

Richard Pearce Replies

How great to receive your letter out of the blue, arguing, informing, opening up new perspectives on physics and on Pynchon.

Actually, I have a hard time keeping up on modern physics as well as literature since my literature students go blank when I even begin to think about physics, and most scientists I know won't read Pynchon, or any modern literature for that matter. And they keep insisting that the study of subatomic particles doesn't tell us anything about ordinary experience--though Heisenberg argues to the contrary.

I don't want to argue that modern physics helps us interpret the world we live in or that Pynchon was influenced more by quantum mechanics than he was by thermodynamics, etc. (I dealt with that and other aspects of modern physics, as well as Henry Adams, in the introduction to my Critical Essays on Thomas Pynchon), though I really appreciate what you do with entropy. What I think is important is that some of the same impulses govern science and literature--or, to put it in a way that's more fashionable and perhaps more precise, they share a similar discourse. As I'm discovering in my work on a book called The Politics of Narration, similar discourses share similar epistemological, social, and indeed political assumptions.

Thanks so much for your thoughtful letter. If you ever get to Boston, I hope you'll give us a call.

--Wheaton College