

# Subliminal Cues: Psychoanalysis and Entropy in Pynchon's Novels

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I

In one of Robert Gernhardt's humorous sketches, a man calls on Sigmund Freud to consult him and tells him about a strange dream. In this dream, his id expressed libidinal urges which the superego tried to repress and the ego finally sublimated. Freud claims that the interpretation of the dream is quite simple: the man's id was repressed by the superego when it expressed libidinal urges which the ego finally sublimated. The patient rejects this interpretation, declaring that it is not an interpretation but the dream itself. Freud gets upset and sends away the patient, who is thenceforth tormented by a terrible inferiority complex (140-41).

Gernhardt's sketches do not necessarily call for a serious reading, but this one does raise a valid point: what happens to the interpretation of an otherwise deeply hidden structure once that deep structure is transferred to the surface? When Freud began to write about psychoanalysis, he faced severe resistance on various fronts, ranging from the ridicule of his colleagues to the moral scorn of a bourgeois society unwilling even to consider the possibility that humanity shares more with the animal world than some physiological features. Nietzsche's dictum that man rests in ignorance suspended in dreams on the back of a tiger (376) was provocative enough without being reformulated as the basis for psychoanalytical, that is, medical treatment.

But by now things have changed considerably. The Western world and the United States in particular seem saturated with psychoanalytical knowledge and terminology. Formerly intimate and embarrassing personal traits and experiences have entered fashionable parlance, while the principles of psychoanalysis have become clichés in amateur diagnosis. Possibly as a consequence of this development, many authors have professed an open scorn for Freud and his theory. Vladimir Nabokov (who may or may not have been Pynchon's teacher at Cornell), for instance, attacked Freudianism as "one of the vilest deceits practiced by people on themselves and on others" (23-24), and listed Freudian symbolism as an example of *poshlost*, which comprises

"vulgar clichés . . . bogus profundities, crude, moronic and dishonest pseudo-literature" (101). Nevertheless, psychoanalysis has become a fairly common literary topic, explored and satirized by authors as different as Philip Roth and Philip K. Dick, the latter of whom introduced the portable computer-shrink as early as 1964, in *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the analyst has turned into a stock item in the vast store of literary clichés.

References to psychoanalysis abound in Pynchon's works. The most obvious example is probably the name Oedipa in *The Crying of Lot 49*;<sup>2</sup> the link to psychoanalysis is further stressed by the introduction of her analyst. In *V.*, the name of the psychodontist, Eigenvalue, has a psychoanalytical ring to it. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, the names Weissmann and Thanatz, the latter first encountered on the ship *Anubis*, obviously allude to Freud's death instinct (Plater 247);<sup>3</sup> but then this is a rather trivial discovery, as the text is rife with images of death, including a literal image of the collective death instinct: "Living inside the System is like riding across the country in a bus driven by a maniac bent on suicide" (GR 412). *Vineland* seems to lack such obvious allusions to psychoanalysis, but frequent references to the Yuroks indicate that Leif Erikson, the mythical discoverer of "Vinland the Good," may be far less important than Erik H. Erikson, the author of *Childhood and Society* and the well-known if inaccurate study of the Yuroks it contains.<sup>4</sup> Once this connection is made, other features fall into the pattern, especially *Vineland's* depiction of the American family. Frenesi Gates, the mother of the novel's heroine, exemplifies Erikson's typical Mom, a cold, dominant and rejecting mother, while Zoyd Wheeler fits the image of her common counterpart: he is dominated by even the absent Frenesi; he is the one who offers tenderness and understanding to their child, Prairie, but even so, he is ultimately disappointing as a father (cf. Erikson 261). Pynchon presents the concept of Momism earlier, in fact, in *Gravity's Rainbow's* "mother conspiracy" (505), a grotesque instance of the operational paranoia working on most of his characters, while he reverses and parodies the Oedipus complex in the image of "Pernicious Pop," the "typical American teenager's own father, trying episode after episode to kill his son" (674).<sup>5</sup>

Pynchon's texts not only offer a multitude of allusions to psychoanalysis, but spell them out so clearly that they simply cannot be missed. Thus, a psychoanalytical approach to the novels faces the problem that the texts constantly exceed expectations, that everything seems already said and readily apparent on the surface, but that it remains difficult to determine whether the allusions and motifs function merely as clichés or parodies, or as serious arguments within the

novels' thematic framework. Accordingly, in his fascinating 1986 paper approaching *V.* from the perspective of Lacan and Deleuze and Guattari, Hanjo Berressem could rely on a multitude of quotations from the novel to confirm his analysis; and, indeed, occasionally the literary work corresponds to the theoretical texts in some detail, and presents—and anticipates—their arguments in narrative form. But four years later, Deleuze and Guattari appear as the rather obscure authors of an imaginary, “indispensable *Italian Wedding Fake Book*” in *Vineland* (97).

I want to argue here that the references in Pynchon's novels to psychoanalysis serve, at least to some extent, to modify and qualify an altogether different thematic context, the particular use Pynchon makes of the concept of entropy. Those references thus gain some of their momentum from their potential to work within a network of signification in which every position is circumscribed and defined not only by its own inherent meaning but also by every other aspect of the text which might alter, defer or undermine its actual content. My intention is not to contradict other psychoanalytical readings of Pynchon's texts, but rather to add one more to the number of interpretations in a perennial process of accumulation.

## II

Taking into account that Pynchon is obviously rather well versed in psychoanalytical literature and theory, and that a chief concern throughout his novels is the problem of entropy in thermodynamics and its counterpart in information theory, we might expect psychoanalysis to offer itself as an ideal metaphor for informational negentropy, as it heals with words: that is, a disorder is treated and cured by communication and information only.<sup>6</sup> But the psychoanalyst in Pynchon's novels is invariably introduced as a grotesque figure, almost affirming Karl Kraus's notion that psychoanalysis may well turn out to be the ailment it pretends to be the cure for. The psychodontist Dr. Eigenvalue in *V.*, Dr. Hilarius in *Lot 49*, and Dr. Edwin Treacle, “that most Freudian of psychical researchers,” in *Gravity's Rainbow* (85) are clearly classified and ridiculed by their names. And while Freud is not mentioned in *Vineland*, the satirical *nomen est omen* may also apply to Dr. Dennis Deeply, head of NEVER (the National Endowment for Video Education and Rehabilitation), a clinic for the psychological treatment of television addicts.

Yet none of those characters is quite a psychoanalyst; the caricatures of the shrink are themselves no shrinks. Especially in the cases of Eigenvalue and Hilarius, we have to look at the departures

from the traditional image, or even cliché, of the analyst to appreciate the use Pynchon makes of psychoanalytical theory.

Eigenvalue is primarily a dentist—possibly echoing Lacan’s use of “dentists” in the seminar of 1954–1955 for those who have a simple and unproblematic concept of the *I/je* (6)<sup>7</sup>—who merely fuses the terminologies of dentistry and psychoanalysis as a fashionable jargon:

Back around the turn of the century, psychoanalysis had usurped from the priesthood the role of father-confessor. Now, it seemed, the analyst in his turn was about to be deposed by, of all people, the dentist. . . . Psychodontia, like its predecessors, developed a jargon: you called neurosis “malocclusion,” oral, anal and genital stages “deciduous dentition,” id “pulp” and superego “enamel.” (153)

The narrator introduces the new jargon as “little more than a change in nomenclature,” but this is not quite correct, as a rather important psychoanalytical item seems to be missing. While the id and the superego have counterparts in Eigenvalue’s terminology, the I or ego is conspicuously absent. It does not remain so, as the passage continues:

The pulp is soft and laced with little blood vessels and nerves. The enamel, mostly calcium, is inanimate. These were the it and I psychodontia had to deal with. The hard, lifeless I covered up the warm, pulsing it; protecting and sheltering. (153)

The I and the superego are not only ideally fused; they are both defined as the lifeless, the inanimate. The object of the psychodontist’s treatment is to support and repair the enamel or, if necessary, to extract the whole tooth and replace it with an artificial and inanimate denture. In the terms of psychodontia, the ailment consists of a corrosion of the protective shield and a consequent unwelcome expression of the living matter beneath, which has to be firmly stopped. The transformation of the animate into the inanimate ultimately takes the place of analytical treatment. The point is driven home by the “showpiece” of Eigenvalue’s office, “a set of false dentures, each tooth a different precious metal” (152), an object of perfect beauty for Eigenvalue, who remarks, “‘Like Cinderella’s prince . . . I’m still looking for the jaw to fit these’” (154). Eventually Stencil steals the dentures, intending them as a present for V., as one more item of inanimate matter to be incorporated into her body.

The tendency of the animate to progress toward the inanimate is, of course, a main theme of V., and it is presented in a multitude of images of which the psychodontist is just one. But since this tendency

toward the inanimate is usually identified in Pynchon criticism with the inevitable and irreversible process leading to an increase in entropy and the final heat-death, a look at the idea of entropy as Freud employs it might help us understand not only the rather weird and unusual character of the psychodentist but also Pynchon's particular use, and significant alterations, of the concept of entropy.

In his study of entropy in postwar American literature, Peter Freese gives a brief account of Freud's assimilation of entropy as a metaphor for mental inertia and "the irreversibility of psychic processes" in the "Wolf Man" case and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Freese claims that "in [Freud's] later work this psychic desire for equalization and entropy becomes coterminous with his central notion of the 'Todestrieb'" (118). The juxtaposition of entropy and death has a long pedigree: among those who saw the inevitable path toward death as a manifestation of the entropic principle in a biological context were Erwin Schrödinger (113) and Norbert Wiener (44–47). But a problem lurks behind this simple equating of Freud's notion and the physical law of nature. Death and the state of inanimateness desired by the death instinct are not necessarily the same: death indeed obeys the irreversible rule of time's arrow, while the death instinct is directed toward a return to a previous state of being. Freud writes of instincts in general:

*It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces; that is, it is a kind of organic elasticity, or, to put it another way, the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life. (BPP 43; Freud's emphasis)*

Later he adds, "on our hypothesis the ego-instincts arise from the coming to life of inanimate matter and seek to restore the inanimate state" (52). Bernfeld and Feitelberg make a similar point when they suggest that the simple identification of entropy and the death instinct neglects to take the problem of time into account: "For with the death instinct the historical character of all instincts plays an important role, and Freud holds outright that this instinct represents the striving of organic substance to return to the *earlier* state of inanimate matter" (66; authors' emphasis).<sup>8</sup> Once the historical element in the death instinct and ego-instincts in general is accepted,<sup>9</sup> one conclusion is obvious concerning the tendency these instincts show in relation to entropy: they are not directed toward an increase of disorder and dissolution but, truly conservatively, toward an increase of order, albeit order of an inanimate kind.

In Freud's theory, Eros and Thanatos, the life and death instincts, are opposed principles (BPP 63–64); the life or sexual instinct troubles or threatens the desired state of rest. In consequence, one more instinct is introduced as the guardian of a kind of equilibrium which, in contrast to entropic equilibrium, can be reached or desired before the energy within the system has been completely depleted—the destruction instinct: "This is the supremely conservative instinct which aims at preservation of the state of sleep—narcissistic repose—which feels and treats the world as an interruption to be escaped and annihilated" (Bernfeld and Feitelberg 76). The death instinct, directed toward rest and an equilibrium of order (which cannot exist in physical nature), is accompanied by an opposed instinct bent on destruction and thus an increase of disorder.<sup>10</sup>

The analogy with the principle of entropy is striking. While the death instinct aims at the return to an earlier state of inanimateness, which necessarily implies a reversal of biological processes and ultimately of time, death itself by no means contravenes the arrow of time and the increase of entropy.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the desire for a reversal of entropic processes may lead to a temporary local decrease of entropy, but only on the premise that overall entropy does indeed increase and, again, that the arrow of time will not be contravened. The tendency toward a prior form of lifelessness equals a conservative tendency toward order. This is precisely the human condition as Pynchon depicts it. In his novels, human society is constantly threatened by a collective and individual tendency toward organization and order which, since new order can be created only by an increase of entropy elsewhere, is always accompanied by death and destruction on a larger scale.

This is where Wiener and his view of life and death enter. In *Slow Learner*, Pynchon claims that his early story "Entropy" was strongly influenced by Wiener's popular text,<sup>12</sup> and critics have been quick to find parallels between the approaches to the problem of entropy in Pynchon's fiction and in Wiener's nonfiction. But this assumption of parallelism is premature. The allusions to Freud's concept of the death instinct as depicted above help show to what extent Pynchon accepts and makes use of the physical principle of entropy but at the same time rejects Wiener's conclusions concerning possible ways to counteract the inevitable progress toward disorder and universal heat-death.

Wiener claims that "such words as life, purpose, and soul are grossly inadequate to precise scientific thinking" (44), and argues that there is no reason machines, especially life-imitating automata, "may not resemble human beings in representing pockets of decreasing entropy in a framework in which the large entropy tends to increase"

(45–46). Wiener propagates the branch of science he helped create, cybernetics, but frequently draws his examples of negentropic machines from the vast array of military machinery, and this bias occasionally culminates in a kind of celebration of war's contribution to the invention of new machinery and in the claim that "a new war will almost inevitably see the automatic age in full swing within less than five years" (218).

Such words as life and soul are, of course, highly significant in literature, and it is hard to imagine that Wiener's unself-conscious juxtaposition of life and machines—including military machinery—could have found favor among authors in the sixties, particularly Pynchon, who, following up on the prognoses of Henry Adams, has always been concerned with the progress of mechanical power and the simultaneously increasing speed of destruction in the course of this century, with negentropy and entropy.<sup>13</sup> Thus, in Pynchon's texts, a fascination with machines is always seen as one more step toward the inanimate. This motif is repeated over and over in *V.*, for example: in Rachel Owlglass's sexual passion for her car; in Fergus Mixolydian's becoming "an extension of the TV set" (56); in Bongo-Shaftsbury's claim to be an "'electro-mechanical doll'" (80); in *V.*'s incorporation of an accumulation of inanimate material into her body; in Benny Profane's dream of an "all-electronic woman."<sup>14</sup> These instances drive home the point that all that is gained by the fascination with life-imitating machines is one more piece of negentropic death. The two dummies SHOCK and SHROUD represent the ultimate achievement on the way to life- (and death-)imitating machinery. SHROUD claims that he and SHOCK are "what you and everybody will be someday," and points out that the process may well be self-initiated: "If somebody else doesn't do it to you, you'll do it to yourselves" (286).

But negentropic machinery is only one instance of lethal order depicted by Pynchon. His texts abound with distinctly less than optimistic images of order which are frequently the object of a reluctant but irresistible fascination: for example, various counterforces' movements toward organization,<sup>15</sup> the highly organized V-2 rocket in *Gravity's Rainbow*, and Frenesi's sexual obsession with uniforms in *Vineland*.

Accordingly, Weissmann, already a supporter of Hitler in 1922, is engaged in a negentropic activity in the Herero episode of *V.* He reconstructs (or constructs) a garbled message, which turns out to be the name of the addressee and the first proposition of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*: "Die Welt ist alles was der Fall ist" (278). And what is the case in the novel is the ever increasing number of dead Hereros, killed to protect the tiny enclave of proto-Fascist colonialists. In Pynchon's

texts, diametrically opposed tendencies are fused: a psychological bias toward rigid order (ranging from fascism to negentropic machinery) is balanced by an ever increasing amount of waste; the death instinct and the destruction instinct work hand in hand.

Is there, then, no alternative to the reign of death? There is, and it ties in with Freud's instincts. The death instinct and the destruction instinct are, to some extent, opposed to each other, as explained above, but similarly directed toward the inanimate: "the city is only the desert . . . in disguise" (V 83). But Eros, the life instinct, remains in the excluded middle. Biological processes, including procreation, oscillate between order and disorder; they dissolve order but constantly create new order in a process which may ultimately be terminated but still remains our best bet for at least buying some time.<sup>16</sup> Life takes place at the interface between entropy and order. In consequence, entropy can take on distinctly positive connotations in Pynchon's work (for example, in the counterforces before the tendency toward order begins to take hold),<sup>17</sup> and occasionally the spontaneous emergence of order out of chaos is hailed as an "anarchist miracle" (CL 120).

### III

Freud's concept of the death instinct helps clarify the specific use Pynchon makes of the quite different but metaphorically related principle of entropy. In *Lot 49*, psychoanalysis is used in a satirical context but is nevertheless used to convey concepts which are alien to it and yet in accord with its basic principles. Dr. Hilarius, the "shrink or psychotherapist" (16), is introduced as a menace rather than a healer when he calls Oedipa Maas in the middle of the night and tries to talk her into taking part in an "experiment he was helping the community hospital run on effects of LSD-25, mescaline, psilocybin, and related drugs on a large sample of suburban housewives" (17). Little wonder Oedipa does not exactly trust his medication or his therapeutic sincerity. But apart from the stereotype of the bored suburban-American housewife, there is little to suggest why Oedipa might have started psychotherapy in the first place.

When the doctor resurfaces near the end of chapter 5, he himself is literally insane. Suffering from what he calls "relative paranoia" (136), he has locked himself in his office, trying to hide from Israeli agents who are supposed to be hunting him down. He reveals to Oedipa, who has gained access to his office, that he was a doctor at Buchenwald, where he "worked . . . on experimentally induced insanity" (137), but that after the war he tried to become "a good enough Freudian" as an atonement: "I tried . . . to submit myself to



that man, to the ghost of that cantankerous Jew. Tried to cultivate a faith in the literal truth of everything he wrote, even the idiocies and contradictions. It was the least I could have done, nicht wahr?" (134). The introduction of the concentration camp and of the experiments performed there ties in with the motif of the inhuman use of human beings—central in this novel as well as in *V.*—and with the temporary maintenance of a rigid and perverse order by an increase of death.

In this context, the name Hilarius for a former Nazi doctor may appear to be only a cruel joke, but it is not. The name makes the shrink the perfect antagonist of the principle bearing the diametrically opposite name in the novel, Tristero (tristful: sad, melancholy). Critics usually identify Tristero with the alarming aspects of entropy and the dissolution of order,<sup>18</sup> but this interpretation neglects the hope which balances the sinister attributes of the anarchic counterforce. In addition, Tristero not only shows tendencies toward order, as indicated by the various schisms in the course of which factions of "the organization" (158) may "merge with [the] old enemy Thurn and Taxis" (164); it also causes paranoia in Oedipa, the mental state in which an artificial order is superimposed on every perception. In contrast, the LSD Hilarius gives Oedipa's husband causes him to lose his identity, making him "less himself and more generic" (140), while the doctor's own history is governed by the menacing order of Fascism. The opposite principles each carry a grain of the other. Yin and yang. They are complementary.

Nils Bohr chose the motto "Contraria sunt complementa" for his coat of arms when he was knighted, and this same principle inheres in the Tristero/Hilarius opposition. The names allude to the epigraph of Giordano Bruno's *Candelaio*—"In tristitia hilaris, in hilaritate tristis" [In sadness there is laughter, in laughter sadness]—and thus to the Renaissance equivalent of the principle of complementarity, the *coincidentia oppositorum*. An earlier personification of this principle can be found in James Joyce's contrary twins, who appear as Tristopher and Hilary in the "Prankquean" episode of *Finnegans Wake* (21–23), so the likelihood of Pynchon's familiarity with the allusive potential of the names should not be dismissed. In *Lot 49*, Dr. Hilarius would accuse Oedipa "of using subliminal cues in the environment to guide her to a particular person" (84); within the text, his own name serves as just that, a subliminal cue to guide the reader to a particular allusion and motif.

The allusion to *Il Candelaio* or *Finnegans Wake* may still seem a little too obscure to guide readers, but it is only one in a system of clues leading in the same direction. Indeed, the name of the heroine may well fuse the same opposites again: the obvious allusion to psychoanalysis and the shrink is balanced by her husband's

abbreviation of her name, “Oed” (12, 16, 141–44), the German equivalent of “triste”: dull or dismal.<sup>19</sup> The significance of psychoanalytical concepts resurfaces here, for it is in the language of the unconscious that opposites fuse. This phenomenon exemplifies William Empson’s seventh type of ambiguity: “the most ambiguous that can be conceived, [which] occurs when the two meanings of the word, the two values of the ambiguity, are the two opposite meanings defined by the context, so that the total effect is to show a fundamental division in the writer’s mind” (217).<sup>20</sup> Pynchon’s reader is led to this aspect of the text by the various subliminal cues, by the necessity to follow up on the multiple intertextual references in the attempt to create a coherent meaning from the conflicting messages. The fundamental division is not in the writer’s mind, but artfully implanted in the reader’s—and in the heroine’s, for at the end of the novel, Oedipa sees herself in a hopeless dilemma:

waiting for a symmetry of choices to break down, to go skew. She had heard all about excluded middles; they were bad shit, to be avoided; and how had it ever happened here, with the chances once so good for diversity? For it was now like walking among matrices of a great digital computer, the zeroes and ones twinned above, hanging like balanced mobiles right and left, ahead, thick, maybe endless. (181)

The dilemma she faces can be resolved only by realizing that, like Oedipus, she has to confront herself, that the opposites are, in fact, complementary and that the excluded middle, her own position between the polarities, is of necessity where the opposites merge, where order and chaos, creation and waste, information and noise are inseparably interwoven—in the mind of the observer, in the act of reading, in the language of the poet, and in the continuous if ultimately terminated process of life.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The back cover of the Vintage edition of *The Three Stigmata* quotes an article from the *Village Voice* calling Dick “a poor man’s Pynchon.” That insults both authors. Dick’s books are perfectly able to stand on their own feet, while Pynchon would probably not be happy to be called “a rich man’s Dick.”

<sup>2</sup>The return of some repressed trauma may also be evoked and parodied by the name of the dead father-figure and former lover of Oedipa, Pierce Inverarity. The name alludes not only to the famous stamp collector or to male sexual activity (cf. Freese 533), but also to Laios, who pierced Oedipus’s feet.

Oedipa now drives an Impala (impale = pierce); thus her modern means of transportation bears a linguistic trace of the injury, and she almost literally travels in the name of the father.

<sup>3</sup>Freud cites August Weismann and his theories about death several times in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (54–59); there is some evidence that Weismann's name was occasionally spelled Weissmann (Löther 43). Among Weismann's concepts mentioned by Freud is the suggestion that death might be a result of the evolutionary process, "a matter of expediency, a manifestation of adaptation to the external conditions of life" (BPP 55).

<sup>4</sup>Hartmut Lutz has informed me that Erikson's depiction of the Yuroks in *Childhood and Society* bears little or no resemblance to the actual Yurok people. For an account of Erikson's study and the Yuroks in *Vineland*, see Becke and Vanderbeke.

<sup>5</sup>The idea of a reverse Oedipus complex is not unique to Pynchon. The experience of an adolescent generation being sent off to fight—and possibly die—in Vietnam doubtless had some significance for the development of this image in America. In Europe, Pier Paolo Pasolini worked on a similar idea in *Affabulazione*.

<sup>6</sup>Peter Freese argues that American authors who deal with the concept of entropy celebrate the negentropic potential of their own craft, imaginative writing (418, 452, 475, etc.). I do not necessarily want to contradict Freese, but it seems odd to me that none of the authors he discusses makes use of psychoanalysis as a metaphor for informational negentropy to drive that point home.

<sup>7</sup>It is difficult to assume that Pynchon had any knowledge of Lacan or his seminars as early as 1963, when *V.* was published; after all, book 2 of the seminars was first published in France in 1978. But then who can tell what Pynchon may have come across by chance or interest. It may be no more than yet another coincidence that in this seminar the psychoanalytical relevance of concepts like energy and entropy, machines and cybernetics is also discussed (cf., for example, 77–83).

<sup>8</sup>Bernfeld and Feitelberg also point to the fact that, according to Freud, death and dying (with the exception of suicide) are not to be confused with the death instinct: "Freud has constantly asserted that dying and death cannot be instinctual aims of the id" (74).

<sup>9</sup>Bernfeld and Feitelberg tend to ignore the historical element after having pointed it out, as they are chiefly interested in equating entropy and the death instinct. Lacan severely criticizes this equation as an absurdity, and points out that the symbolic order intervenes and imposes itself and its structure on man and human experience (115–16).

<sup>10</sup>It is difficult—and perhaps even unnecessary—to keep the death instinct and the destruction instinct precisely separate. Freud sometimes treated them as synonymous or as different aspects of the same instinct. He wrote about the

death instinct that it seeks to bring living substance and its larger units “back to their primæval, inorganic state” (CD 65–66), but also that “a portion of that instinct is diverted towards the external world and comes to light as an instinct of aggressiveness and destructiveness” (66). Thus the death instinct seeks to regain a former state of rest and inanimation for the self: it is negentropic in its desire. This desire is troubled by the life or sexual instinct as well as by all kinds of interferences. The destruction instinct or the destructive aspect of the death instinct then seeks to eliminate these intrusions so the state of rest can be preserved. Being destructive and directed against the external world, it is entropic.

<sup>11</sup>In *V.*, the reversal of time is frequently presented by the mirror image of a clock, “time and reverse-time, co-existing, cancelling one another exactly out” (46). The image is not an optimistic one.

<sup>12</sup>“I happened to read Norbert Wiener’s *The Human Use of Human Beings* . . . at about the same time as *The Education of Henry Adams* and the ‘theme’ of the story is mostly derivative of what these two men had to say” (SL 13).

<sup>13</sup>The most striking image for this process is “the System” of *Gravity’s Rainbow*, “removing from the rest of the World these vast quantities of energy to keep its own tiny desperate fraction showing a profit: and not only most of humanity—most of the World, animal, vegetable and mineral, is laid waste in the process” (412).

<sup>14</sup>“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 385). “Remove and replace” is Profane’s version of Stencil’s “Approach and avoid” (55): both express the desire for an inanimate, mechanical woman, and together they form a chiasmus.

<sup>15</sup>The eponymous “secret integration” of Pynchon’s 1964 short story ends when the children give in to their need to remain within their families (SL 191–93). Tristero, in *Lot 49*, allegedly undergoes two schisms—in 1645 and 1789—losing members to Thurn and Taxis (163–65, 172). In *Gravity’s Rainbow*, the Counterforce ends up as an organization with an official spokesman giving an interview to the *Wall Street Journal* (738–39). In *Vineland*, the youth movement harbors “unacknowledged desires” for order and the “need . . . to stay children forever, safe inside some extended national Family” (269).

<sup>16</sup>In contrast, the orgy on the *Anubis* consists of only sterile sexual acts (GR 467–68) and thus resembles the Empty Ones’ program of racial suicide through a strictly non-procreative sexuality (317–18).

<sup>17</sup>Compare Ken Kesey’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. Nurse Ratched’s ward is depicted as a place of black, humming machinery, of artificial and life-stifling order, while she herself is introduced as a “tractor” with “machinery inside” (10). R. P. McMurphy rebels against and tries to dissolve the rigid discipline. He can thus be seen as an entropic force that, by destroying

order, sets free the energy required for a renewal. For further examples of technological imagery in Kesey and a distinctly different interpretation, see Freese 368–74.

<sup>18</sup>Freese, on the other hand, reads Tristero on the cybernetic level as “one of those anti-entropic enclaves that Wiener talks about” (550).

<sup>19</sup>James Fanning has pointed out to me that the pronunciation of “Oed” in British English is close to that of “id,” the vowel being simply a little more closed. This pun, which puts the id into Oedipus, should not go unmentioned.

<sup>20</sup>For Empson’s discussion of Freud, the principle of condensation, and analogous phenomena in “primitive” languages, see 218–21.

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