shays' Rebellion (GR 268). Steven Weisenburger finds the hemlock "an ambiguous reference" (Weisenburger 140), but The Berkshire Hills notes several times the decimation of the ancient hemlock forests to provide pulp for the paper mills. At the time of Shays' Rebellion, the Slothrops "were still for the living green," while the government troops wore "a tatter of white paper" in their hats (GR 268)--paper and whiteness being Pynchon's two most persistent images of death.

Shays' Rebellion itself exemplifies how Pynchon uses but also departs from his sources. There are many anecdotes about the uprising in The Berkshire Hills, and the authors note several times how much support the rebels had in the region: "Hard on the heels of the Revolution came Shays' Rebellion. The Berkshire farmers, oppressed by heavy taxes, hard times, and the almost worthless post-Revolutionary currency, understood better than the 'city folks' in Boston the real purpose of Daniel Shays' uprising" (BH 137). However, while apparently sympathetic to the rebels' aims, these anecdotes are decidedly pro-government in tone, casting common folk who opposed the rebels as the heroes. This rebellion, like those of Operation Spartacus and the Counterforce, finally succumbed to the Establishment: "The despair and bitterness that incited Shays' Rebellion gradually faded, as an improved system of finance and government brought new hope" (BH 138). Given the context in which The Berkshire Hills was written--a Federal project to alleviate the effects of the Depression among writers--it is not surprising that its authors should find centralized government more appealing than anarchic revolution. It is the rebels who are valorized in Gravity's Rainbow, but the Federal Writers' Project gives Pynchon the cue to suggest that Shays and his followers represented one more alternative path America could have taken but rejected.

Another example of America gone wrong cited in Gravity's Rainbow is the career of "Jubilee Jim" Fisk. While Fisk is best remembered in history as the robber baron who, with his partner, Jay Gould, precipitated one of the great financial scandals of the Gilded Age, Pynchon's references to the financier seem more benign. Lyle Bland is described as "a hustler in the regional Jim Fisk style" (GR 285), and when Slothrop is seized by "what the Book of Changes calls Youthful Folly," the following song emerges:

> Jubilee Jim, just a-peddlin' through the country,
> Winkin' at the ladies from Stockbridge up to Lee--

Buy your gal a brooch for a fancy gown,
Buggy-whip rigs for just a dollar down,
Hey come along ev'rybody, headin' for the Jubi-lee!
(GR 378)

In its chapter on the town of Otis, The Berkshire Hills recalls Fisk's days in the county:

> Not the least of those who have since traveled the Great Road was "Jubilee" Jim Fiske [sic], king of Berkshire peddlers. In 1835 he sent out through the Berkshires twenty-five outfits, peddling his goods from door to door. Otis remembers "Jubilee" Jim, not so much for his great wealth and power, as for his famous Paisley shawls. . . .
>
> Otis likes to remember "Jubilee Jim" as the shrewd, suave peddler, rather than as the wealthy and famous Jim Fiske who later departed from Berkshire, acquired the Erie Railroad, beat down the power of his rival Jay Gould, and behind the scenes of State and Federal politics, pulled wires manipulating officials like puppets. (BH 212-13)

Pynchon would seem to agree with the townspeople of Otis, yet Gravity's Rainbow also acknowledges the later, less jubilant truth when Säure Bummer tells Slothrop that the money Von Göll promised him "'is gone where the woodbine twineth.' Exactly what Jubilee Jim Fisk told the Congressional committee investigating his and Jay Gould's scheme to corner gold in 1869. The words are a reminder of Berkshire" (GR 438).

As that "reminder of Berkshire" suggests, in Gravity's Rainbow this region represents a scene of loss, of failed beginnings and goals unachieved. The Berkshire references in Gravity's Rainbow acquire their greatest resonance, though, once Slothrop reaches the Zone and encounters, first, Geli Tripping and, then, Margherita Erdmann. Slothrop has reservations at first about his involvement with Geli, a professed witch. His only previous knowledge of witches was of his ancestor Amy Sprue: "Slothrop grew up not quite knowing what to think about her. Witches were certainly not getting a fair shake in the thirties. They were depicted as hags who called you dearie, not exactly a wholesome lot" (GR 330). Such depictions did not belong only to movies like The Wizard of Oz. In one anecdote about Crazy Sue Dunham, The Berkshire Hills refers to her as "the Berkshire wandering hag" (BH 70).

Nevertheless, Slothrop's encounter with Geli leads to one of the novel's most spectacular scenes. Standing at the peak of the Brocken, Geli and Slothrop watch the sun rise:

> As the sunlight strikes their backs, coming in nearly flat on, it begins developing on the pearl cloudbank: two gigantic shadows, thrown miles

> overland [. . .] "By golly," Slothrop a little bit nervous, "it's the Specter." You got it up around Greylock in the Berkshires too. Around these parts it is known as the Brockengespenst. (GR 330)

Geli and Slothrop dance erotically, their "God-shadows" projecting gigantically, until the sun rises higher and "the shadows have come shrinking back to their owners" (GR 331).

Remarkable as it is, it is quite likely that the entire scene was inspired by this passage in The Berkshire Hills about Mount Greylock, the highest point in Massachusetts:

> Of the stories and legends about Old Greylock, the one about the "Specter" is most popular.
>
> Thirty years ago [1909], at the end of the summer season, a Berkshire man was bringing down the piano from the little recreation house atop the mountain. Suddenly he saw himself, his horse and wagon and the piano standing upright, outlined in monstrous design against the sky. Unable to decide whether he had quaffed too much from the "cup that cheers," he is said to have fled in haste from the mountainside to the minister, and taken the pledge at once.
>
> The phenomenon of a gigantic shadow of an object reflected in a cloud is so well known as to have a German name, the Brockengespenst (Specter of the Brocken) from Brocken, the highest peak of the Hartz [sic] Mountains. As Greylockgespenst would be a bit unwieldy for Berkshire, here it is simply called the Specter. (BH 42)

Like a specter, the past of Slothrop's family and home territory haunts him. The Berkshires are Pynchon's image of America itself, particularly the forgotten American landscape of preterite failure. Slothrop's abandonment of Bianca to the mercies of her deranged mother triggers a new round of associations with the landscape of his past:

> Her look now--this deepening arrest--has already broken Slothrop's seeing heart: has broken and broken, that same look swung as he drove by, thrust away into twilights of moss and crumbling colony, of skinny clouded-cylinder gas pumps, of tin Moxie signs gentian and bittersweet as the taste they were there to hustle on the weathered sides of barns, looked for how many Last Times up in the rearview mirror, all of them too far inside metal and combustion, allowing the days' targets more reality than anything that might come up by surprise, by Murphy's Law, where the salvation could be. . . . Lost, again and again, past poor dam-busted and drowned Becket, up and down the rut-brown slopes, the hayrakes rusting in the afternoon, the sky purple-gray, dark as chewed gum,

> the mist starting to make white dashes in the air, aimed earthward a quarter, a half inch . . . (GR 471)

Slothrop's memories of Bianca and his own inaction raise for him the memory of his home country. The battered signs and empty landscape of the Berkshires again preclude the chances for surprise-as-salvation desired as well in "The Secret Integration." One place within the region stands out as the symbol of this loss: the reference to "drowned Becket" is an allusion, not to the Martyr of Canterbury (Weisenburger 217), but to a town in the Berkshires that was nearly destroyed by a flood:

> In 1927, when the Ballou Reservoir burst its earthen bank and poured a twenty-five-foot wall of water down the narrow valley, the railroad embankment was destroyed, roadways were ruined, and the settlement was nearly wiped out. The town's principal industry, a silk mill, was swept away; houses and shops floated downstream with the flotsam and the debris. This disaster marked the end of Becket's era of industrialism. Since then, save for Ballou's basket factory and a gristmill, the town's shops and mills have either closed down or been destroyed. (BH 220)

Becket, like the rest of its region, is for Slothrop a reminder of loss. Like the Watts of Pynchon's journalism, Berkshire has become a place where surprise and salvation are in short supply. The beautiful, once-prosperous community described by the Federal Writers' Project becomes in Gravity's Rainbow:

> a hilltop desolation of businesses going under, hedges around the estates of the vastly rich, half-mythical cottagers from New York lapsing back now to green wilderness or straw death, all the crystal windows every single one smashed, Harrimans and Whitneys gone, lawns growing to hay, and the autumns no longer a time for foxtrots in the distances, limousines and lamps, but only the accustomed crickets again, apples again, early frosts to send the hummingbirds away, east wind, October rain: only winter certainties. (GR 28)

If Pynchon's winter certainties aren't shared by the authors of The Berkshire Hills, he still has not done their work or the region a disservice. Pynchon's Berkshire is a region of words and of the mind. In his introduction to The Berkshire Hills, Walter Prichard Eaton remarks on the difference between real and linguistic geographies:

> Ninety-nine out of every one hundred Americans to this day see the Catskills as Irving colored them, and the fact that they aren't a bit like that any more doesn't trouble most of us merely because we don't go there.

> If Bryant had created as vivid a legend for the Berkshires as Irving did for those mountains which we can see from our Taconic divide, huddled blue against the west, I suppose we would resent the General Electric plant in Pittsfield, the Lenox villas, the cement highways, and all the other marks of the later nineteenth and this twentieth century. (Some of them, may I remark parenthetically, some of us _do_ resent.) But no such overwhelming haze of legend was distilled around the Berkshires to remove them forever into a hushed and wistful past. (BH xi-xii)

Pynchon, who shares that resentment of the General Electric plant and "other marks of . . . this twentieth century," prepares his own legend for this region, but not in any "hushed and wistful past." Just as he appropriates this geography for Slothrop's past to help give that character much greater depth than is often acknowledged, so too in "The Secret Integration" and _Gravity's Rainbow_ does Pynchon create a legend for these hills that returns them to the rest of the nation.

--Mankato State University

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