V. IN LOVE:
FROM THE "OTHER SCENE" TO THE "NEW SCENE"

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--Love is love. It shows up in
strange displacements (V 412).

1: The Machine and the Subject

In his "Seminar II," Jacques Lacan describes the brain as a "machine made to dream."[1] Philip K. Dick's question, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?[2] is the title of the book on which the post-industrial cult movie Blade Runner is based; Dick's question may almost be read as a comment on Lacan's statement. Both quotations testify to the fact that, after having invaded the subject's garden, the machine has finally invaded the subject itself. Freud's and certainly Lacan's theories are already constructed from systems to which images of interlocking optical, linguistic and sexual "machines" are central. Most drastically, however, the machine figures in the theories of Deleuze/Guattari, whose work begins with and departs from Freud. For them, the machine's entry into the unconscious as the pattern of unconscious registration marks a new beginning: "the unconscious itself is no more structural than personal, it does not symbolize any more than it imagines or represents: it engineers, it is machinic."[3] This heralds a possible breakup of what Deleuze/Guattari regard as old, corroded Oedipal structures and a release of "culturally" unregulated and unmediated flows of pure desire/energy, with a generally liberating effect. But even within this paradoxical promise, the "machinic" carries more sinister connotations which resonate in the background of Deleuze/Guattari's study. Borrowing their terminology from chemistry and physics, they use the contrasting terms molar and molecular. Molar machines are great machinic networks following certain well-defined parameters, in which all flows are directed towards a particular projective (the Oedipal Machine, the Social Machine, the Capitalist Machine).[4] In contrast, their molecular Desiring Machines are machines without operational use, "formative machines, whose very misfirings are functional" (AO 286). Like the machinic sculptures of Jean Tinguely, these desiring-machines are in fact defined by their very uselessness and their aesthetics of pure motion, flows, passages and movements, completely free of directed, functional parameters: "A machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks" (AO 36). These machines, in their dynamics also reminiscent of the Futurists' spectacles of pure speed and energy, find their dark doubles in the cold, mechanical robot of the factory, or of any "operative" endeavour, for that matter.[5] Within the molecular machine, the (utopian) liberation and the liberating dispersion of the subject as well as the "objectification" of

desire are carried out;[6] whereas molar machines insert the subject into pre-set structural patterns, within which--as a living extension of this machine--it is defined, much like Charlie Chaplin in the "Modern Times-Machine."

Deleuze/Guattari's use of the vocabulary of "machine," "machinic," "molar" and "molecular" involves more than metaphor. On the one hand, an expression like the "Oedipal Machine" is a metaphor for a familial-social system which Freudians believe "operates" (in the West? in the World?) to "produce" human subjects of a certain--our--kind. On the other hand, Deleuze/Guattari do not want us to think of these "machines" as wholly separated, by their metaphoric nature, from the machines and the mechanical which are more than metaphor, more than model and paradigm, which increasingly invade the minds and bodies of human subjects, or of subjects--robots, androids, cyborgs--made on the model of the human, and whose presence is acknowledged throughout Pynchon's fiction. The meeting of the machine and the subject is carried out within psychoanalytical as well as cultural registers and figures as a constant trope within modern consciousness. It pervades all discursive practices, either as formal structuration or as direct content, and gives each discursive instance a specific marking. Postmodern society has born witness to this meeting in all its various manifestations, from projects of Artificial Intelligence to worldwide computer networks, from Ballard's post-industrial science-fiction to the whole complex of political/technological simulation.

This landscape of automata and their "mechanical brides" also defines the scenario of Pynchon's novel V.,[7] an overall investigation of the invasion by the inanimate of the animate. The dark vision of modern society (actually a dystopia) Pynchon sketches, I will argue, also implies a critique of outdated humanistic illusions concerning the status of the "subject." The text describes the infiltrations of the inanimate as parallel to the growing mechanization of V., which stands metonymically for the growing usurpation of the human and its body by the various "simulacra" of science and culture.

2: The Freud/Pynchon Interface

Chapter fourteen of V., entitled "V. in Love," describes the relation of V. to Mélanie L'Heuremaudit. Within this scenario, which re-enacts the effect of "mechanization" upon what used to be called love, Pynchon stages the disruption of Freudian psychoanalysis and posits, if not the invalidity of its theoretical framework, then at least its inapplicability to a new scene. His critique revolves around notions of "the subject" and "the fetish," and enters the Freudian system at the level of its most basic assumptions.

Freudian psychoanalysis is based on specific assumptions concerning the status of the subject and defines itself as the science of this subject. Pynchon questions this position by applying Freudian concepts to a "subject" that has turned into a pure "object."[8] Beginning within the Freudian assumption of the

(primarily Oedipal) determination of the subject, Pynchon quickly moves to reveal and confront the problematics of Freudian analysis by making it address a subject completely determined by forces outside of psychoanalysis. This kind of critique is analogous to recent post-structuralist debates, themselves strongly influenced by Freudian and Lacanian concepts and to a great extent unfolding within their parameters. Jean Baudrillard's writing enters the post-structuralist scene at an angle comparable to the one at which Pynchon's enters the Freudian one. Baudrillard voices his critique from within post-structuralist theory but aims at a complete rearrangement and disruption of its positions via the concept of "simulation."[9] Pynchon's critique of Freudian psychoanalysis, I would argue, is similar to Baudrillard's: the latter enters the Freudian scene in its second, Lacanian generation, and Pynchon's concept of "complete determination" may well be read as an early, narrativized version of Baudrillard's "simulation": the subject's shift into a mere symptom and concept.

Chapter fourteen of V. describes the final days of Mélanie L'Heuremaudit, a fifteen-year-old dancer who comes to Paris to perform in an avant-garde ballet.[10] It describes her relations with a mysterious woman (V.), and culminates in her death during the premiere of the ballet, in which she dies the death she was only supposed to act out on stage. Already the first sentence of the chapter develops these tropes and defines Mélanie in her first "appellation": her last name translates as "The Cursed Hour," a time that denotes both a historical and a cultural framework--for Pynchon a growing decadence.[11] Accordingly, Mélanie's exact time of arrival in Paris is not her time, and can only be extrapolated by its relation to various time-systems operating simultaneously. "The clock inside the Gare du Nord read 11:17: Paris time minus five minutes, Belgian railway time plus four minutes, mid-Europe time minus 56 minutes" (V 393). Her arrival is the interface of various paradigms, its time not an instance in a general flow, but already colonized by differing forces and determinations and a specific historical moment: "By the cover of Le Soleil [. . .]it was 24 July 1913" (V 393). Against these geographically, culturally and politically mediated times, Mélanie herself is explicitly undefined: "To Mélanie, who had forgotten her traveling clock--who had forgotten everything--the hands might have stood anywhere" (V 393). Another such interface, this time not temporal but psychological, defines her personality, which is neither unified nor dispersed (as are Deleuze/Guattari's utopias of the schizophrenic), but also defined within specific functions: Apart from being Mélanie L'Heuremaudit, she is also "La Jarretière" (her stage name, "the Garter) and "Su Feng" (the character she plays on stage).

3: The Fetish

The psychoanalytical concept within and against which the whole chapter must be read is that of fetishism, introduced early on by Itague's welcome to Mélanie: "'Come, fétiche, inside'" (V 395). For Freud, fetishism is related to the fear of castration

and is thus first a male domain. The fetish enables the male to "re-create" the missing phallus of a woman, the lack of which grounds his fear of castration in that it presents him with a state in which it is absent, a state which, he fantasizes, may come to be his own as well. The fetish is thus related to woman in her function as the object of male desire; for man, it serves as a circumvention of the fear of castration because it recreates from a material object associated with women's bodies a missing phallus out of the realm of the inanimate.[12] For Freudians, then, the fetish is the male's way of giving female nature something that it initially lacks, if "lack" is viewed from within the phallic position; the fetish is a supplementation of this initial lack by a sort of conceptual crutch. The fetish-object is always this supplement and this simulation. It stands for (signifies) the phallus, inscribing its presence at the very place of its absence via a semiotic substitution (signifier for signified/referent). Freud's contention that fetishism becomes pathological only when it loses this function of "supplementarity"[13] and becomes a "signified" itself mirrors the exclusion of the signified within semiotic theory, an exclusion which inaugurated the Lacanian topography of the law of the signifier. The fetish, however, is a supplement only from within the phallic position: "if women are not fetishists, that is because they apply a constant fetish-work upon themselves, turning themselves into dolls."[14] In other words, woman can use the inanimate to add to and to shape her body in ways congruent with male desire, so that the missing phallus is not equated with a single fetish (her shoe, her underwear) but is spread out over her entire body as phallic object. From both positions (the female as well as the male), it is the phallus which "defines" the fetish, so that women ultimately become their "own as well as the Other's fetish" (SE 171). From the male perspective, the fetish replaces the absence of the female phallus (itself a virtual, imaginary term) by an inanimate object; from the female perspective, the absence of the "female phallus" also causes the fetishisation of the "real thing" (the male phallus) and the power it signifies. This economy is inaugurated and guarded by the phallocratic structure of psychoanalysis. As Lacan says:

> I am saying that it is in order to be the phallus, that is to say, the signifier of the desire of the Other, that a woman will reject an essential part of femininity, namely, all her attributes in the masquerade. It is for that which she is not that she wishes to be desired as well as loved. But she finds the signifier of her own desire in him to whom she addresses her demand for love. Perhaps it should not be forgotten that the organ that assumes this signifying function takes on the value of a fetish.[15]

Lacan writes from the Freudian position that "there is only one libido, [Freud's] text showing that he conceives it as masculine in nature" (E 291). This implies that: "the problem of [the woman's] condition is fundamentally that of accepting

herself as an object of desire for the man."[16] In order for the woman to make the phallus "her own," she can either make the male phallus into her fetish or turn her own body into a phallus, a gesture facilitated by the complementary male desire to turn the female body into a phallus. Lacan clearly situates her in this position when he says that: "such is the woman concealed behind her veil. It is the absence of the penis which turns her into the phallus, the object of desire" (E 322). Men and women both, having it and fearing its lack, or lacking it, desire the phallus. Woman does not need an inanimate object for a fetish, then, because the phallus--as a function--is either in the place of the male or "spread out," projected over her own body. For her, the inanimateness of the "male" fetish is thus paralleled by the inanimateness of herself as phallic object or by the "real" phallus. These positionings of woman within the "phallic theatre" designate to her the role which she has to act out within this double choreography of her own desire, which in turn firmly grounds male desire.

Mélanie's first auto-erotic scenario soon after her arrival starts with a daydream triggered by the image of herself in an overhead mirror and continues after she has undressed and put on the costume she is to wear as Su Feng. The scene shows her insertion into the phallic mode and proceeds exactly along these two modes. In the beginning, she watches herself in the mirror and moves her legs: "the blue skirt had worked high above the tops of the stockings. And lay gazing at the black and tender white" (V 397). The "route" of her desire is already lodged according to a male perspective and is grafted onto her own body: she sees herself (in the mirror) as the object of male (in this case, her father's) desire: "Papa had said, 'How pretty your legs are: the legs of a dancer'" (V 397). In her taking the perspective of her father's desire in relation to herself, she already inserts herself firmly into a fetish-function.

After this initial contemplation in the mirror, which already stresses the relation between body and cloth, she immediately goes on to "disguise" herself. The broken relation to her own sexual attributes, which Lacan diagnosed in woman, is highlighted by the emphasis placed on her being "dressed up" for her encounter with the lay figure, rejecting (concealing) quite literally "all her attributes in the masquerade" and thus all natural relation to her own body. This need for concealment as well as addition marks her involvement with her own body:

> She rose, in a near-frenzy, removed blouse, skirt and undergarments. [. . .] Back in the hot room she quickly removed shoes and stockings, keeping her eyes closed tight until she had fastened her hair in back with the spangled amber comb. She was not pretty unless she wore something. The sight of her nude body repelled her. Until she had drawn on the blond silk tights, embroidered up each leg with a long, slender dragon; stepped into the slippers with the cut steel buckles, and intricate straps which writhed up halfway to her

> knees. Nothing to restrain her breasts: she wrapped the underskirt tightly around her hips. It fastened with thirty hooks and eyes from waist to thigh-top, leaving a fur-trimmed slit so that she could dance. And finally, the kimono, translucent and dyed rainbowlike with sunbursts and concentric rings of cerise, amethyst, gold and jungly green. (V 397)

In this intricate phallic masquerade in which the objects themselves already come to life--the inventory includes blond tights, writhing straps and underskirts with "eyes"--she "lay back once more [. . .] breath taken by her own beauty. If Papa could see her" (V 398).

This transformation of her body into a phallic simulation also entails her body's submission under someone else's language and code:

> The whole contemporary history of the body is that of its limitation, the matrix of marks and signs that cover it with a network and partition it, that negate it in its difference and its initial ambivalence in order to . . . change it into a sexuality that is seen as the determining instance--a phallic instance, which is organized entirely around the fetishization of the phallus as the general equivalent. (SE 155)

Within this "phallic grammar," the female body itself is strictly excluded, and banned from representation. All the signs that cover it are male signs, so that a male erotics ultimately has to detach itself from the body proper and affix itself to the overlying signs themselves, the endpoint of which is the "body as sign" defined within and dominated by a "phallic code."[11] Because of this code:

> [A] marking gets the power of a sign and by way of this a perverse erotic function. It turns into a line of demarcation which represents castration. . . .castration is signified and by way of this, misunderstood. The naked and the clothed stand in a structural opposition and work towards the representation of the fetish. As for instance the edge of the stocking on the thigh . . . becomes the naked thigh and metonymically the whole body by way of this demarcation has turned into the phallic image, the fetish-object of contemplation and manipulation. (SE 158)

Roland Barthes detected a similar structure in Sarrasine, in which this "dissemination of the female body" is, however, countered by a belief in the textual "body of love":

> the subject . . . knows the female body only as a division and dissemination of partial objects: leg, breast, shoulder, neck,

> hands. . . .Fragmented woman . . . Divided, anatomized, she is merely a kind of dictionary of fetish objects. This sundered, dissected body . . . is reassembled by the artist . . . into a whole body, the body of love . . . in which fetishism is abolished.[18]

It is within the juxtaposition of skin and clothing (garter, for example, la Jarretière), that the phallocratic erotic element is lodged as a result of an "emphasis placed on a fragment of the body by a horizontal line, a line of demarcation" (SE 158). These eroticized divisions make lace the ultimate(ly) erotic fabric; it is the "délire"[19] of the polarity between body and fetish. It is the line as such which opens up the play of the juxtapositions (body/fetish) and within which male desire is lodged, enabled by a structural framework of oppositionality/difference. This line also always functions as a demarcation between animate (skin) and inanimate (cloth). The demarcation of clothing and body, of black stockings and white skin, which was so important for Mélanie in her first "reflection," denotes the part of the structure in which the phallus is spread out over her <u>own</u> body, turning it into a fetish.[20]

Another route determines her relation to the mannequin, which functions as a replacement of the desired phallus (her father's). Unlike a fetish, it denotes a <u>real</u> (temporal/spatial) lack rather than a <u>structural</u> one. It is an attempt to hallucinate the presence of the real being, and the lay figure, in its life-likeness, is of course the perfect surrogate and substitute, especially because it is "without a head" (V 396) and thus has no identity: it is the truly phallic (and already machinic) body. "The ideal body . . . is that of the mannequin. The mannequin is the model for this complete phallic instrumentalization of the body" (SE 170). This body-as-mannequin refers primarily to the female body and to women, who are quite literally the mannequins of phallocratic fashions: "the unveiled body of the woman denotes quite obviously the appearance of the phallus, the fetish-object" (SE 161). It can, in this scene, however, take on a complementary function for the woman, who is herself already a fetish-object. In her fantasy, Mélanie transposes the (phallic) body of her father onto the mannequin.

Both parts of the initial encounter are performed within a phallocratic perspective and denote the two ways in which woman has to lodge her desire. In the first structure, she emerges as the object desired by the phallus, in the second as the object desiring the phallus herself. The scene shows the supplementarities and dynamics of this economy, the result of which is that in both "dimensions" Mélanie can relate to herself only within an "exteriorization." Active or passive, her desire is ultimately the desire of the phallus, and she is the product of her father's fantasy: "'He gave her all that. Or was he giving it all to himself, by way of her?'" (V 399).

Within the chapter's literary structure, the scene also figures as an overture, pre-staging its "automatic" ending, and from the beginning establishes (via the lay figure) a connection between Mélanie's father and the automata. Just before the scene, Itague tells Mélanie about the inclusion of automata in the ballet, and the connotations of this permeate the entire scene: "What was he saying? Automata . . . " (V 396). Her "lovemaking," which ends the scene, is, in this sense, also already a prefiguration of her final dance.

> The lay figure in the corner was light and carried easily to the bed. She raised her knees high and--interested--saw her calves in the mirror crisscross over the small of its plaster back. Felt the coolness of the figure's flanks against the nude-colored silk, high on her thighs, hugged it tight. The neck top, jagged and flaking off, came to her breasts. She pointed her toes, began to dance horizontal, thinking of how her handmaidens would be. (V 398)

The phallic "alienation" of woman from herself is carried to its limit within striptease, the scenario in which the complete woman, and not only some of her attributes, is turned into a fetish-object. Within the inversely proportional movements of the discarding of clothes and the revealing of the body, the "subject" vanishes completely, and a purely male "hallucination" takes its place,[21] her auto-erotic caresses becoming caresses of herself-as-phallus within the two basic positions of striptease: voyeurism and fetishism.

4: The Dream of Psychoanalysis

From the beginning, various motifs serve to establish a Freudian connection for Mélanie: her very first word, the screamed "'Papa!'" (V 394) (triggered, revealingly, by a statue of Apollo); the images of her incestuous relation with her father in the past ("Mélanie lay on the wide bed beside him, while he touched her in many places, and she squirmed and fought not to make a sound. It was their game" [V 394]); a remembered daydream of herself sliding down the roof of the family mansion (a thinly disguised dream about incestuous sexual intercourse).

Mélanie's dream about the German engineer, however, which follows her "dance" with the lay figure, is the most revealingly "Freudian" one, and also the one in which psychoanalysis itself is thematized along with Mélanie's shift from "cultural" and "psychoanalytical" to "real" object. In this dream, she equates the engineer of the automata with her father (the phallic instance), the engineer who "built her."

> The German stood over the bed watching her. He was Papa, but also a German.
>
> "You must turn over," he repeated insistently. She was too embarrassed to ask why. Her eyes--which somehow she was able to see, as if

> she were disembodied and floating above the bed, perhaps somewhere behind the quicksilver of the mirror--her eyes were slanted Oriental: long lashes, spangled on the upper lids with tiny fragments of gold leaf. She glanced sideways at the lay figure. It had grown a head, she thought. The face was turned away. "To reach between your shoulderblades," said the German. What does he look for there, she wondered.
>
> "Between my thighs," she whispered, moving on the bed. [. . .] The Mėlanie in the mirror watched sure fingers move to the center of her back, search, find a small key, which he began to wind.
>
> "I got you in time," he breathed. "You would have stopped, had I not . . . "
>
> The face of the lay figure had been turned toward her, all the time. There was no face.
>
> She woke up, not screaming, but moaning as if sexually aroused. (V 401-02)

The mechanical "arousal" of the automata by the winding of the key between their/her shoulderblades figures as a displacement of a more direct sexual arousal; her whispered "'Between my thighs'" denotes her desire to change the place of arousal from the back to her genitals. Constructed directly according to Freudian concepts of displacement and condensation, the dream contains much of the latent wish within its dream-material and is in this sense a "quotation" of psychoanalytical theory. Because of this equivalency, it can be read, not only as Mėlanie's dream, but as the dream of psychoanalysis itself. Mėlanie's desire (to be a phallic automaton) mirrors the desire of psychoanalysis itself for its latent wish, the implied (phallic) structuration behind the scenarios of the dream-work; Mėlanie dreaming is thus simultaneously psychoanalysis dreaming the nostalgic dream of the (phallic) subject. In this reading, the dream is "made" from psychoanalysis and is the result of a retro-projection of psychoanalytical structures into the unconscious itself, which (conveniently) "takes on" the structure of its "science." The "ghostlike" structure of this dream as well as the complicity it establishes between sex and the inanimate (the implications of what Freud calls the "death-drive" within the sexual arena) is expressed by Mėlanie's final reaction, which is not, as one might have expected, horror, but rather arousal. Already here, Pynchon's final project emerges: not only a critique of the subject within psychoanalysis, but a critique of the subject constructed by psychoanalysis.

Yet the Freudian scenario is not the only episteme within which Mėlanie is defined. Because psychoanalysis is itself a specific cultural phenomenon and moment, she is also the object of a specifically "modern love" and thus a cultural object. Within phallocratic society, a society directly inaugurated and simultaneously mirrored by Freudian concepts and further developed by Lacanian ones, woman has to turn herself into a

doll[22] in order to fit the "phallic scene," which is exactly how V. describes Mélanie.

> "What are you like unclothed? A chaos of flesh. But as Su Feng, lit by hydrogen, oxygen, a cylinder of lime, moving doll-like in the confines of your costume . . . You would drive Paris mad. Women and men alike." (V 404)

The repressed image of the female body as a chaos of flesh is transformed by artificial light effects and costumes into a phallic performance. As its doll, the inanimate representation of a human, Mélanie becomes the inanimate object of (phallic) desire itself. Within male society, woman seems to lend herself "naturally" to such an object-function, her role (as cultural object) having been instigated via a long historical process. But within Pynchon's setup, the "fetish-object"--not shoes, garter-belts, etc., but the one to which the fetish is linked as a supplement--that is to say, the "subject," turns herself into an "object" by becoming in her entirety a "fetish." Woman thus crosses the border from being a cultural object, but still human, to being a fetish-object, and thus inanimate. Within the shift, Pynchon also implies that from now on both victim and victimizer (female and male) will be victimized, because in the new scene sexual differences will be annulled altogether.

In what follows, Pynchon explores the mechanics of this new "erotic stage" along the split between subject and object within the new fetish-object (the "inanimate female"), because some sort of separation has to be re-established within the fetish/object; otherwise, both subject and object functions would be combined in an unstable "personal union." The line of demarcation, the bar which separates the "fetish" (the fetish as human) from the "object" (the human as fetish) is the plane of the mirror. It takes over the function of the "bar" (the horizontal line) within fetishism, the plane on which differences can be inscribed. But by now, this line is no longer directly connected to the body of the subject, but marks the complete exteriorization of the fetish in relation to itself.

5: The Mirror

Mirrors mark the topography of the whole chapter and are ever-present. Mélanie herself "functions as a mirror" (V 399). Her investment within what Lacan would call the Imaginary (the space of specular identification) can be observed in her inability to express herself within the Symbolic, the realm of language and discourse. The only words she speaks within the whole chapter are: "'Papa!'"(V 394), "'I have nowhere to stay'"(V 396), "'Move?'" (V 396), "'I . . . '" (V 404), and, within her dream, "'Between my thighs'" (V 401). Twice her silences are commented upon from the outside: "Mélanie could not speak" (V 404), and "The girl didn't answer" (V 406). Whereas within the Lacanian topography the Imaginary and the Symbolic constantly interact once the "Mirror Stage" has been passed, Mélanie is firmly caught within a specular scenario, less a

subject than herself the mirror-plane, reflecting the presence of her father, who has modelled her after his own wishes. She has become the embodiment of this "phallic" dream, its "fétiche." But because the phallic scene had itself been revealed as a mere ghost (a male hallucination), she can, as its mirror-image, only mirror "the reflection of a ghost" (V 399).

The initial reason for Mélanie's obsession with mirrors and her double is that she herself, being a pure object (a fetish), can relate only to a double of this object and can "love" only other fetishes, who thus become fetishes of a fetish. To any other reality she is emotionally immune: "The eyes would not respond. Not with fear, desire, anticipation. Only the Mélanie in the mirror could make them do that" (V 404).

Her first mirror-encounter had still been performed under the aegis of the male, the memory of her father and her incestuous relation with him. But while in that instance it had been a "bringing-to-life" that was performed by the mirror, an identification of the inanimate object (the lay figure as phallus) with the animate one (the desired father as phallus), in her later mirror encounters, the audience which she had only hallucinated in order to fill the gap between "object" (lay figure) and "loved object" (Papa) becomes real. It is exactly here that Pynchon finally overthrows the Freudian scene: while Mélanie's first encounters were still taking place within a phallocratic scenario, and Mélanie (as a male hallucination) remained a metaphorical object, her relation to V. defines her as a real object. The textual nodal-point at which this change is established is another of Pynchon's "low puns."[23] Like Mélanie who completely internalizes (takes for real) her fetish-function, Pynchon takes psychoanalysis at its word: taking the word object literally, he can re-define the Freudian setup and project this new scene back onto the old one. Once the fetish-function has completely colonized the female body (within psychoanalytical parameters), one can then treat this body as a completely objectified site. The shift from "human body" to "automaton" is closely linked to V., with whom Mélanie enters into a "lesbian" relationship. Pynchon thus disrupts the male/female dichotomy, not only by letting Mélanie become the fetish for a woman, but by making this woman at the same time already a "machine," an automaton who sees in Mélanie the perfect fetish:

> "You are not real. [. . .] Do you know what a fetish is? Something of a woman which gives pleasure but is not a woman. A shoe, a locket . . . une jarretière. You are the same, not real but an object of pleasure." (V 404)[24]

Their meeting is from the beginning a meeting of two variously defined "objects" that are mirrored and grafted onto each other. Even before she had met Mélanie, V. had worked within parameters of fetishism. During a "Black Mass," she is:

> absorbed in burning tiny holes with the tip of her cigarette, through the skirt of the young girl.

> [. . .] She was writing ma fêtiche, in black-rimmed holes. The sculptress wore no lingerie. So that when the lady finished the words would be spelled out by the young sheen of the girl's thighs. (V 403)[25]

Soon after their introduction, Mélanie and the woman enter into a complicated "menage à trois" in which the concepts of subject and fetish are imploded and constantly oscillate. V. leads Mélanie to her loft outside Paris in "a landscape of factories, chemical works, iron foundries" (V 406). Within this ambience of industrial robots and molar machines, she has created a secret chamber of mirrors: "As for Mélanie, her lover had provided her with mirrors, dozens of them. Mirrors with handles, with ornate frames, full-length and pocket mirrors came to adorn the loft wherever one turned to look" (V 408). In this landscape of the Imaginary and its multiple diffractions, Mélanie derives pleasure from the (two-way) contemplation of the image of herself (her double) in the mirror which can function as audience (as "other"), since this image is violently split along the mirror-plane and separated from herself. She can use its voyeuristic position to enable her to enact the internal split of subject and object functions within herself and to recreate her own image for herself as her own (though "other") fetish. She uses the presence of a real "other" (V.) whose virtual as well as real images are present to amplify this separation/split of herself from herself. The presence of V. strengthens the voyeuristic position of the "mirror-Mélanie" by the introduction of a real voyeur, and thus equalizes herself-as-audience with the other-as-audience on the plane of the mirror(s) which marks an even more basic split.

> She needs, it seems, a real voyeur to complete the illusion that her reflections are, in fact, this audience. With the addition of this other--multiplied also, perhaps, by mirrors--comes consummation: for the other is also her own double. (V 410)

Within the complicated geometries of the virtual spaces, the multiple and diffracted images constantly ricochet and are lost in the depths and dispersions of the mirror planes as such.[26] The (virtual) mirror-image of V., her (real) image and her voyeuristic function "objectify" V. for Mélanie in the same ratio to which her own image had been "objectified" via the reflection: a step by which the self-as-audience is put into a similarly distant position as the other-as-audience. The separation of (virtual) "fetish" from (real) "fetish" is carried out within these substitutions.

In the position of the "real" voyeur, V. (herself a fetish) occupies a position parallel to that which the fetish (Mélanie) has to itself: "As for V., she recognized--perhaps aware of her own progression toward inanimateness--the fetish of Mélanie and the fetish of herself to be one" (V 410). Within these multiple identifications, the scenario is closed into a symbiotic triadic

function, because from V.'s perspective the fetish (Mélanie) is also doubled and amplified in the mirror(s) in a similar equation of mirror-image and original. In this complex grid of "fetish functions," the tableau freezes into inanimateness. No submission, no oppression: "No movement but a minimum friction" (V 409). In fact, gazes are the only carriers of this structure.[27] The scopic structuration of this tableau also anticipates Lacan, who has defined the gaze as "object a," because it is via the gaze that the subject and the "other" are connected.[28] Here, however, with each image already a mirror-image, the other as well as the self, and one as well as any other, the gazes can no longer affix themselves to a subject (even if permanently de-centered), but bounce from fetish to fetish in an endless doubling and re-doubling. Unlike in Lacan, there is no "alienating identification" (E 4) but a complete dispersion, and no "anchoring points" (E 154) which might throw "the subject" out of its paralyzed passivity. The "minimum friction" also evokes again Freud's "death-drive," and it is precisely at this point that Pynchon introduces death (master of the inanimate) as the final equivocator of the fetish-function:

> Dead at last, they would be one with the inanimate universe and with each other. Love-play until then thus becomes an impersonation of the inanimate, a transvestism not between sexes but between quick and dead; human and fetish. (V 410)

The fetish posing as human and the human functioning as a fetish are the final transmutations within this scenario, which violently disrupts the psychoanalytical system in relation to its "field." It can no longer be the science of a subject, because the line of demarcation does not run anymore between subject and subject, but between object and object.

Pynchon thus "displaces" the Freudian concept of fetishism on various levels. First of all, he dis-connects it from the male perspective and interlocks it with the systems of lesbianism,[29] and, via V., with the machinic. He thus undermines one of Freud's basic contentions, the relation of fetishism to the fear of castration, although a shadow of this relation does persist and is taken up again within V. as the "braid-cutter," hence castratrix, of an androgynous, hence partly-male, Mélanie: "One day the girl arrived at Le Nerf accompanied by the woman and wearing schoolboys' clothing [. . .] Moreover, her head--all her thick buttock-length hair--had been shorn. She was nearly bald; [. . .] she might have been a young lad playing hooky" (V 407). In a second step, Pynchon disrupts the level of relations between fetish and loved object, declaring, like Baudrillard, the loved object in her entirety to be a fetish. Taking elements of the Freudian system, leaving the basic definitions intact (such as fetishism and homosexuality) but aligning them along different lines, the initial displacements trigger a number of other displacements in a sort of domino-effect. What Pynchon disrupts in the first step is the internal "structuration" of the Freudian setup. That he also has his fun with Freud can be seen in the lovingly detailed speculations about the "64 different sets of

roles" (V 408) Mélanie and V. could enact in their triangular scenario.

In the second step--the equation of subject and fetish--however, Pynchon breaks open the difference between animate being (formerly the "loved object") and inanimate object (formerly "the fetish"). From the male perspective, Freud's fetish-object is an inanimate object which has a supplementary relation to the animate one. Pynchon's concept of the fetish describes rather the implosion of the animate object into the inanimate, and thus blurs the initial difference between subject and object on which the Freudian binarism is based.

6: The Automaton

Two of Mélanie's "appellations" have been brought into play by now: "L'Heuremaudit," "the cursed hour," denoting the atemporality of Mélanie as an object, and "La Jarretière," "the garter-belt," denoting her function as fetish-object, but which can also mean, in a revealing twist of the French language, "conductor-wire." This discursive "sexualization of science" and "scientization of sexuality" defines Mélanie in her role as Su Feng, the raped virgin in "L'Enlèvement des Vierges Chinoises."

This final "mirror-stage" of Mélanie differs in an important aspect from Lacan's. While it is a constant dis-placement that underlies Lacan's concept, a continuous and basic mis-apprehension (mé/connaissance) which gets carried over into the Symbolic, Pynchon defines it as an even more complete disruption. In Lacan, the "self" and "l'autre" constantly oscillate, though sometimes this autre/other is the "other-as-other" (within the realm he defines as the Symbolic), and at others it is the "self-as-other" (within what he defines as the space of the Imaginary). In either case, self and other thus define each other, albeit in a constantly missed encounter. Yet, despite this oscillation, the notion of "subject," even if violently de-centered, is still valid and in operation. In Pynchon's setup, these terms implode into each other, and the subject becomes an object in its totality. This "new scene," as differentiated from the psychoanalytic "other scene" of Freud, is adapted for the stage by Porcépic and Satin. Within it, all elements of the new triad are present: it is populated by male and female dancers, but also--and this is the addition that disrupts the basic Freudian binarism--by automata; it is this scene in which the final implosion of "fetish and human, dead and quick" is acted out. The climax of the ballet, depicting the rape of the virgin by Mongols, shows the impalement of Mélanie by the "entire male part of the company" (V 413) while the women lament.[30] Here the phallic and psychoanalytic connotations are unmistakable, and Pynchon is still working within the psychoanalytical structure which he then sets out to deconstruct. But while this part of the drama directly implies the Freudian/Lacanian concept of the phallic signifier and contains in a nutshell the female position within Freudian and Lacanian theory, Pynchon provides the scene

with yet another twist: the death that should have been only simulated (the theatrical one) becomes real: Mélanie "forgets" to wear her protective belt, "the one inanimate object that would have saved her" (V 414). But because Mélanie is in her entirety a fetish, this real death is also one in which only a simulated human--a fetish--dies. Orchestrating this final disruption in an ironic side-show, one of the automata on stage, whose "life-likeness" had been so stunning ("'But they move so gracefully! Not like machines at all'" [V 396]), runs amok and commits, it seems out of some sort of machinic solidarity with Mélanie, a symbolic suicide.

Within the growing chaos of the music, automaton and human finally merge: the automaton acts human, while the human is revealed as having always already been an automaton, and it is only in death, within the final passage from animate to inanimate, that "the expression on the normally dead face" (V 414) becomes haunting. The "phallic machine" and the automaton switch places, taking on each other's characteristics within the chaos of the climactic music: "all tonal location had been lost, notes screamed out simultaneous and random like fragments of a bomb" (V 414). While the automaton actively "toss[es] itself about the stage" (V 413), Mélanie's movements get more passive, uncontrolled and "more spastic" (V 414). Within this catastrophic moment, the inanimate and the animate implode, and the scene tumbles out of the psychoanalytical framework into a machinic one, which cannot be read in "human" parameters (Lacanian or otherwise) anymore, but only in machinic ones, and in which the law-of-the-father[31] is replaced by the "law-of-the-machine."

7: The Man-Machine Interface

In V., this law-of-the-machine takes over the personal as well as the cultural field. It annexes the body in both dimensions, a double definition also commented on by Baudrillard: "For the systems of political economy, the robot is the ideal type of body; for the system of the political economy of the sign, the mannequin is the reference-model of the body" (SE 180). The fetish, all work-force or all sign, is the signifier by which the culturally determined (sexual) economy is inscribed onto the body via the semiotic code. It is the relay by which "symbolic ambivalence" is replaced by phallic economics: "The rationality of the sign is rooted in its exclusion and annihilation of all symbolic ambivalence on behalf of a fixed and equational structure."[32] Its status as signifier finally comes to designate the desire of the semiotic code itself: "Something like a desire, a perverse desire, the desire of the code is brought to light here."[33] This transfer of desire onto the code replaces the body/subject with the sign/code within psychoanalysis and harks back to the importance of objects (signs) and their oppositional structure: "It is the sign in this beauty, the mark . . . which fascinates; it is the artifact that is the object of desire" (SE 94). For Mélanie, this exclusion of the subject had created the space for the display of all her clothes, objects

and supplements,[34] but it also marks the nodal point between economy and psychoanalysis. The human body is split into two functions: an "eco-nomic" one (the robot) and an "ego-nomic" one (the mannequin). Within both spheres, however, it is a dead or at least non-animate body that serves as the reference model.

Pynchon follows the sexually dead body into its equally dead culture. Like Shroud and Shock, two more automata in V., Mélanie and V. (whose whole history describes her "mechanization" into a pure object) enter the inanimate and death-time. The deceptively idyllic, private scenery in which their love-drama is acted out is embedded within a larger cultural analysis of Tourism and its Colonial machine, which Pynchon calls "perhaps the most absolute communion we know on earth" (V 409). This machine has the same relation to the "visited" cultures as man has to the fetish, so that fetishism is ultimately a "tourisme-à-deux." It replaces/simulates the "other" within one's own parameters, much in the same way as the fetish replaces/simulates the phallus within the parameters of castration.

> For as tourists bring into the world as it has evolved part of another, and eventually create a parallel society of their own in every city, so the Kingdom of Death is served by fetish-constructions like V's, which represent a kind of infiltration. (V 411)

The concept defining both movements is that of psychic and cultural "colonization." It implies a gesture that radically alters and re-defines objects according to specific operational parameters, a gesture that invades the "other" and redefines him/her as a pure object.

In V., Pynchon carries this tendency to its two logical conclusions, at the end of each of which invariably lies a dead object. V.

> might have [. . .] come to establish eventually so many controls over herself that she became--to Freudian, behaviorist, man of religion, no matter--a purely determined organism, an automaton, constructed, only quaintly, of human flesh. Or by contrast, might have reacted against the above, which we have come to call Puritan, by journeying even deeper into a fetish-country, until she became entirely and in reality--not merely as a love-game with any Mélanie--an inanimate object of desire. (V 411)

Both trajectories (the robot of Puritanism and the fetish of psychoanalysis) are defined by inanimateness, once in the change from "subject" to "economic simulation" within the social order, and once in the change from "subject" to "fetish/object," in which desire itself is dead because it is invariably implicated in the deadness of its object. These two determinations together insert the body inextricably into an operational grid, an

ultimate molar machine, a purely machinic Metropolis in which even the operators are machines, an industry of robots building other robots. Max Weber's critique and analysis in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism[35] is of course the early key text for Pynchon, but Baudrillard provides a later, parallel text:

> For the system of political economy the robot is the ideal type of body. The robot is the ultimate model of the functional "liberation" of the body as work-force. It is the extrapolation of the completely rational, asexual productivity . . . . For the system of political economy of the sign, the mannequin (in all its variants) is the model of reference for the body. As a contemporary of the robot . . . the mannequin represents a . . . fully functionalized body . . . . It is no longer the work-force that is being produced . . . but sexuality itself as a model. (SE 180)

Similar perspectives open up for Profane and Stencil. What is at stake is the transformation of psychoanalysis into mechanics.[36] The limit of fetishism, and also the limit of psychoanalysis, is man as fetish and man as pure object. It is from this new perspective, presided over by the engineer, that Pynchon "deconstructs" psychoanalytic constellations. He exposes the inadequacy of psychoanalysis and its field, a field based on outdated assumptions, in the light of a new cultural arena. In a radical critique of humanistic patterns of explication, psychoanalysis is the first to fall. Appropriately, the last image is, again, of V., standing metonymically for the new scene:

> at age seventy-six: skin radiant with the bloom of some new plastic; both eyes glass but now containing photoelectric cells, connected by silver electrodes to optic nerves of purest copper wire and leading to a brain exquisitely wrought as a diode matrix could ever be. Solenoid relays would be her ganglia, servo-actuators move her flawless nylon limbs, hydraulic fluid be sent by a platinum heartpump through butyrate veins and arteries. Perhaps [. . .] even a complex system of pressure transducers located in a marvelous vagina of polyethylene; the variable arms of their Wheatstone bridges all leading to a single silver cable which fed pleasure-voltages direct to the correct register of the digital machine in her skull. (V 411-12)

8: The Fetish-Text

The spectre of simulation and the fetish weaves not only through this chapter but through the whole of V. At every conceivable (and investigable) angle, inanimate simulation enters the "real": Profane's fight against his inanimate universe;

Rachel's sexual relation to her MG; Fergus, the extension of the TV set; Esther's nose; Eigenvalue's dentures; the "inanimate buddies from Detroit" (V 357); Profane's dream about an all-electronic woman ("Any problems with her, you could look it up in the maintenance manual. Module concept: fingers' weight, heart's temperature, mouth's size out of tolerance? Remove and replace, was all" [V 361]). These all add up to a universe streaked through with the mechanical and the machinic. The female body, however, seems to be a privileged site for this mutation. Being simultaneously the direct phallic object and the ultimate "other" of the phallic scene, woman is defined by these functions within a general economy, and she is the first, but also the last, to fall prey to this mechanization.

Like the stage-setting within Chapter 14, the text itself stages this invasion on the field of the signifier, the ultimate fetish. Within its space, the death of desire, the demise of the human and the advent of the machine are recovered within the text's desire, its thrust into signification, and the momentum which loads the signifiers with desire within the infinitesimal line of demarcation between the stage and the street.

But there is yet another aspect of the text. Being part of the code, the text itself is a fetish, a function which Barthes has commented on:

> The spitefulness of language: once reassembled, in order to utter itself, the total body must revert to the dust of words, to the listing of details, to a monotonous inventory of parts, to crumbling: language undoes the body, returns it to the fetish . . . . it accumulates in order to totalize, multiplies fetishes in order to obtain a total, defetishised body. (S/Z 114)

In The Pleasure of the Text, he further extends this function to the reader: "The text is a fetish object, and this fetish desires me."[37] Pynchon's stance towards language is defined within these problematics. Aware that the text is always already this supplement, Pynchon constantly carries it to its own limit, to the limits of reading/writing. As the ending of The Crying of Lot 49 shows, Pynchon knows about the dangers of too much reading, and it is certainly no coincidence that the agent of the "unknown bidder" who will carry Oedipa's search into yet another round is called "Schrift" (L49 175) which, after all, is the German word for "Writing."

What remains for the text is to be a site to voice the desire for the "real,"[38] the "whole body." That it is always already implicated within "writing," and never quite "real" itself, however, opens up the question of its desire for its own termination within its desire to "signify."

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Notes

[1] Jacques Lacan, Das Seminar von Jacques Lacan, Das Ich in der Theorie Freuds und in der Technik der Analyse. Olten u. Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1980) 101. The translation is from the German edition.

[2] Philip K. Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? (London: Granada, 1972).

[3] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983) 53, my emphasis. Hereafter cited as AO.

[4] One might add the Derridean "Philosophical Machine" (see Derrida's argument with Hegel in Margins of Philosophy [Sussex: Harvester, 1982]), as well as what Deleuze/Guattari would call the Lacanian Machine, which they attack directly through their critique of Oedipal structures.

[5] Deleuze/Guattari see the molar machines as conglomerations of molecular machines under "determinate conditions":

> By "determinate conditions" we mean those statistical forms into which the machines enter as so many stable forms, unifying, structuring, and proceeding by means of large heavy aggregates: the selective pressures that group the parts retain some of them and exclude others . . . . These are therefore the same machines, but not at all the same regime . . . . It is only at the submicroscopic level of desiring-machines that there exists a functionalism--machinic arrangements, an engineering of desire . . . . Only what is not produced in the same way it functions has a meaning, and also a purpose, an intention. The desiring-machines, on the contrary represent nothing, signify nothing, mean nothing. (AO 287-88).

Within this definition, the desiring-machines are defined as being situated outside of any semiological framework.

[6] "Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the subject that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression" (AO 26). This elision of the subject entails a replacement of the Lacanian "object petit a" by an "object-machine petit 'a'" (Felix Guattari, Molecular Revolution [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984] 115), and of Lacan's definition of the signifier as "that which represents the subject for another signifier" (E 316 [see note 15 below]) by "a pure

signifying space where the machine would represent the subject for another machine" (Molecular Revolution 117), thereby foreclosing any internal (Oedipal) structuration within psychoanalysis.

[7] Thomas Pynchon, V.(1963;New York: Perennial, 1986). Hereafter cited as V.

[8] As the notions of "subject" and "object" will be important reference points throughout this paper, it is important to delineate how they will be used. Their demarcations are situated along two axes: One is that of "intersubjective" relations, in which each subject is simultaneously the object for another subject, the position from which one speaks, designating the subject and object functions, as in Lacan. The other axis runs along economic structures; it juxtaposes an object which is fabricated with definite aims, a "product," and over which an instance of power has control, with an object completely out of the subject's control, a complete "other." This line of demarcation can best be followed in Bataille's and Baudrillard's critique of the "economical object." In this paper, the object is always understood as a "product," entailing a (self-legitimized) position of power within the "subject." Pynchon's whole critique, I would argue, is directed against this "object," and in favour of the "object-as-other."

[9] "Simulation" entails a model-built reality, which cannot reach back to an original any more, but only to operational modes themselves. "The very definition of the real becomes: that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction . . . the real is not only what can be reproduced, but that which is always already reproduced: the hyper-real." Jean Baudrillard, Simulation (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983) 146. Hereafter cited as S. Operational structures underlie simulations, whose raison d'être is to gain complete control. The "real," as antagonist to the "human," is turned into "simulation/real," a "real" produced by the human. Analogous to fetish constructions, it thus becomes a supplement and a signifier. The result is a merely "hallucinatory resemblance of the real with itself" (S 142). It is interesting to note that Baudrillard uses the same rhetorical device to designate the originators of simulation that Pynchon uses for the members of the "Firm": "They have already tested "reality" . . . They have broken down reality into simple elements that they have reassembled into scenarios of regulated oppositions" (S 120, my emphasis).

[10] The whole chapter is a pastiche of the eclat of the premiere of Stravinsky's "Le sacre du printemps" in Paris in 1913, which provides a constant sub-text

within the chapter. Porcepic, Satin and Itague represent Stravinsky, Nijinsky, and Diaghilev respectively. While Stravinsky was working on "Le sacre du printemps" (a ballet about the sacrifice of a young girl to the god of spring), he was also working on another piece, "Petruschka," a ballet about an automaton, inspired by a "vision of a mannequin which suddenly comes to life and tests the patience of the orchestra by its diabolic arpeggio of its jumps, so that it finally threatens it with fanfares" (Wolfgang Burde, Strawinsky [Mainz: Goldmann, 1982] 68, my translation).

11 "'A decadence,' Itague put in, 'is a falling away from what is human, and the further we fall the less human we become. Because we are less human, we foist off the humanity we have lost on inanimate objects and abstract theories'" (V 405). Mélanie's Buddenrbrookian family history, as well as her name (in itself less a proper name than a designation referring to a specific function), also evokes this ambience of decadence and poêtes maudits.

12 Sigmund Freud, "Fetischismus," Studienausgabe (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1975) Bd. 3. The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works (London: Hogarth and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953, vol. 21).

13 Sigmund Freud, Studienausgabe Bd. 5, "Der pathologische Fall tritt erst ein, wenn sich das Streben nach dem Fetisch . . . an die Stelle des normalen Zieles setzt, ferner wenn sich der Fetisch von der bestimmten Person loslöst, zum allgemeinen Sexualobjekt wird" (64). "The situation only becomes pathological when the longing for the fetish . . . actually takes the place of the normal aim, and further, when the fetish becomes detached from a particular individual and becomes the sole sexual object."

14 Jean Baudrillard, L'échange symbolique et la mort (Paris: Gallimard, 1976); translated as Der symbolische Tausch und der Tod (München: Matthes & Seitz, 1982). My translations are from the German edition. Hereafter cited as SE.

15 Jacques Lacan, "The Signification of the Phallus," Ecrits (New York: Norton, 1977) 290. Hereafter cited as E. Throughout this paper, I argue on the purely psychoanalytic level within Lacan's theory.

16 Jacques Lacan, "Intervention on Transference," Feminine Sexuality, ed. Juliet Mitchell & Jacqueline Rose (New York: Norton, 1985) 68. The shift is thus away from the female genitalia (the "real thing" which

psychoanalysis constantly "represses") to a simulation of the phallus.

17 In The Medium is the Massage (New York: Bantam, 1967), Marshall McLuhan comments on a photograph of two crossed female legs in net stockings: "when information is brushed against information," showing the double definition of the erotics of the code and the code of erotics. Baudrillard sees a similar convergence: "within the general equivalent of the phallus-cult, the body has turned into a complete sign-system, steered by operative models" (SE 175).

18 Roland Barthes, S/Z (New York: Hill & Wang, 1974) 112, my emphasis. Hereafter cited as S/Z.

19 The pun on délire in French (it means "delirium" but, as de-lire, "of reading") is here especially apt. Lace indeed produces an intricately woven "erotic text."

20 In the analysis of "Little Hans," Freud had already stressed the fact that the phallus had served the child as a clue to the problem of the animateness/inanimateness of objects. The shift from the human to object to machine can thus proceed especially well along these lines.

21 In Mythologies (Fragmore: Granada, 1973), Barthes describes exactly these "chinoise" dynamics.

22 For Lacan, the male as well as the female narcissistic object is a "heteroclite mannequin, a baroque doll, a trophy of limbs." (Schriften III [Olten u. Freiburg im Breisgau: Walter, 1980] 69). Relating directly to his notion of the mirror-stage, which describes the infant's relation to its mirror-image and the resulting mis/apprehension caused by the oscillation between recognition and mis-recognition of this image, these artifacts are "statues" in every person's psychic landscape. It is only from the female perspective, however, that this "doll" overlaps with the "phallic doll" which she herself becomes within the sexual arena.

23 Thomas Pynchon, The Crying of Lot 49 (1966; New York: Perennial, 1986) 129. Hereafter cited as L49.

24 "La Jarretière" evokes again the scene in which Mélanie had contemplated her body in the overhead mirror and is related to the line between thigh and nylon constituted by the garter-belt.

25 Here it is again, the juxtaposition of cloth and skin, inanimate object and body, into which the fetish-function is quite literally inscribed.

26 One is reminded of the shootout-scene in a gallery of mirrors in Orson Wells's The Lady from

Shanghai, of its play with differing planes of reality and of the emphasis it places on the difficulty of shooting at the right image, the real object.

27 Pynchon gives the Freudian reference himself: "Had they [. . .] read [. . .] in the new science of the mind, they would have known that certain fetishes never have to be touched or handled at all; only seen, for there to be complete fulfillment" (V 408). The immediate reference here is to the famous "Glanz auf der Nase," which really was a "glance of the nose." Freud, "Fetischismus," 383.

28 The gaze may contain in itself the object a of the Lacanian algebra. Jacques Lacan, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (New York: Norton, 1981) 76.

29 Again, Pynchon gives the Freudian reference himself: "Lesbianism, we are prone to think in this Freudian period of history, stems from self-love projected onto some other human object" (V 407). He might be referring to any one, or several, of various Freudian texts, e.g.: "Zur Einführung des Narzissmus," in Studienausgabe, Bd. 3 ("On Narcissism: an Introduction," Standard Edition, Vol 14): bei Perversen und Homosexuellen . . . dass sie ihr späteres Liebesobjekt nicht nach dem Vorbild der Mutter wählen, sondern nach dem ihrer eigenen Person" (54); "with perverts and homosexuals . . . because they choose their future loved object not after the model of their mother, but after their own person." In "Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci," Studienausgabe, Bd. 10 ("Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood," Standard Edition, Vol 11), Freud first writes a similar statement: "und seine eigene Person zum Vorbild nimmt, in dessen Ähnlichkeit er seine neuen Liebesobjekte auswählt . . . er findet seine Liebesobjekte auf dem Wege des Narzissmus" (125); "and he takes his own person as a model, in whose similarity he chooses to find his future loved object . . . he finds his loved object along the route of narcissism." He then combines it with two other themes that are of importance in this chapter: "Die fetischartige Verehrung des weiblichen Fusses und Schuhes scheint den fuss nur als Ersatzsymbol für das einst verehrte, seither vermisste Glied des Weibes zu nehmen; die 'Zopfabschneider' spielen, ohne es zu wissen, die Rolle von Personen, die am weiblichen Genitale den Akt der Kastration ausführen" (122); "the fetish-like veneration of the female foot and the shoe seems to take the foot mainly as a supplementary symbol for the once venerated and since then missed female genital; the "braid-cutters" play, without being aware of it themselves, the role of people who perform the act of castration on the female genital."

[30] In Gravity's Rainbow, Pynchon has a similarly "harsh" image of this relation. During an orgy on the Anubis: "A girl with an enormous glass dildo inside which baby piranhas are swimming in some kind of decadent lavender medium amuses herself between the buttocks of a stout transvestite in lace stockings and a dyed sable coat." Thomas Pynchon, Gravity's Rainbow (New York: Viking, 1973), 468.

[31] For Lacan, the law-of-the-father denotes basically the male position (phallic instance) of control and authority.

[32] For Baudrillard, ambivalence is a concept outside of semiotic reach. It is not a net of connotations but a more basic, structural ambivalence of the objects of the world themselves which in fact challenges the authority of the semiotic codings. Jean Baudrillard, "Toward a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign," For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign (St. Louis: Telos, 1981) 149.

[33] Jean Baudrillard, "Fetishism and Ideology," For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign, 92.

[34] It has also created a space in which Pynchon can stage "orgies of the signifier," fetish-countries of increasing complexity in which his prose can wander at will.

[35] Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Scribner's, 1958).

[36] In Chapter eleven of V., "Confessions of Fausto Maijstral," Pynchon shows the relation of the engineer not to psychoanalysis but to poetics. Dnubietna, the poet, turns around into "Anteibund(t)" (Latin for "they will progress"), the engineer of empty progress, who ends up building roads in America. The counter-weight is Fausto, fragmented humanist, who tries to re-create the "lost" unity in his poetry. As so often, Pynchon plays out these two extremes against each other and creates a sort of "third term."

[37] Roland Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text (New York: Hill & Wang, 1975) 27.

[38] This aspect relates Pynchon's poetics to Lacan's ontology. Whereas the strictly psychoanalytic aspect of Lacanian theory (its phallocratic structuration) is opposed to Pynchon's ideas, his more general topography (especially the function of the Lacanian Real within the triad of Imaginary, Symbolic and Real) might well provide a useful reference for a reading of Pynchon's constant "de/constructions" of his own texts.