Univerzita Karlova v Praze / Charles University in Prague

Filosofická fakulta / Faculty of Arts

Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur /
Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Filologie / Philology
Americká literatura a studia / American Literature and Studies

V í t V a n í č e k

Territory and Deterritorialization in Works of Thomas Pynchon: Space in the Post-Modern Novel

Teritorium a deteritorializace v dílech Thomase Pynchona: Prostor v postmoderním románu

Disertační práce / Doctoral Dissertation

Vedoucí práce / Supervisor – Erik Sherman Roraback, D. Phil. (Oxon.)

2012

Prohlašuji, že jsem disertační práci napsal samostatně s využitím pouze uvedených a řádně citovaných pramenů a literatury a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

Vít Vaníček

ABSTRACT (IN CZECH LANGUAGE)

Tato práce přináší interpretivní literární analýzu románů Thomase Pynchona, které pojímá do jednoho celku jako všezahrnující „dílo" (*oeuvre*). Ústředním východiskem práce je sledování jednotícího prvku *použití prostoru* v textu. Tento jednotící prvek je stvrzen rozvojem tropů, motivů a témat zapojených do vybudování literárního prostoru, literárního prostoru jako světa stvořeného pro postavy a prostorový diskurz vymezující epistemologii postav. Tato práce poukazuje na společný jmenovatel řečeného vývoje: autorský hlas zdůrazňující rostoucí naléhavost s jakou je etický postoj jednotlivce určující pro svět jako společenskou realitu.

Metodologie této práce se opírá o kombinaci interpretivního čtení založeného na spolupráci čtenáře s textem a užití termínů půjčených z vybraných filosofických pramenů. Spolupráce s textem se zakládá na restitutivní (otevřené) interpretaci, vymezené tím, co text skutečně může podpořit (koncept textu jako „líného stroje" Umberta Eca) a pojetí „malého světa" v literatuře Lubomíra Doležela. Filosofická inspirace začíná pojetím lidské epistemologie bytí ve světě jako záležící na fyzické existenci v prostoru (Maurice Merleau-Ponty). Potom se metodologie této práce vyrovnává s konceptem Bytí Martina Heideggera přinášející starost o toto bytí a o svět. Důsledky starosti Bytí jsou pak diskutovány na úrovni života jedince s ostatními lidmi (Jean-Luc Nancy). Diskuse pak pokračuje na úrovni společnosti, kde sleduje argumentaci přivlastnění prostoru a mechanismů kontroly (Henriho Lefebre, Edward Soja a Gilles Deleuze a Félix Guattari). Stát jako typ společenské organizace je pojímán coby dynamický systém, což přináší specifický výklad jeho chování jako celku, založeného na principech sebeorganizace (Humberto Maturana a Francisco Varela). Mechanismus sebeudržování je určen principem entropie (Rudolf Arnheim a Geert Hofstede).

V díle Thomase Pynchona je čtenář svědkem vývoje postav a literárního prostoru: tato práce uvádí pro sledování tohoto vývoje koncept *tělesné investice* v prostoru. Jeho postavy nabývají ve fabuli zřejmější výraz, dichotomie mezi prostorovými diskurzy se vyjasňuje, a důraz na soužití jedince s druhými roste na naléhavosti. Aby zdůraznil etický aspekt lidského bytí ve světě, a aby mohl diskutovat protiklad synchronního bytí-skrze-druhého a diachronního bytí-ke-smrti, Pynchon mění literární prostor a jeho užití ve svých románech.

Za tímto účelem Pynchon poukazuje na dichotomii mezi skutečným a imaginárním prostorem a diskurzy, jež epistemologie užívá k tomu, aby mezi nimi vytvořila „smysl". Tato práce vysvětluje vliv moci na tyto diskurzy skrze koncepty *vrstveného prostoru* (jako produktu teritorializace) a *hladkého prostoru* (jenž předchází procesu teritorializace, či je produktem procesu de-teritorializace). Tato práce identifikuje v Pynchonově díle autorský vývoj *skutečných či imaginárních konceptů*, které produkují systémické mechanismy sebeorganizace ve vrstveném prostoru na straně jedné, a *imaginárních dějišť* produkovaných odporem ke kontrole v hladkém prostoru na straně druhé. Dále tato práce pokračuje analýzou změn epistemologie postav a užitím prostoru v jednotlivých románech. Závěrem této analýzy je poznatek, že Pynchon užívá výše zmíněné „typy" prostoru se vzrůstající intenzitou, jež se snoubí s rostoucím důrazem na etický aspekt lidského bytí ve světě. Pynchon volá po etické zodpovědnosti.

Tato práce doporučuje sledování tohoto vývoje v díle k lepšímu čtení a kritice Pynchonových románů. Nejenže tím obohatí možnosti interpretativního čtení, ale úspěšně se tak vyvaruje hledání významu založeného na čtení jednotlivých románů a kontextualizovaného s externími aspekty, které se na text dají naroubovat, ale text samotný je nepodporuje.

ABSTRACT

The present work takes Thomas Pynchon's work as a whole (*oeuvre*) in an interpretive literary analysis, arguing that there is a unifying pattern of the *use of space* in the narratives. This pattern is attested to by the development of tropes, motifs, and themes vested in literary space, literary space as a world of the characters, and spatial discourses informing the characters' epistemology. The present work claims that there is a recognizable common denominator in Pynchon's use of space: the authorial message emphasizing the growing urgency with which the ethical aspect of human being in the world is constitutive to social reality.

The methodology of the present work combines interpretive reading based on reader's cooperation with the text and the use of terms from selected philosophical readings. The cooperation with the text is vested in restitutive (or open) interpretation that is delineated by what a text can and does support (Umberto Eco's concept of the text as a "lazy machine") and the concept of the "small world" of narrative (Lubomír Doležel). The philosophical inspiration relies on the tenet that human epistemology of being in the world is contingent on the physical existence in space (Maurice Merleau-Ponty). The work then negotiates Martin Heidegger's concept of Dasein that cares for its existence and for the world. The ramifications of Dasein's care are then explored on the level of living with others (Jean-Luc Nancy). Finally, the work continues the discussion on a societal level following the argumentation of space appropriation and mechanisms of control (Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari). The State as a type of societal organization is understood in terms of dynamic systems based on the principles of self-organization (Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela), with entropy as the principle determining mechanisms of self-perpetuation (Rudolf Arnheim, Geert Hofstede).

Throughout Pynchon's work, the reader witnesses a development of characters and literary space: the present work uses the concept of *visceral investment* in space to grasp this development. His characters gradually acquire a more particularized expression in the narrative, the dichotomy between spatial discourses is clarified, and his message on the topic of the other becomes more urgent. To emphasize the ethical aspect of human being in the world and to explore the opposition of the synchronic becoming-through-other and the diachronic being-toward-death, Pynchon modifies the space and its use in the narrative.

To achieve the paradigmatic shift from the diachronic to the synchronic, Pynchon explores the dichotomy between real and imagined space, and the discourses that are applied in human epistemology to "make sense" of the two concepts. In order to grasp how power affects these discourses, the present work employs the concepts of *striated space* (product of territorialization) and *smooth space* (preceding territorialization or produced by de-territorialization). The present work identifies the oeuvre's development of the *real sites or imagined concepts* produced by the systemic mechanisms of self-organization in striated space on the one hand, and *imagined locales* produced by resistance to control in smooth space on the other. It then proceeds with an analysis of the change in the characters' epistemology and the use of space in individual novels, concluding that the growing intensity in the use of the respective "types" of produced space parallels the increasing emphasis on the ethical aspect of individual being in the world, resulting in a call for ethical responsibility.

The present work thus suggests that to read and critique Thomas Pynchon's text(s), it is crucial to follow the observed development. Not only is it highly productive in terms of interpretation but it successfully avoids an imposition of meaning that would be particularized only on the basis of a single narrative, and contextualized with exterior aspects that may be read into the text but are not necessarily supported by it.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Development in Pynchon's *oeuvre* toward a Message of Ethical Urgency

If Thomas Pynchon's work indeed defies categorization and instead supports a truly post-modern reading, that is, a reading based on continuous frustration of any one, particular interpretation based on building and then fulfilling the reader's expectation, it still offers the reader a narrative that has its particular coherence and unity. This is a *sui generis* coherence that arises not from any individual novel that the author has penned. Rather, it lies in the dynamic unity of Pynchon's *oeuvre*, that is, his work as a whole.

The present work takes Pynchon's work as such a whole in an interpretive literary analysis. It argues that when the author's oeuvre is taken as a whole, there is a unifying pattern discernible throughout, a pattern of the *use of space* in the narrative. What appears to be a mostly epistemological inquiry in *V.* (1961) and *Crying of Lot 49* (further only *COL49*, 1965) becomes a debate of dichotomy in modes of being in space in *Gravity's Rainbow* (further only *GR*, 1973) and adds ethical aspect of being in the world in *Vineland* (further only *VNL*, 1990) and in *Mason & Dixon* (further only *M&D*, 1997) in the process of appropriation of space. Finally, the emphasis on individual ethics and responsibility culminates in the dramatic spatiality in *Against the Day* (further only *AtD*, 2006) despite the fact that since 2006, the readership already witnessed a new work, *Inherent Vice* in 2009.[1] This pattern is attested to by the development of tropes, motifs, and themes vested in literary space, space as a world of the characters, and spatial discourses informing the characters' epistemology. Because the development of the literary use of space in the subsequent novels is traceable, the present work claims that there is a recognizable common denominator that informs the use of space in the oeuvre: the authorial message emphasizing the growing urgency with which the ethical aspect of human being in the world is constitutive to social reality.

---

[1] However seemingly unfounded a prediction, the rhythm of Pynchon's work (and the subsequent observation by several critics) involves work on two books at the same time, with a relatively short one being published first and a grand encyclopædic epic afterwards. It has been noted (from Pynchon's letters to his publishers) that such could have been the situation after *V.* (preceded by a score of short stories): Pynchon could have worked on *COL49* (1965) and *GR* (1973) simultaneously, then on *VNL* (1984) and *M&D* (1997), and he either reversed the order with *AtD* (2006) and *Inherent Vice* (2009), or the readership may expect yet another great work to come. This is one of the reasons—together with the fact that *Inherent Vice* has yet to see any body of critical readings to come—for not including the last novel in the present inquiry. Even the newest critical publication on Pynchon, *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Pynchon* (January 2012), does not contain critique of the author's latest novel.

The methodology of the present work lies in a combination of (1) interpretive reading based on reader's cooperation with the text on constructing meaning and (2) the inspiration drawn from selected philosophical readings. The cooperation with the text is vested in restitutive (or open) interpretation that is delineated by what a text can and does support as it is outlined by Umberto Eco's concept of the text as a "lazy machine" and works that theorize the "small world" of a narrative (Lubomír Doležel). The philosophical inspiration relies on the tenet that human epistemology of being in the world is contingent on the physical, material existence in space as it is established in the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. This has implications for language as a structural determinant of being in the world and language as a tool of re-presentation of the physical world in communication as is argued by Georg Lakoff, Max Black, and Louis Armand. The work then negotiates Martin Heidegger's concept of Dasein as the peculiarly human existence in the world that results in human being's care for its existence and the world. The ramifications of Dasein's care for its being are then explored on the level of living with others and the associated problem of individual responsibility for oneself and the other, inspired by the work of Jean-Luc Nancy. Finally, the work continues the discussion onto a societal level following argumentation of space appropriation and mechanisms of control in the works of Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Society and the State as a type of societal organization are understood in terms of dynamic systems, with the resulting effects on their behavior as wholes, based on the principles of self-organization of complex systems outlined by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, with entropy as a principle determining mechanisms of self-perpetuation theorized by Rudolf Arnheim on the side of art and Geert Hofstede (and Gert Jan Hofstede) on the side of politics.

Upon the inspiration drawn from this quite selective set of philosophical ideas, the present work embarks on the interpretive literary analysis. It focuses on spatiality of the ontological being (of characters in the narrative), the opposition of spatial discourses in the epistemology of characters, and on space as the construction of the "small world" of Pynchon's narrative. This development of the use of space gradually intensifies the message of ethical aspect of human being in the world. What reads as questioning, or even shattering, the image of self-assuredness of the modern monological approach to the world in Pynchon's earlier novels (*V.*, *COL49*, and *GR*) grows into an intensified plea for the necessity of dialogical epistemology, demanding not only awareness of, but also full responsibility for, ethical choices. These are choices by which individuals *live in* the

world, *are with* in a socius, and *become through* in their self-actualization, all posed in the dialectics of "I" and "not-I," or images Self and of the Other.

1.2. Methodology

The present work starts with identifying the methodological tools employed to unfold the inquiry of the use of space in Pynchon's work. The methodology first focuses on establishing the concept of language phenomenologically, that is, as a structural determinant of the peculiarly human existence.

Such a development lies in the "making sense," or constructing meaning, in language and text as such. Human reality is taken as a construct of a lived-in world, or lifeworld (inspired by the phenomenological concept of *Lebenswelt*), which exists in addition, or even as an alternative to, the natural world. This understanding of human reality lies in a twofold claim: (1) the lifeworld is vested in language, whose tenet is that it is, in itself, material (not metaphysical, originated with-out human physicality), and thus structurally determines the lifeworld and its existence; (2) language, as a structural determinant of human being in the lifeworld, is in its immediate material that constitutes all acts of communication based on the mechanism of metaphor, or re-presentation of that which is not physically present, attested to sensoric data (that is, it overcomes the *haecceitas*, or givenness, of the sensoric input).

This functions, indeed, in an inherently twofold manner: humans are structurally determined by language through which they construe their lifeworld – this determination functions, at the same time, by the mechanism of "making sense," or constructing meaning as constant bridging between that which is attested to by sensoric input and that which is not (known and unknown, immediate and possible). Thus, language always re-presents (or brings forth) that which is not immediate by an act of actualization (elevating the possible to the true) of selected immediate material. This actualization constantly defies the structural constraints that delineate the lifeworld, in other words, it always negotiates the frame of reference by new iterations of communication and constructing meaning. This may seem circular, yet it lies rather in a *restitutive* relationship between the known and the unknown that is marked by two-directional flow rather than a *reductive*, unilinear imposition from the signifier to the signified.

This theory of language function informs the interpretation of the text in the present work. In extension, it will be argued that precisely by elaborating on the

epistemological uncertainty of his characters and by decreasing narrator's reliability to a non-sequential minimum, Pynchon creates a text which demands this restitutive relationship. As a result, the interpretation of his oeuvre can only be informed by the mechanism of metaphor, in an opposition to a monological approach to meaning (and lifeworld) that Pynchon ridicules on the level of characters and thwarts on the level of narrative technique.

This present work is a literary analysis of Pynchon's work. However, the analysis has been conducted according to several methodological viewpoints and followed principles these viewpoints validate. The topic of the inquiry is the *use of space*: its image, its use, and its discursive power for interpretive framework within which the inquiry is confined, and by which it is delineated.

There is a particular confluence between the topic and the analysis in question. While the analysis is characterized by its interpretive endeavor, such interpretation is necessarily embedded in the qualities the topic presses upon it. In other words, this inquiry examines the topic, while the topic to a degree determines back the characteristics of the inquiry. The features of this analysis are paradigmatic (following the paradigm of space); ontological (based on the evidenced assumption that contents of text require location); and epistemological (creating a particular set of cognitive reading of the texts in question).

The interpretive analysis of space in the literary work in question is paradigmatic. It examines the shifts of the paradigm that delineates the concept of space. It also strives to determine what is the paradigm of space within Pynchon's works and if it follows the said shifts. In other words, this work is based on the assumption that the concept of space is in a sense central to any text that 'locates' its content/plot/story into a setting, however 'real' or 'imaginative' they may occur.

The argument stemming from it is directed towards the understanding of space as a structure within which literary text necessarily operates. It will be argued that this has a particular bearing for Pynchon's works, since his works operate within space which is malleable, or rather, the paradigm of which changes: both synchronically (within individual works) and diachronically (between works).

If the understanding of literary space in the works in question is considered a framework for operation of whatever happens in the text happens "somewhere," or, in other words, that everything that is "content" must be necessarily somehow "located," it is essential to address the source of such understanding. Such understanding must stem

from a set of claims about the human condition in the world. More precisely, the human experience in space humanly perceived, that is, the manner in which human being happens in the world, its ontic condition. The framework necessitates that the present interpretive analysis addresses the ontological question of how the human condition is determined by being in space.

The ontological and paradigmatic features are wedded into the epistemological characteristic of this inquiry. This is because that which is experienced in space and within what paradigm the space, is conceptualized lies in the nature of knowing this experience. In other words, knowing how space is thought of, how it is expressed, and how it is experienced, determines what the interpretative analysis can say about its use in Pynchon's works.

Therefore, it is necessary to postulate (1) what the fundamental assumption of language as a vessel, a tool, of expression is. That is, it is necessary to establish what the mechanism of language is, and, at the same time, what the relationship between language and thinking, is. Chapter 2.1. introduces the notion that thought and language are mutually structurally determined, that the language's capacity to re-present is contingent upon its *technē*, that is, upon the possibility of executing communication through symbolization.

It is also crucial to determine (2) how the representational nature of language is understood for the purposes of this inquiry: in other words, it must be explicated how meaning is conveyed in language. The mechanism of constructing meaning, of the *technē* of language, is vested in conceptual metaphor, a bridge between two thought domains (the known and the unknown) that are ubiquitous in human experience. This rests on the assumption that it is the category of distance that delineates the relationship between the two domains of human experience. Chapter 2.2. shows that such a mechanism is iterated by the dynamic balance within language as a self-organizing system between the use of immediate material and the reliance of the system on situational structure.

Finally, this inquiry requires that (3) the act of interpretation is addressed, and that to proceed with the planned interpretive analysis, it must be set out how the process is understood in the particular case of the topic of space in the said literary work. Chapter 2.3. reveals that the following interpretive analysis rests on a two-fold approach. It pays attention to the requirement that the text(s) supports a particular interpretation of the topic in question through central (but also marginal) themes in individual works. It examines whether the reoccurrence passes the test of reiteration throughout the works. In other

words, the inquiry rests on interpretation of Pynchon's individual works but checks its validity not only by relying on assessment of previous interpretations, but also by comparing various works and identifying the development of themes that are relevant to the topic of space.

1.3. Inspiration for Reading Literary Space

The ideas inspired by the reading of selected philosophical texts are brought together because of a certain interpretation: yet they are all vested in one underlying analogy between the individual and society. This is because the observed mechanisms and their suggested interaction seem to be able to translate in an analogous manner from the level of the individual to the level of society. The mechanisms and the ideas seem to apply both in the microcosm of an individual and the macrocosm of the society and the lifeworld (the second-nature constructed in the course of human adaptation to natural world, structurally determined by language) as is suggested in Section 2. How is this possible that this analogy informs everything that has been said so far about individual, culture, state, and their interactions and interrelations? There are two vantage points that both reply to this query in affirmative.

It will be argued in Chapter 3.1 that both individuals and societies find themselves in an environment that, through their perception and through their interaction with the physical world, they co-create. Since there is no space set "before" humanity ontologically enters it, since there is no such thing as empty space that would be somehow originary to the space human beings create, waiting to be filled by existence that is diachronic on an energetic level, in short, since there is no container into which a being would be thrown before it itself exists, space that human beings are defined by and define themselves is relational on both individual and societal levels, however are these understood.

Interaction of both individuals and societies with the environment co-creates this environment by adding to it – humans change space into their reality, they turn physical reality into lifeworld. In doing so, the basic distinction between that which an individual or a society *is* and which it *is not* constitutes the key to relation between being and lifeworld. However, the more actualized being becomes in the environment, the more obvious it seems that their becoming is open to the space (and at the same time differentiated from) as a system is to its environment. The exchange of energy between

the system and its environment (individual or society) is governed by the behavior of such a system, that is, by self-organization that aims at adaptive changes. The principle of *autopoiesis*, or self-organization, is employed in Chapter 3.2. to address the issues of control within the system, to elucidate that the living complex systems become societies that, in turn, develop into the State. State as a type of societal organization is understood here as a dynamic system: it is autopoietic in the sense that it seeks self-preservation and self-perpetuation. To that end, the State tries to control energy flows within its physical boundaries, that is, between its constituent components (human individuals). In so doing, however, it stifles the diversity of the possible interactions, thus fueling every system's tendency to sameness (captured in the principle of entropy).

In its outward expansion that is supposed to supply the energy drained from the controlled interaction of constituent elements within the system, the State appropriates the War Machine as a mechanism of continuous self-organization (Deleuze and Guattari), a tool employed to bring efficiency that is otherwise marred by the ever-increasing rigidity of social interaction. The ordering mechanism of the State War Machine is, indeed, appropriation of social interaction, in the act of dispossession of individuals – by institutionalization (ritualization of behavior, limitation of individual options for actualization, reduction of possible interactions with the other). The State War Machine must expand, i.e, appropriate space, by occupying, and transforming natural space to social space, through control of means of production. This is what Deleuze and Guattari termed "territorialization." The State War Machine aims at progressively more effective and efficient grasp of space, which is best illustrated by societal stratification of space (transformation of natural space into "striated space"), that is, ascribing to space the social relations and interactions that concern production ("imposition of meaning" on space, cf. Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja, Brian Jarvis, or Christina Ljunberg).

The process is never completed because the constituent elements cannot be brought to a perfect uniformity. The sameness cannot be achieved in living complex systems. The analogy is thus a tenuous one (as witnessed by the reluctance of Maturana and Varela to apply their concept of autopoiesis on human societies), and therefore merely tentative. It works more as an inspiration rather than application. Despite this reservation, the analogy seems to provide a principle upon which the methodological inspiration for the interpretive analysis of Pynchon's text may operate. Chapter 3.3. then builds the argument that the constituent elements of the State (individuals) resist the State War Machine pressure to uniformity because it is in their individuality and uniqueness

that they attain self-actualization of their being. In other words, individuals insist on their differences from others in order to be able to define themselves as "I" against the "not-I" of the world around them. This is a systemic caveat that causes "de-territorialization," and that ascertains the dynamic nature of the State as a living complex system.

The other vantage point that validates—however cautiously—the application of the analogy between an individual and the society lies in the fact that what is presented here is a reading, an interpretation. What may read as an attempt to analyze and describe social reality and ontology of being of an individual in such a reality is but a tool to base a reading of literary text on an interpretive foundation, informed by the principle of restitutive relationship that constructs meaning. This foundation has been sought to display some basic coherence and refers to ideas of construction of meaning and language perception of the lifeworld ascribing a meaning to the lifeworld. It was no coincidence that the inspiration for analogy is based in systems theory and thermodynamic understanding of both physical and social space: Pynchon consistently employs both in his works, both as a motif and a theme and a narrative technique and strategy.

Thus, it is concluded that the processes of territorialization and de-territorialization are confluent spatial expressions of the tension between individuals and the State, with their dichotomy to the institutionalization as control and pressure toward sameness as mechanisms of ordering within a system. It will be argued that Pynchon explores both processes in his characters and their being in the "small world" of his narratives, with an increasing urgency of the necessity toward becoming-through-others as the mode of being in the lifeworld, in an opposition to the being-toward-death. Pynchon demonstrates the opposition between the synchronic becoming and the diachronic being by its expression in space as "visceral investment" and "space appropriation."

1.4. Living Pynchon's Space

Throughout Pynchon's work, the reader witnesses a development of characters, literary space, and the discourse of power between society and an individual. As will be argued below, his work as a whole undergoes a gradual shift. It first proceeds toward complexity and introduction of a multitude of topics, then crystallizes into more lucid, more exemplary notions. His characters acquire a more particularized expression in the narrative, the dichotomy between spatial discourses is clarified, and his message on the

topic of the other becomes more urgent, more radical. Chapter 4.1. demonstrates the development in Pynchon's *oeuvre* by analyzing the gradual withdrawal of agency from the characters to their environment, extending Cyrus Patell's study of "negative liberty" of Pynchon's characters to the argument that it is Pynchon's use of space as an active element rather than a passive environment that constitutes the narrative.

The major characters in the first two novels, *V.* (1961) and *COL49* (1965) are elaborated upon from a seemingly objectifying point of view – a reader may find it hard to find time to empathize with them in the blur of fascination with the multitude of systems and plots. In *GR* (1973), it is common to sense clear dread in those whose lives may end any day (mirroring the M.A.D., or Mutually Assured Destruction, atmosphere of the period), and to see the insane death-wish (*Todeswunsch*) in those obsessed with war machines of any kind – after the hilarity of many a moment, the reader realizes the book ends in a small apocalypse, personal or cultural. It is as if Pynchon has grown more humane, caring for his protagonists a little more in *VNL* (1990), giving a broken family and a community a recourse in a reunion that connects mythological past with a grim present and future. *M&D* (1997) is probably the most humane of the novels, redeeming the two surveyors after their endeavor in a found-at-last friendship, and a new start in the New World, and *AtD* (2006) reads as a eulogy for those whose effort to preserve the future was drown in the Bad History exploding into the global violence of the Great War.

In Chapter 4.2., the term *visceral investment* into space is introduced as an interpretive tool. It is through this principle that characters can actualize themselves as individual beings in the "small world" of Pynchon's narrative. While earlier novels unfold the themes of epistemological uncertainty and juxtapositions of modes of synchronic becoming-through-others opposed to the diachronic being-toward-death, the later novels, it is argued, emphasize the all-encompassing ethical aspect of being in the lifeworld.

To that end, the agency of Mason and Dixon's absorption in space is beyond the characters: indeed, the impersonal mission that Mason and Dixon embark upon after their reluctant affirmations signal that either member of the astronomer/surveyor team may keep a distance from the mission's goals, from the place, even from one another. Yet it remains inevitable that they too become a part of the landscape[2] in the sense that they

---

[2] This becoming a part of the landscape stretches further, than the awkwardly superficial argument of the historic relevance of Mason/Dixon Line. However potent a message it is, and however loaded with symbolism the gist of the novel remains, the point here is not to elaborate on the fact that Pynchon deals

leave not only their imprint on human reality and natural environment but also that they come to realization of themselves through their exposure to the space in which they move and live. In *VNL*, the motion is set by an old enemy coming to finish the job and destroy Zoyd – Brock Vond is the nemesis and the agent of the post-human State, representing the strife for ordering that eliminates any smooth, vague space that may provide shelter for those harboring different paradigms of socio-cultural relationship toward the individual, and the nature of individual freedom. Finally in *AtD*, Pynchon openly tells the tale of the unlimited stratification that turns everything into production – Scarsdale Vibe buys off his own death through Foley Walker and firmly believes he can buy off the son (Kit) off the father he had killed (Web Traverse).

Herein lies the gradual development in Pynchon's works in terms of characters' interaction with literary space: from mere inanimate exterior of characters to supranational clandestine institutions, and from these impersonal entities on to super-human networks.[3] Chapters 4.2.1. through 4.2.6. demonstrate on both the development and the changing agency in characters in literary space the increasing urgency with which Pynchon's *oeuvre* emphasizes the ethical aspect of being in the lifeworld on the individual novels. If Pynchon's initial opposition to inward-oriented modernism sought the human as a creator of meanings, it grew into an observation of patterns that betray structures shaping reality regardless to the people populating it, and always out of their immediacy. Thus it is not vested merely in the dialectical concept of individual freedom based on individualism that is pathological or a struggle against society, as Patell argues. The issue of individual freedom in Pynchon's work is not only struggling with individualism as a concept invented in a societal organization (i.e. as a political concept)

---

openly for the first time in his writing career with the 'bad history' of America in this novel of slavery pursuant the Enlightenment rationale, drawing its image on the face of the continent but to demonstrate that Pynchon requires *visceral investment* of the characters in all of his work. (cf. Patell, 32)

[3] The super-human networks are often identified as corporate bodies of today's America, or Western world (Weisenburger, 2006), or as malfunctioning, coercive community of the '80s Republicanism in America (Patell, 2001). It is notable that Pynchon dwells on the corporate links between the enemies of his lonely heroes only to draw the connections between the novels' past and present. In *COL49* it is Yoyodyne, Inc. as a part of the Inverarity's real estate mogul enterprise bringing Oedipa to find out about the secret W.A.S.T.E. postal system; in *GR* it is IG Farben and British Petrol as members of the partnership of chemical enterprise bringing infant Tyrone to exposure to Imipolex G, which eventually binds him to the V-2 rockets. However, no strong claims are made for accusation of corporate bodies real or fictitious—more clearly, it is the principle of unlimited exploitation on super-human level. That is why Pynchon can develop the allusion further in his later work: to state-controlled colonial effort in *M&D*, and the boundless—and borderless—capitalism in *AtD*. Be that as it may, these entities make even the most liberal-thinking, free-going individuals powerless turning them into pawns on the chessboard of world continents, for interests reaching further than mere control of human affairs. In other words, the webs of relations exterior to human individuals hypertrophy into networks of unlimited reach that engender structures rendering humanity obsolete.

but rather as an epistemological construct that lies in the ontological mode of being. That is where Pynchon's postmodern, synchronic depiction of being's investment in space as lifeworld opposes the modern diachronic being-toward-death. And that is where Pynchon's work is not only the debate of the political (which it is, of course) but also a discussion of the ethical (and thus applicable even at the time when post-modern discourse is eroding and giving way to its yet-to-be-named successors).

1.5. Pynchon's Spatiality

If the urgency for ethical aspect of individual's being in the lifeworld is, gradually increasing in Pynchon's *oeuvre*, how does that affect his literary space, or rather, the use of space in the "small world" of his narratives? Section 5 establishes that the spatiality of characters, the spatial discourses informing their epistemology, and the concepts of space that determine and at the same time are created by, the mode of being individuals appropriate are marked by the same intensification. In other words, the present work argues that to emphasize the ethical aspect of human being in the world, to accentuate its twofold, restitutive relationship to the lifeworld, and to explore the opposition of the synchronic becoming-through-other and the diachronic being-toward-death, Pynchon indeed modifies the space and its use in his narrative. This corroborates the claim that post-modern writing shifts fiction writing's paradigm from the temporal to the spatial, from the diachronic obsession with development and search for origins to the synchronic embrace of nodal points of intensity with multifarious possibilities open to actualization.

Literary space is of central interest to Pynchon. Arguably, the development of his treatise of spatial discourse and building an alternative, imaginary, space carries out what his novels may be "about" as a whole. If *V.* and *COL49* explore epistemological questions underlying one's being-in-space as actualization or "making sense" of the lifeworld, *GR* pushes the issue of (literary) space onto the characters' being itself as space claims the protagonist – it is only in the individual physical dissolution into the Zone that Pynchon finds an escape from the war machine. *VNL* chronicles the end of the struggle for maintaining individual freedom in the totally striated space of State, probing into myth and the past for remedy and understanding. In *M&D*, the two heroes connect the epistemology with the construction of space and come to realize that it is *subjunctive space* that is possible if one aims at personal salvation through ethical peace with oneself. *AtD* abandons the subjunctive of "if" space and points an accusing finger at the nodal

points in which humanity wasted a chance for improvement. However, *AtD* gives rise to a hope that de-territorialization on the individual level can bring survival and redemption to the preterite. Throughout Pynchon's work, imaginary space always hovers just beyond reality, reminding one that what seems to be merely possible is a question of modality: potentiality increases plausibility, and with enough energy, it can be brought up to the level of reality. Pynchon entertains the ever-present alternative to what seems to be the inexorable reality, subverting the notion by reminding the reader that the possible is within reach. Pynchon's work embarks on a quest for u- and dystopian space: starting with a tell-tale colony of "Vheissu" in *V.*, he proceeds to construe an underground society in *COL49*, experiments openly with the possibilities in the "Zone" of the world super-power vacuum setting it against the ominous potential in the "Raketenstadt" of the war machine, searchers for pockets of resistance to commodification in *VNL*, draws the would-be "world of the Line" in *M&D*, and finally shows an escape in the under-the-surface travel and "Shambhala" in *AtD*. It will be argued that Pynchon's imaginary space unfolds with ever-increasing intensity and constitutes the "small world" of the narrative requiring a more dedicated cooperation from the reader.

The discourses of power permeate the network of relationships among characters but, more importantly, outline the ontological ramifications of abstract societal systems' impact on the being of an individual. In other words, Pynchon discusses at length the issues of personal freedom. It seems that as his works acquire a more humanistic undertone, his outcry for preservation of the liberty of the individual within dehumanized State systems grows louder, more desperate, and more radical. *V.* attempts to peak under the veil of colonial practices and international plotting of both secret services and brutal forces of human and territorial appropriation. *COL49* introduces a plot that may be dangerous to intercept too closely but mainly instills a shiver by suggesting an alternative to what seems normal and ordered. *GR* exposes the State war machine that thrives on suffering and that functions best when individuals submit to the fascination of the inanimate *Gerät* they originally built. *VNL* sets elitism of ninjas and state agents against communitarian coexistence, revealing that social conditioning and labeling locks individuals in an opposition outlasting their physical lives. The outcry against treating the other as a commodity is perhaps loudest in *M&D*, where the surveyors attempt to abandon their prospective career in order to quit their participation on the general enslavement of humanity. Finally, *AtD* reveals that the only possible escape from the tentacles of merciless profits seducing the individuals to give up their ethics and their

mode of being may be through love to one another and through keeping one's mind open to the playfulness of luddism. An open mind entertaining the possibility of the imaginary may be the only strategy of survival against the grim madness of organized violence, however doomed it seems by the apocalyptic events in the world. Pynchon's theme of individual deliverance against the agents of systematic oppression pursuing a better ordering, an "optimization" of lifeworld, rests on the call for decency and treatment of the Other as a human being.

To achieve the paradigmatic shift from the temporal to the spatial, Pynchon explores the dichotomy between the real and imagined space, and the discourses that are applied in human epistemology to "make sense" of the two concepts. In order to grasp how power affects these discourses, the present work employs the concepts of *striated space* (product of territorialization) and *smooth space* (preceding territorialization or produced by de-territorialization), terms borrowed from the works of Deleuze and Guattari, following the borrowings of the processes of territorialization and de-territorialization. In Pynchon's *oeuvre*, the present work identifies the author's development of the *real sites or imagined concepts* produced by the systemic mechanisms of self-organization, or control in striated space on the one hand, and *imagined locales* produced by resistance to control in smooth space on the other. It then proceeds with an analysis of the change in the use of space in individual novels in Chapters 5.1.1. through 5.6.1., concluding that the growing intensity in the use of the respective "types" of produced space parallels the increasing emphasis on the ethical aspect of individual being in the world, resulting in a call for ethical responsibility.

The present work thus suggests that to read and critique Thomas Pynchon's text(s), it is crucial to follow the observed development. Not only is it highly productive in terms of interpretation but it successfully avoids an imposition of meaning that would be particularized only on the basis of a single narrative, and contextualized with exterior aspects that may be read into the text but are not necessarily supported by it.

2. ESTABLISHING THE QUESTION: METHODOLOGY

2.1. Language as a Structural Determinant

The spatial category of distance is a common denominator of human evolutionary and linguistic "situation." Evolution is based on the principle of accidental mutations within a population of organisms of a given species. These mutations occur through accidental combinations of genes in an individual. The combination of genes that brings its bearer any evolutionary advantage is more successful than others only by the fact that the bearer of such combination has a better chance to produce its young, and therefore his or her genetic equipment becomes a part of genetic equipment of future generations, or their genotype.

This principle is bound in quite an intricate manner with ecological[4] coexistence with the organisms' habitat. It is, however, by no means straightforward: it may appear in a line of thought based on causal chain ending with a biased "positive" outcome. The accidental combination of genes may provide an individual organism, or a group, or even a generation of individuals with an apparent advantage. Yet this advantage may end very abruptly in a blind alley, once the ecological "balance" of the habitat changes in any way – it is necessary to realize that any environmental balance in a habitat is necessarily dynamic, i.e. it is not a balance that would presuppose an "ideal," or "neutral," state, its quality is of the delicate balance of forces and relations based on this balance.

The dangerously charged principle termed "survival of the fittest" must not lead to an idea of a selection as "competition." Rather, it may lead to a simple observation, that an apparent principle of selection of—or rather, preference by—certain species to populate certain habitats can be considered. Such a preference is accidental to the degree that: (1) species may either migrate between habitats and change to adapt to the new conditions they arrive in, (2) species develop in a certain habitat, and have to change when the habitat changes. In other words, the principle ascertains that not all species can live in all possible environments as their habitats. On the contrary, some species

---

[4] When I use the word ecological, I mean strictly a *relational* quality of co-existence – i.e. the *relations* of an individual organism to its anorganic environment; the *relations* of this individual organism to other individual organisms outside its species; the *relations* of this individual organism to other individual organisms of the same species; and finally, the *relation* of this individual organism to itself in terms of preferences and decisions made during various events of its life (that may lead to death, to preservation of individual life at the price of a related individual's death, to preservation of individual life of the related individual at the price of its own death, based on the principles of altruism of soft and hard core).

necessarily occur only in some environment. Their "ecological" coexistence is not based on competition, but rather on relation (see fn. 3).

The only alternative for a species is extinction. To discuss which process better describes real conditions of the planet system means inevitably discussing the emergence of life as such, which is the task that can hardly be carried out within the scope of the present work, if at all. That is why I shall not explore the process further diachronically, but rather synchronically. There are dynamically changing habitats within which adapting species either "thrive" or "perish" in terms of expansion of the variety within their genotype, while keeping the coherence as species (i.e. qualitatively) or in terms of expansion of the population (i.e. number of bearers of most similar combination of genetic equipment, quantitatively; or, alternatively, numbers of related species that stem from a similar genotype, yet acquire characteristics differentiating the individuals enough to become two or more separate species).

Any comparison between species and their ecological coexistence within their habitat leads to a methodologically abysmal barrier of inevitably human interpretation of what is observed. It has been argued (Armand, 2005) that we can create only models of understanding between species – a conclusion leading to the fundamentals of human perception thanks to the comparative approach, that puts in opposition human and other species to demonstrate the different *technē* of perception and the resulting different realities perceived. While this may shed some light on how human perception works, another aspect of such *technē* is being omitted. If I begin my line of thought on the evolutionary pre-assumptions outlined above, I must arrive at the conclusion that the uniquely human *technē* of perception must provide the human species with some evolutionary advantage. This evolutionary advantage must be responsible for the species' geographical expansion across vastly varied habitats (humankind as species seemingly *does not have* its natural habitat, see below).

The discipline of paleo-anthropology has agreed on an observation that separates human bio-mechanics from other species. It is the size of the human brain. This is not to claim that the sheer amount of brain tissue determines human condition or supports the noted human species uniqueness. Other species may have much bigger brains, or seemingly much better organized perception/brain apparatus (in the sense of the location on their bodies). It is, however, the size of the brain *proportioned* to the rest of the organism's body *at the time of the birth of a new individual* that makes this difference interesting.

The growth of a human individual organism begins in gestation period, which seems to be very short or inefficient—if we see the new-born human individual—compared to other species. The newborn human individual cannot survive—in the sense of fulfilling his or her basic needs—without adult individual's help for a very long time. While having a proportionally big brain, a young human individual cannot survive without another individual's help. Human young are not equipped enough, prenatally, to survive on their own.[5]

In fact, the spread of human species across various habitats on the planet, and the fact that none of these seem to be non-livable can be interpreted from its logical opposite. Humans seem to be very poorly equipped to survive as individual organisms in *any* particular habitat. This holds two ramifications for the species: (1) humans are *forced* (by the environment to which species adapt) to develop some non-biological adaptive mechanisms to their habitat,[6] while having very little to work with (as far as bio-mechanic equipment, specifically evolved to foster a special ecological relation is concerned); (2) humans have no apparent *niche*, i.e. no habitat which would be *their own*, where they would be *at home* in nature. The only specialization that has been observed with the human species is its *non-specialization*, i.e. a seemingly very general, somehow basic, yet profound ability of habituation.

What then, is the evolutionary advantage of the combination of the size of human brain that prevents human young to be more independent, and non-specialization for any habitat? The evolutionary advantage for the species is precisely the *technē* of perception: perhaps the non-specialization, combined with the disproportionate brain creates a structure for advanced processing of input sensory data. In other words, the senses and bodies that humans have may not be well-suited for survival of an individual in a particular habitat, because they are vague, imprecise, and unreliable. However, they allow for a simplification, reduction—of immediate material—that may lead to this advanced,

---

[5] The cases of wolf-children were only possible when a mother of a different species (wolf, ape) took care of the individual for long enough time for it to grow, and socialize in the group of this different species. This is, however, a total rarity, that has nothing to do with evolutionary line of thought given the fact that such an individual could never profit from nor contribute to the genotype of this different species.

[6] It is crucial not to confuse *adaptation* with *habituation*, two processes that vary vastly. While adaptation happens on the level of the species and only through the means of genetic mutations, habituation can happen on group or even individual level and lays in *getting used to* certain conditions while obviously not changing the individual's genetic equipment. The term is most often used in context of hostile environment, in which, contrary to their genetic equipment, organisms survive, yet almost on the level of extinction (within the habitat with hostile conditions).

abstract processing. The sensory data thus reduced may—as immediate material—limit, create, and contribute to thought.

For John Dewey, the sensory material was the "the *datum* or *immediate material* presented to thought" (Dewey, 54) and constituted one of the three antecedents and stimuli of thinking.[7] Louis Armand, upon quoting Dewey, continues to conclude from this component of thought the following analogy in linguistic terms: grammar constitutes a situation within which language becomes a "tissue of probabilities" that requires a synthetic approach:

> In linguistic terms, what we are presented with here is an assertion that while grammar is not an instrument of semantics, the contours of semantic possibility—of correlation and counterpoint; convergence and coherence—are *conditioned* by the grammatical situation and the disposition of linguistic "data" (phonemic or graphemic; tropic or schematic). That is to say, such a grammar assumes a syntactical function in the organisation, not only of individual texts, but of *text* per se …. In short, language thus conceived remains "a tissue of probabilities." The co-implication of syntax and semantics requires us to approach the idea of linguistic *experience* in broadly synthetic terms, as a function of open *possibility* in accordance with a finite set of *probabilities*. (Armand, 52–53)

This is a structure in which thought—as well as language—occurs. Immediate material is actualized at any given moment of perception (active or passive). It leaves individuals to elaborate on it using a non-biological processing that stems from, but is at the same time actualized in, non-biological adaptation. This non-biological adaptation is ultimately discernible only at the level of its products: language, and material and symbolic culture. It is discernible only in a symptomatic way, though, since an individual in a society may realize a particular language and culture as an actualized immediate material in an event that is structured by non-biological adaptation to a habitat.[8]

Language (conventional, used in human communication) is structurally based in thought: this stands as the proof that language must have developed *simultaneously* within the structure of thought. The synthetic—or rather, synchronic—approach Armand calls for stems precisely from his agreement with Dewey's rebuttal of any antecedents of thinking (cf. Armand, 53). If language is inseparable from the structure of thought, it must

---

[7] John Dewey, "The Antecedents and Stimuli of Thinking". *Essays in Experimental Logic*. D. Micah Hester, Robert B. Talisse (eds.). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. 2007.

[8] As seen below, a diachronic idea of the origin of language would presuppose an "ideal, thought language" that would precede conventional language. That may be one of the reasons of failure of artificial languages.

have been a simultaneous part of the human evolution: there cannot be any such thing as "ideal language," or language *a priori*: "Similarly Wittgenstein, arguing against the 'ideal language' fallacy—that meaning exists a priori—insisted that meaning in language is indistinguishable from its grammatical *situation*: 'Let's not forget that a word hasn't got a meaning given to it … by a power independent of us, so that there could be a kind of investigation into what a word *really* means.'"[9] (Armand, 53–54)

However thought is "located," however it is defined by the limitation of the possibility of sensory input (limitation by biological body and environmental conditions), and the limitation of situation (limitation based on the fact that thought is situational in the sense that all the possible interaction of the environment and the individual together build up necessary *condition* for thought to occur), it is bound within the structure of thought.

The situational/immediate material relation found in the *technē* of human perception allows for an analogy to be drawn to the relation of the habitat and an individual organism, that is, to the relation of the non-biological adaptation of humans to their habitat. If this non-biological adaptation is actualized in every individual's sensory data input, it constitutes the *technē* of the perception of the species. That is where human species, thus, differs from other species. This *technē*, actualized on the level of the individuals of the species, and at the same time actualized on the level of unique immediate material then works in the direction of *creating its own habitat*. At that point, it is better to replace the term habitat with another: since the human habitat is no longer natural, the term better describing it is human *reality*.[10]

Reality is construed by humans as *their* habitat, as a product of the non-biological adaptation. Language and culture, the two symptoms of such an adaptation, are not, however, different from each other because they stem from the same structural situation. Language and culture are structurally inherent in each other because language permutes in thought. And thought is a product of an actualization of the immediate material of sensory input, based in the *ability of symbolization*.

---

[9] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Harper, 198) 28. quoted in: Armand, 2006.

[10] This may read almost as a pun but it is only so because of the difficulty to discuss the topic: "reality," that which exists in fact, is derived from the Latin *rēs* (thing), which in turn includes the hint at artificiality, human-made quality. That is, precisely the environment that is not natural, but that is instead created by humans. The etymological inquiry can be enriched by further reach to the Old Indian *rāh*, (possession, property) which encompasses the process of human appropriation of the environment as something that is to be owned (Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*).

Symbolization is the act of de-coding, or rather, re-coding the immediate material of sensory input into thought. This rather crude definition may be refined only after the process of this re-coding between sensory data and the thought, the true *technē* of human perception and consequent cognition, is better explored. This symbolization is not the process of mere signification: It is not an act of ascribing an ability to signify to a *thing* that is perceived as an actualized datum of the immediate material of sensory input precisely because such understanding envelopes the relic of diachronic approach, or assumption that there is something *before* the signification: a neutral plane from which some rules stem (essentially a demoniacal myth[11]) with the necessarily pre-supposed agency of choice.

As was argued above, there is no such thing as an ideal language that would be antecedent to the experience based on situation: Armand chooses the examples of homonymy and homophony as introduced by Wittgenstein and Freud to "[reveal] something about the *synaesthetic* and *material* nature of cognition or thought" (54) and continues with the example of onomatopoeia as seemingly "pre-linguistic, material relatedness to noise" to conclude that the "liminality [between language and reality] reminds us that language (thought) operates within a dimension of synthetic spatio-temporality" (58).

Armand employs Merleau-Ponty's idea of language as "differences without terms" to speak of the relationship between situation as structure of language and immediate material of speech utterances that comes from Merleau-Ponty's "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, 39) to establish a context of the principle of *possibility* and *probability*. Armand claims that possibility—once "relieved of an object"—supplies *technē*: "it is neither descriptive of material conditions nor of relations between terms, rather it is *conditional*, in that it names that which is crucial to any structure whatsoever" (Armand, 64). Defined in this way, the term *possibility* denominates the principle of symbolization because it explains the relation between the individual units of immediate material towards one another, always necessarily defined by their otherness from the whole and their otherness from each other (as if horizontally, on the plane of actualized units of immediate material). The term *probability*, then, quantifies the chance of actualization of any unit of immediate material

---

[11] Cf. Armand writing on *Phaedrus*, 107.

(that is, vertically, the chance of a signifier to become actualized, used in an act of communication).

In other words, possibility and probability explain how immediate material can participate in the process of symbolization: why some datum is actualized while other is not; why the actualization happens at a certain moment and not at another; and why language and thought necessarily actualize simultaneously. And this is because *all* immediate material has the possibility to actualize but some is more probable to actualize than other.[12]

Merleau-Ponty, in another essay in the same volume, entitled "On the Phenomenology of Language," provides the bridge between the synchronic view of language as use of immediate material (phonemic or graphemic) and the necessary diachronic view of language as a developing, self-organizing system (grammatical):

> The past of language began by being present. The series of fortuitous linguistic facts brought out by the objective perspective has been incorporated in a language which was at every moment a system endowed with an inner logic. Thus if language is a system when it is considered according to a cross-section, it must be in its development too. (Merleau-Ponty, 86)

This connection, for Merleau-Ponty, works in both directions, from synchrony to diachrony, as well as from diachrony to synchrony: "If language allows random elements when it is considered according to a longitudinal section, the system of synchrony must at every moment allow fissures where brute events can insert themselves." (86) The result is two-fold:

> (a) "We have to find a meaning in the development of language, and conceive of language as a moving equilibrium … a new means of expression is conceived of in a language, and a persistent logic runs through the effects of wear and tear upon the language and its volubility itself," and (b) "we must understand that since synchrony is only a cross-section of diachrony, the system realized in it never exists wholly in fact but always involves latent or incubating changes. It is never composed of absolutely univocal meanings which can be made completely explicit beneath the gaze of a transparent constituting consciousness. It will be a question not of a system of forms of signification clearly articulated in terms of one another—not of a structure of linguistic ideas built

---

[12] Armand borrows the term *inequality of probability* from Gregory Bateson to explain this schema. See Bateson, G., "Cybernetic Explanations," *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, 1973, 375.

according to a strict plan—but of a cohesive whole of convergent linguistic gestures, each

of which will be defined less by a signification than by a use value. (Merleau-Ponty, 87)

What can be taken from Armand's and Merleau-Ponty's correlation between the structure of the linguistic situation and the immediate material of language use is the following: The purely probabilistic nature of signification acquires a design conditioned by a formal constraint (there is no intentionality behind the language of the *a priori* type). This design occurs only through the use of immediate material, and is structurally determined by linguistic situation. At any given moment of use, the immediate material is at the threshold of invention of new meaning, in the process of "making sense." Thus, the conditions under which the design happens are always changing, or, at least, they are *prone to change*. The commonplace "meaning" that is constructed under the conditions of arbitrary, yet conventionally accepted rules has the *possibility* to become a new one.

The structural determination is manifested by the incessant check on this possibility of change, by the limits of *probability of change*. The arbitrary meaning is checked by the mechanism of "error tolerance" that determines subsequent use of the immediate material (i.e. its successful employment in an act of communication). This mechanism is then based on repeated, preferred, and constructive occurrence: Merleau-Ponty's "brute events insert[ing] themselves"(86) and Armand's invocation of *strange attractors*, i.e. constants that are unpredictable, non-linear, and yet stable when viewed from the perspective of repetition, or rather, reiteration (Armand, 202–203, 217) operates on the basis of the two-fold act of communication: constructing meaning, or "making sense."

Symbol lies in the principle of *something standing in the place of something else*. If this principle is taken in its literal, yet broadest sense, the term symbol does not have to be further supported with the elaborate explanation that it is arbitrary, conventional, and has no information value on its own, that it only possesses such a value in relation to other symbols (just as signs in Merleau-Ponty). This lies already in the fact that symbolization occurs only with actualized immediate material. By standing in the place of something else, symbol *re*-presents.

Re-presentation is to be taken literally: the human capacity of symbolization that constitutes the crucial difference between humans and other species must be based on a different mechanism than a mere acoustic reaction to reality. It is not based on a simple reaction to the immediate material passed on to thought by sensory input. While

synchronic, simultaneous, and instantaneous, such a reaction is based on the principle of mere *mimēsis*, or mimicking that which is relatable and attestable to by sensory input (the above-mentioned "material relatedness to noise" in an experienced reality). It must be based on the principle of symbolizing something *that is not present*, on re-presentation, that is, on the principle of bringing something that is not present—it is *not here and now*, something that is not attestable by sensory input—to the *here and now* of language utterance/use.

However implicit in the previous definition of the principle of re-presentation by symbol, this notion brings up an important, and very specific, characteristic, that needs to be said once more, differently: (1) that which is not present is *too far* to be attested to by other sensory input in spatial, geographic sense but also (2) that which is not present is *too far* in temporal sense (i.e. in the past experience or even future, estimated experience depending on fulfilling certain conditions, an experience not-yet-experienced) and in chronological sense (i.e. in the experience of sequence, or cause—effect). This happens instantaneously, necessarily at the very same moment of coding and re-coding of the immediate material into thought, and *distance* becomes a category uniting the spatial/geographic and the temporal/chronological.

Symbolization, then, is an act of the human thought of constant reorganization in the process of language acquisition (becoming-with-language of the individual as he or she grows biologically and intellectually). Symbolization is shared among individuals: the coding and re-coding of immediate material, based on its possibility/probability principle of actualization. Thus, language grows qualitatively (in number of different uses), and quantitatively (in number of different morphemes for different immediate material). With the ever-expanding variety and the increasing number of different ways of coding and re-coding, language gradually grows towards complexity: describing material reality attested to by sensory inputs (which may be based on *mimēsis*), and non-material reality, *relational* reality, that is beyond such attestations (and is based on re-presentation). Such a reality is created by symbolization in the acts of coding of the immediate material into thought and its subsequent re-coding in thought into *meaning*.

The category of *distance* determines the principle of re-presentation in the necessarily synchronic, situational sense of spatial/geographic sense. Simultaneously, the category of *distance* opens an entire realm of past experience to be related among individuals; also, *distance* thus conceived of opens the realm of an anticipated, chronological (or, causal) experience, in other words, the realm of the future. Arguably,

this may explain the human ability to *plan*, and to *communicate a plan*, or a future scheme. *Distance*, in this sense, connects the category of the old and the new, the familiar/known and the unfamiliar/unknown. Yet, what is the mechanism of such a connection?

2.2. Constructing the Meaning: Metaphor as the Mechanism of *technē* of Language

Disembarking from the previous set of theses, it appears that language as structure determines the situation within which immediate material of language (phonemic or graphemic, not merely based on sensory input) happens. This "happens" is an actualization of a possible material that is based on the principle of "error tolerance" between the emitter and the recipient, in the sense of meaningfulness of what is being communicated. However, that which is being communicated is re-presented, that is, brought to the here and now of the act of communication from a spatio-temporal *distance*.

The category of *distance*, then, determines the principle of re-presentation in language, in the sense of bringing something to the here and now from where it cannot be attested to by sensory input. Since it is vested in the re-presentation of something that is too distant both synchronically and diachronically—something cannot be attested to by sensory input (because it is, simply, *too far*), or it cannot be attested to by sensory input (because it *was* or it yet *will be*), or even more radically, something cannot be attested to by sensory input because it *is unknown*, (it *is yet to be real*)—the act of bringing something here, re-presenting something, requires a mechanism that is reliable and that works in all these instances, yet in the same manner. Such a mechanism constitutes the "how" of language work: it is what may be termed *technē* of language.

The mechanism is *metaphor*: Something that, literally, "brings" (from the infinitive *ferein* – φερειν) something else "from one place to another" ("meta" – μετα). Now, it is important to distinguish between a *metaphorical expression* and a *conceptual metaphor*. George Lakoff (1993) defines the conceptual metaphor as a connection between a "source" domain of human experience and a "target" domain of human experience. In other words, conceptual metaphor is a mechanism by which a bridge between the familiar/known and the unfamiliar/unknown can be extended.

A metaphorical expression, on the other hand, is—while being absolutely specific—merely a statement which draws on the conceptual metaphor. "While conceptual metaphor connects conceptual areas, metaphorical expressions provide

bridges between constitutive elements of these conceptual areas." (Drulák, 8) In other words, a metaphorical expression is the actualized linguistic material, used to communicate the connection between the conceptual areas.

Why is it necessary to invoke metaphor as the *mechanism* of language? Why does it not suffice to speak of mechanism of *language as such*? Perhaps it would be simpler and more lucid to assume that *language as such* simply works by the way of re-presentation, that its power of symbolization is imbued in its function and there is no need to name a mechanism of the process of re-presentation. However, such an assumption would leave the "how" of language work unanswered. In fact, it would evade the issue and would necessarily lead to guesswork of agency in language, which is the afore-mentioned diachronic, demoniacal, view.

Therefore, metaphor as a mechanism connecting the known with the unknown of human experience reveals the relationship between language and thought. The problem lies in the symptom of this relationship. The difference between literal utterance and a metaphorical one, in their capacity to convey meaning between the emitter and the recipient:

> The danger of an approach that treats literal utterance as an unproblematic standard, while regarding metaphorical utterance as problematic or mysterious by contrast, is that it tends to encourage reductionist theories: As the plain man might say, "If the metaphor producer didn't mean what he said, why didn't he say something else?" We are headed for the blind alley taken by those innumerable followers of Aristotle who have supposed metaphors to be replaceable by literal translations. (Black, 22)

The corroborative answer to the Aristotelian blind alley is that metaphors "can function as 'cognitive instruments.'" If "[c]learly, with respect to an individual, new knowledge can result from the comprehension of language in general, and to that extent, at least, it can result from the comprehension of metaphors in particular" (Ortony, 5) then it is necessary to ask:

> Why stretch and twit, press and expand, concepts in this way—Why try to see *A* as metaphorically *B*, when it literally is not *B*? Well, because we *can* do so, conceptual boundaries not being rigid, but elastic and permeable; and because we often need to do so, the available literal resources of the language being insufficient to express our sense of the rich correspondences, interrelations, and analogies of domains conventionally

separated; and because metaphorical thought and utterance sometimes embody insight expressible in no other fashion. (Black, 34)

To explore how the unfamiliar/unknown may become familiar/known, how what may have been a mere *mimēsis* in terms of mimicking the noise of the real world in onomatopoeia, could become the *technē* of language in terms of actualizing the difference of terms based on the otherness of one towards the whole (as corroborated by homonymy and homophony) is to employ metaphor as the mechanism of grasping the category of distance that explains the process of symbolization.

Max Black unfolds the discussion on metaphor by introducing many examples of studies of metaphorical statements, from which he infers precisely what has been said above: the two "implication complexes" (cf. Lakoff's "domains of experience") are connected by a multifarious set of relations between the meanings of key words.[13] However, he disposes of such proliferation by invoking exactly the process of structural determination by language of the situational language use of the immediate material:

> Viewed in this way (and neglecting the important suggestions and connotations—the ambience, tone, and attitudes that are also projected upon *M* [i.e. the metaphorical expressions]), *G* [i.e. the "implication complexes", or "domains of experience"] is precisely what I have called in the past an "analog-model" (cf. Black, 1962c). I am now impressed, as I was insufficiently so when composing *Metaphor*, by the tight connections between the notions of models and metaphors. Every implication-complex supported by a metaphor's secondary subject, I now think, is a *model* of the ascriptions imputed to the primary subject: Every metaphor is the tip of a submerged model. (Black, 31)

What Black claims here may be understood as follows: his "implication-complex" as the structural determination; his "secondary subject" (metaphorical expression) as the actualized immediate material that is not literal (not *mimēsis* but *technē*). Thus, the "analog-model," that is, "a *model* of ascriptions imputed on the primary subject," as the *mechanism* of symbolization. His conclusion then, to paraphrase his perhaps

---

[13] "The difficulty in making firm and decisive judgments on such points is, I think, present in *all* cases of metaphorical statement. Since we must necessarily read 'behind the words,' we cannot set firm bounds to the admissible interpretations: Ambiguity is a necessary by-product of the metaphor's suggestiveness. So far as I can see, after scrutinizing many examples, the relations between the meanings of the corresponding key words of the two implication complexes can be classified as (a) identity, (b) extension, typically ad hoc, (c) similarity, (d) analogy, or (e) what might be called 'metaphorical coupling' [i.e. the bridge between the 'source' and 'target' domains of human experience] and (where, as often happens, the original metaphor implicates subordinate metaphors)." (Black, 30)

unnecessarily metaphorical explanation about a tip and a submerged model, is a corroboration of the above-stated claim that every lexemic unit (graphemic or phonemic) re-presents, in synthetic manner, something that is not here, within the limits of the structure of language.[14]

Why is there a necessity for the abstraction of "source" and "target" domains? It is precisely because the connections may work as a *concept* and may not need the *expression* to come to its function as the mechanism. In other words, the conceptual metaphor works in language, whether or not a metaphorical expression, creating such a connection, is uttered. This bears a serious implication: conceptual metaphor connects the known to the unknown without necessarily being expressed. It may function without the immediate material of language use (i.e. metaphorical expression) but in the thought (i.e. language structure). This would blur the distinction between thought and language once again, and bring about another argument against a diachronic approach of thought preceding language (and being expressed in an "ideal language," see above). "For it may be held that such [conceptual] metaphors reveal connections without *making* them [through metaphorical expressions]. (Would it not be unsettling to suppose that a metaphor might be self-certifying, by generating the very reality to which it seems to draw attention?)" (Black, 37). Indeed, Black concludes, that conceptual metaphors re-present reality as it is (he uses the phrase "how things are," 41), not in a manner that would be *adding* anything to human perception of reality, but in a manner that *constitutes* it, and *is constituted* by it:

> This is the clue we need in order to do justice to the cognitive, informative, and ontologically illuminating aspects of strong metaphors. I have been presenting in this essay a conception of metaphors which postulates interactions between two systems, grounded in analogies of structure (partly created, partly discovered). The imputed isomorphisms can, as we have seen, be rendered explicit and are then proper subjects for the determination of appropriateness, faithfulness, partiality, superficiality, and the like. Metaphors that survive such critical examination can properly be held to convey, in indispensable fashion, insight into systems to which they refer. In this way, they can, and sometimes do, generate insight about "how things are" in reality. (Black, 41)

---

[14] Lakoff corroborates this with his claim that metaphor is *the* mechanism for any actualized use of immediate material: "But as soon as one gets away from concrete physical experience and starts talking about abstractions or emotions, metaphorical understanding is the norm." (1993, 205)

The conventional metaphor is reductive in the sense that it denominates the "source" and the "target" domains. In other words, it reveals what the two domains have in common, it delineates their connection. This means that the unknown is initially grasped only on the basis of mere *likeness*, and this likeness is elevated to the level of an absolute analogy—an analogy that supposes that one thing *is* or *is precisely equal to* the other, while there is no support to claim so in the concept of the familiar, "source" area.

In other words, metaphor cancels the distance that the two domains of human experience are divided by, it identifies the common ground of the two and binds them, reductively, together. This explains how metaphor can re-present something that *is not there*. Metaphor, as mechanism of symbolization, abstracts from the immediate material (that is attested to by sensory input) and carries it into the new domain of experience where the immediate material is not attested to by sensory input: thus immediate material, not attested to by sensory input at all, enters the linguistic reality (language).

If abstraction in language did not work this way, there would only be formal language in the sense of descriptive, function-derived system of signs (based on mere *mimēsis*). However, because the *technē* of language is based on the re-presentation that works on metaphor (which derives its conventionality from analogy of one thing being precisely equal to the other), language is inherently ambiguous. That is why conventional language (performed on the level of lexemes) can never achieve the level of clarity formal languages may possess. That is why conventional language may create reality even without being necessarily used in an act of communication between an emitter and a recipient as an utterance.

Lakoff corroborates this theory with his findings of metaphorical expressions actualizing the conceptual metaphor as a correspondence/mapping of two conceptual domains. His already-classical conceptual metaphor mnemonic LOVE IS A JOURNEY explains the correspondence between the domains of love and traveling and metaphorical expressions that stem from this mapping:

> The mapping is the set of correspondences. Thus, whenever I refer to a metaphor by a mnemonic like LOVE IS A JOURNEY, I will be referring to such a set of correspondences … The LOVE-IS-A-JOURNEY mapping is a set of ontological correspondences that characterize epistemic correspondences by mapping knowledge about journeys onto knowledge about love. Such correspondences permit us to reason about love using the knowledge we use to reason about journeys. (207)

This correspondence is not *a posteriori* derived from individual metaphorical expressions; quite on the contrary, it is constituted by

> ontological mapping across conceptual domains, from the source domain of journeys to the target domain of love. The metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason. The language is secondary. The mapping is primary, in that it sanctions the use of source domain language and inference patterns for target domain concepts. The mapping is conventional, that is it is a fixed part of our conceptual system, one of our conventional ways of conceptualizing love relationships. (208)

Thus, metaphor is the mechanism of the *technē* of language. However, while Lakoff argues that thought *precedes* language, it has been shown above that language/thought consists of the determining structure that actualizes the immediate material of language use.

A metaphorical expression, or the use of actualized immediate material, has a life-cycle, or rather, it is subject to the process of *sedimentation* (Drulák, 11). At its beginning, a metaphorical expression is novel or strong (Lakoff, 1993: 229, Black, 1993: 26), and functions on the principle of absolute analogy, that is, extends a bridge between the source and target domain (as was introduced above). The use of such an expression reinforces the conceptual metaphor: The analogy based on mere likeness, gets exposed to cognition (i.e. the immediate material being incongruous as yet with the conceptual basis, and therefore seen as a novelty, as a bridge). The analogy becomes gradually less visible and gets blurred with its use and chronological distance (i.e. the process between the unknown/unfamiliar becomes gradually a part of the known/familiar) until it is lost entirely and "dies" (Sadock, 1979).[15]

At that moment, such a metaphor is entirely conventionalized: its mechanism of symbolization is complete. The symbol ceases to have a perceived figurative value and enters the structure to become an inherent part of the structural organization of "sense." The term "sense" describes an always-understood meaning, in other words, a meaning that is entirely conventional, and seldom disputed.

---

[15] "First, there is the indisputable fact that figurative language is one of the most productive sources of linguistic change. In particular, reanalysis of figures of speech as literal signs is clearly the most important source of semantic change. It is a commonplace that most lexical items prove to be dead metaphors that were alive and kicking at some time in the past." (Sadock, 1979, 48)

The process of sedimentation of conventional metaphor attests to the structural relation between that which is symbolized and the organization of "sense": that which is symbolized is *already* unconscious, yet still *intelligible*, because of the environment built up to create context for the possible *meaning* of the symbol, particular within this context. Therefore, only context in its entirety delineates the rules of probable—or less probable—possibilities of meaning.

This structural relation reinforces the previous hypothesis of language as structural determinant. However, it is necessary to introduce it only now, after the mechanism of the *technē* of language has been explained. Armed with the understanding of metaphor as the mechanism of the symbolization in language, and with the understanding of how a metaphor is conventionalized in the process of sedimentation, it is possible to theorize on the previously introduced process of "making sense."

In an act of communication, when both emitter and recipient use language, two processes of "making sense" are in progress. Construction on one side, and reconstruction on the other ensues, and it is based on the prior incongruity. The act of communication is by its nature, necessarily, analogous to the afore-mentioned act of symbolization (re-coding of the immediate material of sensory input into thought).

This reconstruction is what can be termed *reading*[16]. This reading is the same as the process of "making sense," i.e. the active, conscious process of bridging the gap between the unknown and the known. Once a certain reading is selected—that is, established, reinforced in subsequent readings—the immediate material that is recursively used in a certain situation is confirmed in its context. That is how language operates to promote certain sets of possible meanings (in other words, a selection of those possibilities that become preferred in comparison with others). Thus, the probability of a particular reading grows as it is reiterated in the process of re-coding actualized immediate material in certain manner. The process explains why and how language can actually happen across the development of singular use by an individual; that is how an individual *acquires* language.[17]

As Armand (2006) writes, symmetrical, and complementary, differentiations lead to the design of signification because of formal restraint. Only a certain number of

---

[16] The term proposed here is inspired by the terminology in the field of interpretive anthropology, wherein individuals are often referred to as "reading reality" or "situations," or even "symbols." The use here is the result of a lack of a better term and should not be confused with the process of reading in literary sense but rather in the current discussion of cognitive/linguistic theory.

[17] Or "idiolect," a language peculiar to individual in the sense that it is acquired by a singular experience that is, ultimately, *not* shared with other individuals in the society.

possibilities are open in a linguistic situation: since possibilities are not equal, some are more probable than others (35). Because we *read* certain utterances or patterns in reality in some ways and not others, we can conclude that they are preferred, or stronger, or actually closer to what might be the more recognizable reiteration or recursion of certain set of meaning-within-context (i.e. immediate material in its situational structure). *Reading* reality lies in the fact that "the behavior of any one individual in any one context is, in some sense, *cognitively consistent* with the behavior of all other individuals in all other contexts." (Bateson, in: Armand, 35) Lakoff claims, even further, that metaphor, as the ontological mapping between two domains of human experience, that

> Each conventional metaphor, that is, each mapping, is a fixed pattern of conceptual correspondence across conceptual domains. As such, each mapping defines an open-ended class of potential correspondences across inference patterns. When activated, a mapping may apply to a novel source domain knowledge structure and characterize a corresponding target domain knowledge structure.
>
> Mappings should not be thought of as processes, or as algorithms that mechanically take source domain inputs and produce target domain outputs. Each mapping should be seen instead as a fixed pattern of ontological correspondences across domains that may, or may not, be applied to a source domain knowledge structure or a source domain lexical item. (210)

The non-biological adaptation of human species is thus something that grows with every successful use of immediate material in language (every differentiated/recursive reiteration). The principle applies in the same manner on a synchronic, geographic scale, and on a diachronic scale (both on the level of temporality—past events and plans for future—and on the level of chronological and causal relationships—changes in and reasons of events).

This growth translates into a cumulative experience, a common learning experience that transgresses space as well as time. In a socialized human individual, a member/carrier of certain cultural equipment, the reading is based on causalities and traditions extraneous to a single individual's lifetime and possible set of experiences.[18] In other words, once the purely descriptive function of language (i.e. phonemic shape of that whose presence is attested to by other sensory input as well) transforms into the re-

---

[18] That is why every new means of transfer of communication across distance brings about new vocabulary, new terms, and may even change the reading of human reality itself.

presentation (by lexemes), and starts referring to something that is not there, it acquires the quality of an auto-poietic system.

The symbolic nature of constant re-presentation starts reshaping the language *at the same moment*. Thus, language is constantly reshaping its own referential frame, in its re-presentation of human reality. In every use of immediate material, the system risks everything that constitutes it, its structure and its relevance to reality: Every reiteration may bring about a more successful coding that results in re-shaping of the entire structure, and, at the same time, every reiteration may bring about its dissolution, if the said reiteration fails the test of "error tolerance."

Yet, language does not fall prey to the entropy of dissolution of possible meanings. It does not, as a system, fall apart. Language, as a system, lingers constantly in the delicate state of dynamic balance: it allows for maximal invention while preserving its structure through imposing rules.[19] Every new reiteration must be "relevant," that is, while it may bring about a novel re-presentation of human experience (analytically assessing experience identifying new target domains in time—diachronically), it must follow the structural determination given by the linguistic situation (synthetically falling into the structural inter-relationships, differences between terms—synchronically).

As an auto-poietic system, the relationship between human experience based on language and reality is also characterized by dynamic balance: it is on the edge on which the non-biological adaptation of human species constantly lingers, allowing the species to "thrive" within its own created habitat, by the use of immediate material at any given moment, while being prepared for any such moment thanks to the situational structure (i.e. the context of "making sense") provided by the mechanism of sedimentation of conventional metaphors.

2.3. Interpretation: Text as Source for Text

If the meaning in language can be determined and communicated with the help of conventional metaphors and through the process of error tolerance between the emitter and recipient, what does a text communicate? If a text is composed of language and that is a vehicle of communication, can it be assumed that text is an act of communication? And if this extension, or rather, substitution of terms is to be followed, what determines

---

[19] These rules are symptomatic of an auto-poietic system: they seem to validate certain use while discourage another, yet every failed reiteration may weaken the error tolerance test, and may lead to a change.

the meaning of a text? In other words, is there a principle of error tolerance at work with text as well?

This inquiry is dealing with the texts of Thomas Pynchon, perhaps an epitome of American post-modern prose-writing. Stating this brings about a plethora of complex ideas of what a text can mean and how it can be interpreted. If the texts in question were written as post-modern, and are to be interpreted in a post-modern fashion, then it is essential to establish what interpretation in post-modernism is.

This inquiry does not aspire to outline the history of the shift of paradigm in Western literary criticism. However, it is necessary to present here the origins on which the methodology in this work rests: with the explanation of this work's take on language and its situational relation to the human experience of reality, and with the notion of what constitutes the creation and transfer of meaning in language, it is now time to elucidate how these apply to literary interpretation, and how such application constitutes a method of the subsequent inquiry into a particular set of works, dealing with them as particular texts, as well as one body of text by one author.

Kearney (1998) argues that "the post-modern turn of deconstructionist thinking pushes the model of *reflexivity* beyond the modern preoccupation with subjective inwardness. Reflexivity, as the reference of something back onto itself ceases to apply to the individual subject … it becomes, as it were, an end in itself: a mirroring which mirrors nothing but the act of mirroring." (254). He corroborates this further with Roland Barthes's notion of language that follows the above-mentioned understanding of language as an auto-poietic system that is set by using immediate material in a particular situation, while limited by its structural determination of its systemic self-reference:

> The discovery of language as a total system of enunciation which functions independently of the *persons* of the interlocutors, shows that the author is never more than the 'instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying "*I*".' This enables us to replace the modern notion of the *book* (as a project of the authorial imagination) with the postmodern notion of the *text* (as an impersonalized process of writing where the author is absent). … Language is revealed as a self-referential process with nothing *before* or *after* it. And as such it is never *original*—for there is no 'origin' outside of itself, i.e. no transcendent reality or transcendental imagination to which it could refer. The postmodern paradigm of writing does away with both the mimetic and productive models of imagination. (Kearney, 275)

This paradigm implies, according to Kearney, that "to deny the validity of authorial *imagination* is also to deny that of critical *interpretation*" which results in every reader's "liberty to take from it [text] whatever pleasure he wishes, abandoning himself to a play of multiple fragmentation and dissipation" (277). While Kearney, in a way, denigrates the post-modern turn in literary criticism (calling its product "*active nihilism*"), and calls for "*human* imagination" at the end of his work, there is a literary-critical perspective, that keeps up the hope that even in post-modern environment, there is a way to a reconciliation between the post-modern paradigm of the proliferation of readings and an interpretation of a text within a human scope.

Just as the notion of language as seemingly unlimited and fearfully open system, that risks everything in every new use of immediate material, is balanced by its structural determination, the proliferation of possible meanings of a text is countered by the existence of certain criteria that can be followed in interpretation of a text. Umberto Eco (1990), in his *The Limits of Interpretation*, writes with wit and charm: "To say that interpretation … is potentially unlimited does not mean that interpretation has no object and that it 'riverruns' for the mere sake of itself. To say that a text potentially has no end does not mean that *every* act of interpretation can have a happy ending." (6)

Eco reiterates the principle of structural determination of language for the case of text further by saying that

> A text is a place where the irreducible polysemy of symbols is in fact reduced because in a text symbols are anchored to their context. The medieval interpreters were right: one should look for the rules which allow a contextual disambiguation of the exaggerated fecundity of symbols. …
>
> [M]any modern theories are unable to recognize that symbols are paradigmatically open to infinite meanings but syntagmatically, that is, textually, open only to the indefinite, but by no means infinite, interpretations allowed by the context. … [A]ny act of interpretation is a dialectic between openness and form, initiative on the part of the interpreter and contextual pressure. (21)

In other words, there is a limit to which interpretation may a text support. These limits lie not only in the contextual pressure of a given text (a sort of micro-management of what a symbol may represent within a text). They extend to the extra-textual human experience of reality. The process of "making sense," as attested to by the sedimentation of a conventional metaphor and working within the interval of the error tolerance based on the

situational structure and actualized immediate use, is precisely that which Eco refers to when establishing that "the process of *semiosis* produces in the long run a socially shared notion of the thing that the community is engaged to take as if it were in itself true. The transcendental meaning is not at the origins of the process but must be postulated as a possible and transitory end of every process" (41).

While this may shed some light on what a particular text may "mean," it takes interpretation of a literary text only so far. For the process of making sense of literary, artistic text (both on the level of particular works and on the level of the entire work of and author), interpretation needs to be delineated methodologically, so that it can be decided which interpretation may be considered as plausible, and which not.[20] If the literary analysis in this inquiry is based on interpretive reading, it is necessarily subjective, for no pool of interpreters, but a single reader, was engaging Pynchon's works as a text. How can be determined which interpretation may be supported, in the absence of conventionalized agreement in a single text of interpretation?

Pynchon's text must support the interpretation(s) presented here. A methodological tool of such a "check" lies in a comparison that is based on *intertextuality*. Departing from Kearney's notion of reflexivity as a process of mirroring on itself seemingly without content, it is interesting what notion of the post-modern intertextuality Eco offers the following commentary assessment of postmodern literary art:

> It is typical of what is called postmodern literature and art … to quote by using (sometimes under various stylistic disguises) quotation marks so that the reader pays no attention to the content of the citation but instead to the way in which the excerpt from a first text is introduced into the fabric of a second one. … [O]ne of the risks of this procedure is the failure to make the quotation marks evident, so that what is cited is accepted by the naïve reader as an original invention rather than as an ironic reference. (93–94)

Further on, Eco observes that the failure to make quotation marks evident for the reader may result in the perception of aesthetic enjoyment solely through the assumption that

---

[20] As Eco corroborates: "[E]ven though the interpreters cannot decide which interpretation is the privileged one, they can agree on the fact that certain interpretations are not contextually legitimated. Thus, even though using a text as a playground for implementing unlimited semiosis, they can agree that at certain moments the 'play of musement' can transitorily stop by producing a consensual judgment. Indeed, symbols grow but do not remain empty." (41)

quotation marks exist, thus creating a select few readers—as opposed to the naïve reader in the quotation—who can actually aesthetically enjoy the reference. It also requires that the select few readers must rely on their extra-textual knowledge. In other words, the aesthetic enjoyment, then, derives precisely from the ability to locate these quotation marks. From these findings, Eco concludes that that which is re-iterated brings about an "infinity of the text." (96)

Eco's intertextuality in postmodern art is vested in the concept of the infinity of the text. Eco notes that it is no longer the "single variations" but rather the "formal principle of variability" that allows for the aesthetic enjoyment in postmodern art. Therefore, Eco's conclusion about a paradoxical result of the postmodern era of total memory is quite plausible:

> But it is the "infinity" of the process that gives a new sense to the device of variation. What must be enjoyed—suggests the postmodern aesthetics—is the fact that a series of possible variations is potentially infinite. What becomes celebrated here is a sort of victory of life over art, with the paradoxical result that the era of electronics, instead of emphasizing the phenomena of shock, interruption, novelty, and frustration of expectations, would produce a return to the continuum, the Cyclical, the Periodical, the Regular. (96)

This has methodological ramifications for any study of Pynchon's work. It is possible to enhance Eco's proposition of intertextuality by the method of search for contextual support for an interpretation in different texts by the same author, in an effort to determine a direction of development or to establish a commentary that follows a particular motif, theme, or type of tropes.

In a logical extension of creativity, a post-modern author may open a game of acts of mirroring between his or her own works of art, that is, not referring to extratextual knowledge as such but rather developing certain ideas further in successive works. To a certain degree, various works may be considered a single text, if they are to be treated as an entire production of a particular author. What kind of intertextuality is it, then? If Pynchon refers to his own works, as will be shown later in this inquiry, it is intertextuality of *sui generis*. It is no longer an act of building up for the aesthetic enjoyment through the reader's knowledge of other works, or of reality external to the model world created within the particular work: it becomes an act of reference within the already-existing

system of works, and it unites the individual works into a more or less homogeneous text that can be treated as a whole.

Within such a whole, even a single reader may find support for his or her interpretation. That is the "check" the interpretive approach employed in this inquiry will employ. Through inter-textual comparison of works by the same author, it is possible to trace a theme, discern a pattern, notice an omission, and formulate an estimate of reoccurring practice that—regardless to the category of authorial intentionality—corroborates an interpretation, or allows for such in a derivative manner.

The limits of interpretation are given by situational structure: the authorial text provides the interpretive reader with the milieu, in which the "making of meaning" operates, following the same principle of "making sense" in language, based on the communicability within the limits of error tolerance. This milieu necessarily changes with variable coordinates of a situational structure: the variable reader, with her own planes of meaning already in place, engages the text, and explores the text's field, to interpret, to create a meaning of that particular experience of reading. At another time, the experience shall be different, depending on the constellation of the variable reader, variable text, variable circumstances under which the action of reading is executed, forming another experience of reading, ever differentiated from the previous one. And yet this variable experience cannot be regarded infinitely multifarious.

The final product—the interpretation, or a meaning—navigates within what the text supports and what it does not. On the physical level, that means particular words, phrases, syntactic segments. That is what a creative interpretation builds upon.

The principle of searching for support in various texts of the same author, trying to determine a development or simply seeking support for establishing a commentary or launching the texts' interpretation following a singular motif or theme has been employed as a methodological tool before. René de Costa, when engaging a topic similarly enormous to the topic of space in this inquiry, the topic of humor, in writings similarly complex to those of Thomas Pynchon, that of Jorge Luis Borges (de Costa, 1999), comprised his method of findings in a variety of texts: short stories, essays, lectures, letters, interviews, re-editions, and footnotes to his previous works.[21] Although not

---

[21] "Rather, in all his work, throughout his entire career, there is a flip side where we find him exploiting the possibilities of humor, from the most elevated of witticisms to the lowliest of scatological jokes, conducting his readers from sublime to the ridiculous, often within the space of a single sentence, and sometimes through the most elaborate of literary constructs." (de Costa, 2000: 9). De Costa includes many examples of

covering all the texts available, the author of this inquiry is content with establishing an interpretation with evidence that supports such an interpretation coming from other works by Pynchon for the thesis presented here. The novelist's shyness from public appearance make this approach easier as there is only a slim number of Pynchon's non-fictional writings regarding his own works, or writings that would narrow down possibilities for creative interpretation. What is left, are his seven volumes.

Before daring to engage Pynchon's texts themselves, however, it is necessary to establish what are the ontological, epistemological, and paradigmatic sources for the treatise of space as it is undertaken on the following pages.

---

various literary works as well as public appearances of Borges, to illustrate how humor permeated the entire author's existence and work.

3. INSPIRATION FOR READING LITERARY SPACE

3.1. Individual in Space

Extension is one of the crucial determinants of existing things distinguishing them from those that do not exist. Spatiality is, first and foremost, *the way things extend themselves in space*. It is the measure of, and at the same time, the quality that, characterizes extension. It is ubiquitous in the sense that it is impossible to refer to existing things without referring to their extension *and* their setting in space: things are set *in* space; there are relations *between* things in space; every thing has some kind of *exteriority* as well as *interiority*, which refer to the notion of the *outside* and *inside*, respectively.

At the same time, spatiality *speaks of* space, that is, there is no space before the spatiality of things. Space is not a primordial, independent, or pre-existing to spatiality of things. That would refer to an origin that is demoniacal, that is super-natural, and that is not of the space. Space originates at any moment at which there is spatiality between things, of things, in things. That is, space exists only if, and as long as, spatiality of things takes place. Spatiality of things is relational, or, more precisely, spatiality is the relation between and of things.

Compared to the existence of things in space, human existence in space is different: this difference is not vested in a transcendental quality of some kind and the difference does not lie in a space that would be a pre-condition and that would be external, pre-existing to human existence, into which human existence would be set. Human existence in space is an existence that is spatial in terms of spatiality of things, that is, it is also relational: yet, the way human existence *speaks of* space is different. Why is it so? It is precisely because of the quality of the inside and outside, the interiority and exteriority of a human being in space: the interiority of human existence in space is different from that of things because people are *aware* of this quality, there is a sense of this interiority and exteriority of human bodies in each of us.

Human existence in space lies in its self-reference, self-consciousness, self-interpretation. In other words, human existence in space is never merely an existence, it is always being-in-space, not only in the relational sense but also in the sense of a self, a human *one*, that is aware of the relational spatiality. That which distinguishes existence of human beings, or people, from the existence of things, is therefore to be termed *being*. People's being happens *always already in the world* in its own peculiar way, since there

is nothing preceding its way of being, its *mode of* being. Being in the world constitutes a structure to the Heidegger's *Dasein*: it is its existential spatiality. Its exteriority and interiority is always already given by this structure. Heidegger shows that *Dasein* exists in the world differently from other things because it is *ontologically*, it does not merely exist in the world (i.e., it is not only *ontically*, as he terms it).

> Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it. But in that case this is a constitutive state of Dasein's Being and this implies that Dasein, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being—a relationship which itself is one of Being. And this means further that there is some way in which Dasein understands itself in its Being, and that to some degree it does so explicitly. It is peculiar to it. *Understanding of Being is itself a definitive characteristic of Dasein's Being*. Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it *is* ontological. (Heidegger, 32/12)

Heidegger's distinction of human being in the world lies in the human being (Dasein) being able to understand itself through its being in the world. The above-mentioned "concern" is later on defined almost negatively (*Sorge*, "care" that may also mean "trouble"). Whatever the connotation, Heidegger's Dasein, or human mode of being in the world, cares *about the way* it is in the world. And it is this care that distinguishes its mode of being in the world from the existence of other things, physical bodies, in space.

The notion of distinctively human sense of interiority and exteriority which serves as the basis for a care of human existence in space of itself, of its own being in the world, however, results in the perception of space as a distinction of where one's being "begins" and "ends." In other words, the care of human being is focused on the distinction between "I" and "not-I," on the difference between one's body and its distance from other bodies/objects in space. The relational spatiality suggests a relation of non-connectedness: What seems to result from this is the concept of a proximity that is always only a confirmation of distance, of a closeness that is necessarily validated by strangeness, of a similarity or sameness that produces otherness "There is proximity, but only to the extent that extreme closeness emphasizes the distancing it opens up. All of being is in touch with all of being, but the law of touching is separation: moreover, it is the heterogeneity of surfaces that touch each other." (Nancy, 5). It seems to be speaking of disjunction, division, and difference.

Disjunction necessarily results from the distinction that is presupposed by a dichotomy of "I" and "not-I." Any proximity becomes a matter of will, of power, that must be exercised. Disjunction signifies the impossibility to feel a connection with any thing or any body that is anything, necessarily, perceived as a "not-I." A connection becomes a confirmation of distance because it is through it that one actualizes their "I" in an opposition to the "not-I." It is through connection with other bodies (human and others) that one realizes the power over the "not-I."[22]

Division functions as a method to discern similarities and differences. By perceiving a thing, a body, as a singularity, disconnected from other bodies that comprise its environment (for what is environment but an assemblage of perceived things, object, or bodies that are defined by their mutual, relational, spatiality?). It is also a skill that is the basis of analysis, categorization, and comparison. Division is what one employs to identify one thing and comprehends it on its own terms, separated from the context of others.

Difference is a perceived quality, ascribed as a characteristic to a thing or a body; it is a subjective construction that lies in contemplating otherness of things. An otherness that separates them from one another but, most importantly, from oneself. Difference produces the confirmation of "not-I" and simplifies the world into a fragmented aggregate of bodies with no confluence between them.

These three types of distinction between "I" and "not-I," however, presuppose— and are only valid in—a concept of space as an environment that is inert and void of features. That is a paradox in terms. As was shown shortly above, that the environment, or world, is a space that is based on relational spatiality, that is, on a web of co-existence of things. It cannot be a space that pre-exists before things, bodies, and even people, are somehow inserted into it. "Being does not preexist its singular plural. To be more precise, Being absolutely does not *preexist*; nothing preexists; only what exists exists. … A world is not something external to existence …" (Nancy, 29). This refers to the question of origin, and the search for a space that would be, somehow, "originary," and somehow related to a "transcendental" nature of human being. Such a search must be analyzed further, and it will be shown that such a search is against what being-in-the-world is

---

[22] The power that defines such a relation can work in reverse as well: the power of things, of the "not-I" may well overwhelm the "I," that is, the relation can be realized negatively, passively for the human being in such a connection.

actually constituted by, in a discussion on Jean-Luc Nancy's reading of Heidegger's Dasein.

These three types of distinction may serve as a superficial, everyday, orientational method of distinguishing among things that fill space with bodies in a crudely dialectical way. It allows one to perceive other bodies in space in their singularity which is crucial for human everyday orientation in space. It cannot, however, account for connections and mutual influences that fill space with qualities and quantities, that *are* the relational spatiality. To understand the perception of the world, it is necessary to turn to the co-existence of things and bodies, to their confluence.

This confluence is attested to by senses categorizing the distinctions, but also determining these distinctions. The information value of senses, however, is at the same time contingent upon what may be perceived through them as three-dimensional bodies in space. Conceptually, this contingency provides bodies in space (human and others) with the peculiar characteristics of inclusion in the quality of space, perception of the inclusion of bodies in the relational spatiality. Merleau-Ponty identifies the sense of sight as the one that is most productive in the process of space perception. He claims that seeing bodies in the world at the same time proves the necessary participation of the seeing subject in the process, thus blurring the boundary between the two (Grandy, 143). Grandy's reading of Merleau-Ponty's concept of vision as a unifying sense that perceives bodies in the world in their *simultaneity* rather than as their distinctive positions in opposing relationship to one another leads to his support of the relative nature of space-time:

> What Merleau-Ponty means is that although vision may be personalized or particularized to single lines of sight, its expansive, unitary character precedes such particularization and remains in play despite it. … [it] implied for Merleau-Ponty a very different kind of space than that idealized by science, wherein things may be viewed dispassionately … Space is indistinguishable from the body's materiality.
>
> As material realizations of spacetime, physical bodies are imprecisely bounded portions of the spacetime expanse; spacetime does not begin where they end. Rather spacetime and physical objects mutually condition each other so that no clear line can be drawn between the two. … Whereas Newton imagined space as a physically featureless expanse offering no resistance to the motion of physical bodies, Einstein saw it as deeply informative of those bodies and therefore responsive to their motion. (Grandy, 133)

What this brings about, then, is not a concept of space that is a neutral environment for bodies but, quite on the contrary, that which is continuously influenced by, and

influencing, them: "This constancy, then, has nothing to do with any particular thing *in* cosmos; it is *of* the cosmos and therefore expressive of its fundamental nature." (Grandy, 134).

If this is true, and if all physical bodies are of the cosmos, of the world (i.e., they do not exist in a neutral space that would somehow exist before them, and would initially contain nothing—such theorizing would once again deteriorate into a demoniacal postponing of an origin), then Heidegger's schema lacks *material condition* of the human being that would not be based only on the distinction of one's "beginning" and "end." It is in the realm of the material, physical existence, not in the realm of will, that spatiality plays a vital role. Human condition as a physical body means, then, the circumstance that delineates the interval in which the question of spatiality of the mode of human being must be formulated.

Heidegger does address the issue, yet provides his explanation only through assertion of the structural understanding that human being has its own being in the world. His argument may seem somewhat circular, and while it is not, it does not shed much light on the physical nature, the materiality, of human being in space.

> Dasein itself has its own "being-in-space," which in its turn is possible only *on the basis of being-in-the-world in general*. Thus, being-in cannot be clarified ontologically by an ontic characteristic, by saying for example: being-in in a world is a spiritual quality and the "spatiality" of human being is an attribute of its bodiliness which is always at the same time "based on" corporeality. Then we again have to do with a being-objectively-present-together of a spiritual thing thus constituted with a corporeal thing, and the being of the beings thus compounded is more obscure than ever. The understanding of being-in-the-world as an essential structure of Dasein first makes possible the insight into its *existential spatiality*. This insight will keep us from failing to see this structure or from previously cancelling it out, a procedure motivated not ontologically, but "metaphysically" in the naïve opinion that human being is initially a spiritual thing which is then subsequently placed "in" a space. (Heidegger, 53/56)

While his disclaimer of a metaphysical, spiritual (demoniacal) postponing of origin is successful, it is not very useful in the discussion of the materiality of the mode of human being in the world. While it is crucial to agree that the "bodiliness which is always at the same time 'based on' corporeality" cannot account for the mode of human being, the mere self-referring structure of Dasein based on being-in-the-world, fails to address the spatiality that is malleable because of other, non-human bodies in space. As shown above,

the existence of other bodies in space does not appear to be simply ontic and finite (to use Heidegger's terminology of "mere existence of things"), for their being-in-the-world changes the characteristics of the space, changes the spatiality in which the mode of human being is vested, too, and that at the very same time.

At the same time, to claim that Dasein "has its own 'being-in-space'" does not show a particularly neutral attitude towards the human corporeality: for what corporeality would other, non-human bodies demonstrate, if not quantitatively similar to that of the human being as a physical body? In other words, while disclaiming something "spiritual" to precede the being of Dasein, Heidegger provides a rather reiterative support for being of Dasein, implying that its being is different (ontological) simply because it is at the same time a human attribute. This lack of lucidity is the reason to pause in the argumentation and reflect on the implications of the material condition for human being-in-the-world, for the ontological being of Dasein.

Once material condition of human being is introduced, a problem arises: is the observation still conducted from an outside? If all existing things have an interiority and exteriority, and if it is assumed that human being in space is different from the existence of things, based on the human being's self-awareness of such interiority, the question of the mode of human being necessarily runs into difficulties. How can be the observation conducted from *outside*, if there is nobody who can actually think it, without being, at the same time, also a human? And if it is from *inside*, whose interiority is it—can such a thought be projected on another human being? It must be the one from within human being, or: the one from the inside of human being about its exteriority.

Let us assume that it is possible to think about the mode of human being from the *outside*, while the vantage point of the observation is situated inevitably on the inside—that is, the question is asked from the outside of the human being's interiority. Space thus enters the question of the mode of human being even at the moment of the question's very formulation. The human condition only allows the formulation of the question of the mode of human being *as if* from the outside about its interiority, yet always from the inside since the question is formulated by a human being existing in the world at the moment of the question's formulation.

Let us also assume that it is possible to think a hypothetical distinction of subject and object, without slipping into the simplifying dichotomy of "I" and "not-I." The notion of the difficult position of the human observer discussing the facets of the mode of being is a good start when thinking such a distinction. The subject—object relation leaps

forward into attention and its uneasy characteristic is necessarily revealed. If circumnavigated by suggesting the complexity of the outside observation[23] of the interiority (and complementarily of the inside observation of the exteriority), the term "subject—object relation" is exposed as a relation which, once again, operates on the axis of *distance*, as was established earlier about the nature of reference in language.

This operation is, in fact, a negotiation: in language, it is a negotiation of meaning; in the subject—object relation, it is a negotiation of self-awareness. Both, however, share the common denominator, of how this operation happens: it is characterized by *power*. If meaning is an act of power, and imposing meaning onto something an act of violence, awareness of "I" and "not-I" is informed by the power of the subject over object and vice versa (that is, subject's experience of being overpowered by object, defined as an other, that becomes, necessarily, the Other, see below).

That is why the ontology of being is necessarily intertwined with the epistemology of being in the world. So, how come that the being of Dasein is ontological, that is, different, from a simple existence in the world? How come that Dasein's attribute *par excellence* is being-in-space, yet it is still different from all other existences in the world? If one examines the very phrase in which Heidegger introduces this attribute, one cannot fail to notice the semantic value implied in the relationship of Dasein to the world: "Dasein itself *has* its own 'being-in-space …'" [emphasis mine]. In other words, "being-in-space" is an attribute defined by possession, or ownership. Such a semantic value, however, gives rise to the possibility of the exact implicit opposite: if being-in-space is to be had, it must be conceivable for Dasein *not* to have its own being-in-space. The concept is diachronic in its nature, then, because Dasein must have appropriated its being-in-space at some epistemologically crucial moment, a moment drawn back to the question of origin.

Is it possible, then, to think that the mode of human being (of Dasein) is always an act of appropriation? That may shed some light at the seemingly inexplicable, self-referring, momentous, twofold—ontological and epistemological—event of Dasein characterized by its being *and* by understanding its being, otherwise enigmatic

---

[23] In fact, the observation is conducted from the absolute outside (outside space, as mentioned above), which has been identified as unreal, and thus only serves as a working concept—it is a hypothetical standpoint. Any relative outside is in fact *relational*, that is between existing things, owing to the relational spatiality—therefore, it is a physical one. The hypothetical standpoint of the absolute outside is a mere category for the outside that has no real existence of its own. "Everything, then, passes *between us*. This "between," as its name implies, has neither a consistency nor continuity of its own." (Nancy, 5)

proposition that does not seem to be helpful for elucidating anything about the human mode of being in the world.

It is the proprietary relationship between Dasein and its being that generates the "care" of its being. The care comes from the ontological possibility to lose that being. The care becomes a trouble (*Sorge*) when Dasein is threatened by the possibility of misappropriation of its being, in other words, when that which is had can be taken away. The act of appropriation of space, then, necessarily invites the opposite, which is the possibility of loss, of taking the space away from Dasein, the spatiality out of its being. The difference between the two variants of Dasein relationship to its being (having it or not having it) builds on a diachronic understanding of Dasein.

What happens if one understands being in a diachronic way? Such a thought process results in what Heidegger termed "being-towards-death." Heidegger establishes that death as the end of Dasein's being is not a loss to it but only to others. This is based in the fact that death cannot be shared, it cannot be taken over by someone else "Dying is something that every Dasein itself must take upon itself at the time … In dying, it is shown that mineness and existence are ontologically constitutive for death." (Heidegger, 284), it is an end that completes, totals, Dasein's being, and yet *is not a part* of Dasein's being. Death, as Heidegger surmises from its unshareable, incommunicable, nature, is always "not-yet" to any Dasein. It is also common to all Being, and it is always a "possibility." In other words, death is (1) always someone else's, it is (2) a never actualized present, while it is (3) always lurking as the possible outcome of an event. This simultaneous triple nature of death makes it something that epitomizes the otherness, it is a perfect illustration of the concept of being-in-the-world demarcated by the distinction of "not-I."

Conversely, "being-towards-death" is something like "being-away-from-what-I-was," in other words, a diachronic way of thinking of Being results in a differential understanding of Dasein, a "not-yet" of its death, and a "not-anymore" of its past. These two references to the future that is unattainable and to the past that is irrevocable lock one's Being in a solitude that dooms an individual to egotism and consideration of only one's own fate. Being stays always the same in respect to its future end, static in its difference from death. It is constituted by its end, by the unequivocal cessation.

It results in a somewhat anorganic perspective on life, as if reduced to terms of thermodynamics, ruled by the principle of entropic processes: however gradual, entropy is a process in which energy is less and less effectively used. Human being is thus

reduced to a decreasing effectiveness and plummeting number of possible outcomes from slivers of time, heading towards the inexorable end. Such a perspective is highly deterministic: everything must end when the energy supporting it runs out, and offers a remorseless treatment of other physical bodies as sources of energy, and other beings as embodiments of the possible death, of the ultimate Other.

If Dasein is defined in terms of appropriating its being at some point, the definition stands in the possibility of tracing back of a Dasein *before* the appropriation of being, or being *before* being appropriated by Dasein. Heidegger corroborates the proprietary concept of space that is always already *had* by Dasein. Heidegger's being is defined by the act of appropriation of the space it is in. This is a circular argument that confirms itself: Dasein is defined by "having its own being-in-space," which in turn validates the concept of space as a spatiality to be appropriated, which in turn conceives the space of Dasein.

There is no such thing as a pre-existing space to which Dasein would be somehow added, into which relational spatiality of bodies would be set. That is because there is no origin that would be separated in space, or outside of the relations between bodies, that would denominate spatiality of bodies that would come next. This does away with the reoccurring problem of origin: the concept of an originary spatiality somehow preceding the spatiality of being was analyzed closely by Jean-Luc Nancy in his famous *Being Singular Plural* (2000).

Nancy follows the thread of a demoniac origin to a moment of creation that is vested in the following paradoxical issue: "if creation is *ex nihilo*, this does not signify that a creator operates 'starting from nothing.'" (Nancy, 16). However, there has to be something, somewhere, whence the creation operates. "The nothing, then, is nothing other than the dis-position of the appearing. The origin is distancing. It is a distancing that immediately has the magnitude of all space-time and is also nothing other than the interstice of the intimacy of the world: the *among-being* of all beings." (Nancy, *ibid.*) In other words, there is no space that is conceived of by the human being that is not, at the very moment of this conception as space to be in, the moment of reference to it, appropriated by the Dasein, by the spatial mode of human being.

Nancy, in his reading of Heidegger, thus strips Dasein's being of the diachronic dimension. In the elevation of the importance of the "with" in Heidegger's "being-with," Nancy exposes Heidegger's implicit distinction of subject—object relation that leads to the concept of the other as the ultimate Other, as a threat. He demonstrates that the role of

the "with" as the more important component in the "being-with" concept does away with search for an (demoniacal) origin:

> [I]f Being is being-with, then it is, in its being-with, the "with" that constitutes Being; the with is not simply an addition. … But one of the greatest difficulties of the concept of the with is that there is no "getting back to" or "up to" [*remoter*] this "originary" or "transcendental" position; the with is strictly contemporaneous with all existence, as it is with all thinking. (Nancy, 30, 41)

If being-with is a co-presence, Nancy concludes, Being is a togetherness, from which the self, and thus the aforementioned self-awareness of interiority and exteriority, is only secondarily derived. Thus, the originary situation is "being-many-together," and that is what defines situation in general (Nancy 41). That is, there is nothing diachronic about the existence of Being: quite on the contrary, the spatiality of human being-in-the-world is synchronic, and it is structurally situational, arriving at nodes of being in events that turn this being into *becoming*.

3.2. Space in Epistemology and Ontology

If space is, in fact, a spatiality of relations between things and bodies, it is synchronic in its nature. Any change in these relations "produces" the notion of sequence, of time. This sequence, or time, in turn underscores the relation and its diachronic nature. This all, however, happens simultaneously, and there is no originary status of either of the relations between things, or the change thereof.

What is perceived as space by human beings is, therefore, not space. Human perception of space, of itself, and of change in relation between bodies in space, is an observation (for lack of a better term). As Prof. Maturana states: "Everything said is said by an observer." (Maturana, xxii, 1980), which lies in the fact that a cognitive operation is the operation of distinction. It was explained (see above) that this distinction is of the *outside* and *inside*, that is, the distinction between "I" and "not-I."

This fundament of human perception results in a limited, somewhat crude, yet, for human being as a species in an environment, extremely useful notion of space. "We may say, then, that for any living body, […] the most basic places and spatial indicators are first of all *qualified* by that body. … Only later on in the development of the human species were spatial indicators quantified. Right and left, high and low, central and

peripheral (whether named or no) derived from the body in action." (Lefebvre, 174) This notion, however, can be isolated from its *a priori* relational quality, and analyzed, instead, as a qualitatively particularized entity, as something that human individual can conceive of in an abstract manner, and operate with, in a cognitive way that is not based on direct, biologically-based, i.e. neural perception.

Gaston Bachelard, in his later work on poetics of space coins the notion of "building from the inside," justifying imagination applied to phenomena found in reality, surpassing them, and disregarding "function." Bachelard protests "objective knowledge" that would effectively describe space. He advocates life actualization in forms, and imagination in images. Space thus conceived of is, in fact, a mere representation of the relations among bodies, which changes reality forever by bringing about something that did not exist before. Representation of space is, in other words, what humans are only able to perceive by their senses, and consequently to epistemologically embrace, so that ontic, and ontological, existence is possible: this differentiates human existence from the existence of other bodies. It makes human existence a becoming-in-the-world as opposed to a mere extension of bodies in relation to other bodies. Yet, what does this shift from "objective knowledge of physical space" to "representation of space based on perception that conceives of imagination" lead to?

This representation of space results in "representations of space" (Lefebvre, 33) that we actually refer to when discussing what space perceived by humans entails within the notion of being/becoming in living-in-the-world. The human frame of reference is—as was said above—trapped, inexorably, within its corporeal perception of the distinction between "I" and "not-I." In other words, space is always a *projection* of the human perception. As such, it is both an epistemological concept as well as thought construction.

The term "space" is a construct, to which people *actively* relate and bring forth the relational nature they fail to perceive otherwise, that is, the characteristics of space as a spatiality of relations. In human perception, space becomes a construct, in which people are invested, owing to their perception of their environment consisting of relations between bodies that are observed and cognitively approachable. In other words, people have the *agency* over the construction of space. This shift accounts for the Western common perception of space as a "container," not as a web of relations among bodies. On the other hand, the same common perception discerns the relation of the observer to other human individuals as qualitatively different from space as a "container," and succeeds in supplying the relation with exertions of power (force of violence).

In other words, while space is often treated as inert (which was rebutted above), other people are comprehended as a different kind of "I," whose distance from one's own "I" can be bridged by physical touch or by a language-based message. These are always understood in terms of relations, even on the simplest level of individual perception of others. This was best shown in the famous *Crowds and Power* by Elias Canetti, whose analysis confirms that the corporeal "I" is best understood by a physical contact with the other: "The design of one body on the other becomes concrete from the moment of touching. … Whether resistance is continued after this moment, or is given up completely, depends on the ratio of power between the toucher and the touched, or rather on what the latter imagines this ratio to be. … The next stage of approach is the act of seizure. … Among men the hand which never lets go has become the very emblem of power." (Canetti, 204).

However, space as a construct re-emerges in human perception and understanding of the world as something other than a relation to others. Whether perceived as a "container" or as an "opening without difference," it is imbued with a meaning: What Husserl called lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) and employed as the basis of any phenomenological "ground" for meaning (intentional theory of meaning), enters a potentially synthesizing relationship with the concept of differential theory of meaning based on structuralism of de Saussure in the work of Merleau-Ponty on the philosophy of meaning of language (cf. Ajvaz, 61–83). If the analogy between language and space as a carrier of meaning is successful, it would yield a surprisingly lucid—albeit deceptively straightforward—tool for a possible analysis of how space as a construct is affected in the human mode of existence. For, as was shown in the mechanism of the process of making sense of immediate, actualized material within a situational structure, it stands that space as a construct is embedded into the network of meaning that is produced by human imagination, however limited by perception.

If meaning is produced by bridging a known domain to an unknown one against a situational structure that delineates it, however dynamically, it would corroborate the Bachelard–Merleau-Ponty–Lefebvre notion that space as a construct is similarly produced by relating the primordial, bodily qualification of space to a representation of space that is defined by, and endowed with, a meaning. Such endowment with meaning, however, follows the rules of linguistic expression that is *arbitrary*, *symbolic* and, therefore, *imprecise*, and *conventional*.

Yet, what is the nature of the relationship that is construed to connect the corporeal qualification of space to a representation of space? The relationship is based on bridging the distance between the "I" and "not-I," quite similarly to bridging the distance between the known and unknown. Unlike the these two extremities of cognition, and unlike the characteristics of being-in-the-world that Nancy's rebuttal of "nothing" as the "interstice of among-being of all beings" (see above) in the question of origin, the relationship of between corporeal space and a representation thereof is diachronic: the meaning is produced with a delay that characterizes the change and process of abstraction (the thought process from concrete, immediate perception to a conceptual, structural understanding). The mechanism of this change is *appropriation*.

Since space is, at the moment of human perception and conception of it, appropriated, it is produced. In other words, once space is represented, epistemologically construed, it is no longer in any way "absolute" (or "natural," cf. Lefebvre, 48), it is filled with tentative power relations, similarly to Canetti's relations among individuals.

While "absolute" space is appropriated, and thus produced by endowment with meaning, it is not commodified. On the other hand, a thing that is created as a new addition to human reality (as in, a new object) becomes a product *once* it is commodified. Space is thus polyvalent: it is both a product and a means of production.

> Space is never produced in the sense that a kilogram of sugar or a yard of cloth is produced. … Does it then come into being after the fashion of a superstructure? Again, no. It would be more accurate to say that it is at once a precondition and a result of social superstructures. … here we see the polyvalence of social space, its 'reality' at once formal and material. Though a *product* to be used, to be consumed, it is also a *means of production*; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it. Thus this means of production, produced as such, cannot be separated wither from the productive forces, including technology and knowledge, or from the social division of labour [*sic*] which shapes it, or from the state and the superstructures of society. (Lefebvre, 85)

When space is produced, a meaning is imposed on it: it is carved out from the "absolute" space by change (history) and, subsequently becomes a means of production. This process is violent either in terms of physical human suffering or in terms of imprinting power relations onto space by socio-political superstructure – often a combination of the two. The space thus conceived of is a product of social practice, which

is informed by ideology and imagination, it turns an abstraction, a construct, and a representation of the power relations involved.[24]

The notion that spatial representation, or a change of "absolute" space into a "representation of space," or produced space, is executed through the mechanism of appropriation—which, in turn, requires power exertion to occur—lends itself to a further question: if space is produced, can it become a commodity? While Lefebvre claims the polyvalent characteristics of space as a product and a means of production, and therefore free of commodification, the diachronic process of bridging the distant with the near renders appropriated space a commodity. In other words, when appropriation of space is finished (as a historic change), it becomes a commodity, a *territory*.

When a space is appropriated, it is subjected to power (violence) and interpretation (a representational functionality of "making sense" is imposed onto it). It thus becomes a territory, similarly to the process of a thing that is created. The process of turning space into a territory results in the commodification of space.[25] It is important to note that such commodification occurs even outside the context of capitalist production, both historically and geographically. The principle of turning space into a territory, the process of appropriation, remains the same. While materialist in its character, i.e. focused on the physical characteristics of the change, the principle subscribes to a reductionist methodology because it categorizes and simplifies across the various cultural contexts: it serves as a building block for a larger analogy and allows for comparison, and generalization.[26]

Appropriation of space that commodifies it as territory lies in the analogy of tool-making as the first and most easily introduced production. The reason they are analogous is the mechanism of bridging of a distance, a uniquely human response to the human

---

[24] Lefebvre discusses this in detail, when he uncovers the errors and illusions in perception of space that tends to ignore or conceal social practice and power relations (see the chapter "Social Space" in *The Production of Space*, esp. pp. 92–99).

[25] If the interplay between signs in modern Western (i.e., industrial) society is broken along the axes of forces of material production (labor and capital), landscape is turned into a product. This is a neo-Marxist thought that follows the line of the process of commodification of things produced by human labor. Nature, absolute space, or environment is commodified with clear delimitations of differentiation (signification) by the oft-violent forces of material production (and the subsequent violent distribution of the fruits of production). What this debate tries to accomplish is stripping the thought notion off the ideological agenda and inquire whether the claim applies outside the political argumentation: without serving a function (driven by the purpose of transition of power in society). Production, defined by the use of energy, or exertion of force in physical world, underlies any social organization regardless of who constitutes the labor and who controls the capital/production.

[26] As was noted above, the principle of appropriation of space with the result of turning it into a territory by no means offers an exhausting methodological tool that would sustain a philosophically rigid scrutiny. It only serves as an inspiration, or a backdrop to the following literary interpretation.

spatiality (the material condition of human being-in-the-world) introduced above. The mechanism of the response is that of *prosthesis* of one's body into space, extending one's spatiality beyond its immediate physical border. It is an extension of the "I" into the "not-I," a thrust with-out one's (individual and social) body.

Tool-making does, indeed, coincide with weapon-making, the tool always offering a "general convertibility" to a weapon (Deleuze and Guattari, 75). While there are differences between the two groups, they both have a common approximate design of the "*machinic phylum*" (ibid.), that generalizes their use as a prosthesis of human bodies into space.

What such projection entails was shown above: an imposition of meaning and a creation of something new. While the former was corroborated by the previous section on language and the mechanisms of "making sense," the latter needs to be elaborated on. It is necessary to return to the concept of the human non-biological adaptation to environment at this point. It works on the same principle as the possibility for change of use of the immediate material within the situational structure of language: the physical environment is changed by human species into a material *reality*, just as the absolute space is changed into a lifeworld. That is, space and environment are imbued with meaning and are created as an *addition* to the world, into what some call the "second nature." This is, in fact, an artificial environment that is no longer "nature" but a "landscape," or territory.

When a new thing is created, it is *added* to the lifeworld, but *changes it qualitatively* in terms of its reality and in terms of its mode of operation. In other words, every creation of a new thing, new tool, or a new concept of space, changes the way individual or social "I" extends into the "not-I," which means it *succeeds* the natural environment, in both senses of the word. Creation is "successive" because it is secondary to natural environment, and comes along in a diachronic manner based on a perceptive change—and, as such, it is always derived from the environment. This accounts for regional differences in human adaptation to local environmental conditions. Creation is "successful" because it differs qualitatively from the manner "I" used to be in the world and thus brings about a new manner of the relationship towards the "not-I" of other bodies in space (both animate and inanimate). This qualitative change imposes new meanings onto space, requires new strategies for interaction between bodies, and shifts the delineation of being-in-the-world for each individual, as well as for a society. This accounts for differences in understanding space, its representations, and social space.

Nonetheless, the process of creating a new reality out of an old environment is shared by all people as members of a species, as their non-biological adaptation. All people exert energy onto their habitat with the aim of changing it qualitatively so that it is in greater accord with their non-biological adaptation to local conditions. Humans change their environment to the degree that what used to be "nature" (absolute space) becomes an artifice (manufactured landscape) that has little or no connection with the nature "before" (hence the successive characteristics as perceptive change) the human exertion of energy onto it. Once a dwelling is constructed, once a road is outlined, and a river is bridged with engineering, and technology, and tools, humans fulfill their predicament of their equipment as species: the non-biological adaptation. If people, as a species, are specialized in their non-specialization (i.e. they are to be found in almost all possible environments of the world), their adaptation is cultural, not biological. It is precisely by the means of technology, by the means of production of things that do not exist in nature in a diachronic manner of bringing into existence something new, something that was not there before.

That is how lifeworld is designed: and it is because there is a design, a plan, that a meaning is formulated. The meaning is not necessarily delineated only by function (cf. Bachelard), but also by derivation from one's limitations (bodily and socially), by power of intention (act of violence), and by the immediacy of performance (symbolization in the event of the use of immediate material and its actualization). A reality *is*, and by the cumulative nature of cultural development (culture, as society, resembles auto-poietic systems that reproduce themselves, in the context of institutionalization of this cumulative process), human individuals are never born into a nature but always into a network of interfaces *between* culture and social practice. That is why by "space" it is understood that one speaks of "representation of space as a result of social practice" (cf. Lefebvre), and why space is something that is subject to history, in other words, something that undergoes changes and development through shifts in power relations of groups (e.g. socio-economic classes, ethnicities) and how it is produced.

The simplest tool extends one's body but, at the same time, creates a layer of interaction between one's body and the environment. It thrusts into the "not-I" but also distantiates the "I" from it by the means of prosthesis, which, in itself, is always "not-I." However successful this process is in terms of extension towards other bodies, and however it changes the environment into a human reality, it always effectively brings something *in between* one's corporeal "I" and the world's "not-I."

Thus, while *distance* is the category which unites the synchronic and diachronic in language (see above) and offers the explanatory mechanism of "making sense," the very same, "spatial" category leads to a complication of sorts regarding the appropriation of space. It is polyvalent and creates a polysemy which obviates any clear-cut, one-directional elucidation of the mechanisms of such appropriation. By the twofold relationship between the corporeal "I" and the lifeworld of both bridging distance and inserting a prosthetic device between "I" and other bodies, it brings about an ambiguity that would call for analysis. However, the polysemy, or, in other words, the fact that "space" is always a representation of social relations based on meaning ascribed to the natural space, limits any analysis to a mere interpretation that relies, more or less, on consensual arbitrariness (i.e. shared conceptual understanding between individuals).

To sum this up, this is how the processes of commodification and ascription of meaning lead to a "mere" interpretation, and appropriated space becomes a *territory*. Since the shift between a space to a territory must be shared and interpreted, this shift is not universally applicable to just any space. What does this mean in terms of societal macrostructure, far above the level of an individual perception of space as "not-I"?

The shift from space and territory occurs when a society (a group of individuals, however large, sharing arbitrary and consensually interpreted set of rules) turns into a State, a complex, hierarchically-organized system that is self-regulating in the sense of autopoiesis. State is a model of a system that represents an observable stage in society's development toward complexity (with growing numbers of society's constituent members and the number of their interactions), for the attributes of State are shared and communicable – observable. In other words, a human observer can distinguish, where a society becomes a State and where it dissolves and its energy is released to the environment in a different form.

What this entails is a State as a system that is always dynamic in its behavior and whose organization *happens*, not *becomes* through institutionalization, following the maxim of a self-regulating, or auto-poietic organization:

> The establishment of an autopoietic system cannot be a gradual process; either a system is
> an autopoietic system or it is not. In fact, its establishment cannot be a gradual process
> because an autopoietic system is defined as a system; that is, it is defined as a topological
> unity by its organization. Thus, either a topological unity is formed through its autopoietic
> organization, and the autopoietic system is there and remains, or there is no topological

unity, or a topological unity is formed in a different manner and there is no autopoietic system but there is something else. (Maturana and Varela, 94).[27]

The State may be a complex, dynamic system that follows the maxim of self-regulation but it does so only on the level at which it can operate (and that can be observed), that is, the realm of interactions among its members. Interactions are observable if they become institutionalized because it is only then that they become rules for behavior.

The State is a dynamic system and it is useful to observe its macrostructure and its behavior as a whole rather than its individual components and the infinitesimal, countless interactions among them. While it may be an imprecise methodological approach, it is thus useful to build the analogy between the concepts of State and an autopoietic system, in order to see where the inspiration derived from it can take the present interpretation of a work of literary art. It is with great awe that this study invokes the work of Rudolf Arnheim, one of the most influential art theorist, on entropy in art and let its words create a bridge between the theoretical concept of autopoietic organization and a work of art, that validates the present determination to work with the concept of State as with a system:

> Is it foolish to assume that, on the contrary, the microstates average out sensibly because they are controlled by macroscopic laws, such as that of the tendency towards equilibrium; and that we take leave of microevents not only when they elude precise observation but also when we realize that the tracing of elements does not disclose the nature and functioning of the wholes? Even when microevents have a structure and beauty of their own, this structure may bear only indirectly or negligibly on the character of the corresponding global events. Cyril S. Smith, who has long argued for more attention to larger aggregates in physics and chemistry, remarks that 'the chemical

---

[27] Maturana and Varela shrink away from the possibility of application of autopoiesis to human societies. In their seminal essay *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*, they openly admit they disagree on the topic and cannot continue further. That is why this work uses their theory as a source of inspiration only: it does not directly apply what the two scientists' paradigm-shifting work offered. "What about human societies, are they, as systems of coupled human beings, also biological systems? Or, in other words, to what extent do the relations which characterize a human society as a system constitutively depend on the autopoiesis of the individuals which integrate it? If human societies are biological systems the dynamics of a human society would be determined through the autopoiesis of its components. If human societies are not biological systems, the social dynamics would depend on laws and relations which are independent of the autopoiesis of the individuals which integrate them. The answer to this question is not trivial and requires considerations which in addition to their biological significance have ethical and political implications. … In fact no position or view that has any relevance in the domain of human relations can be deemed free from ethical and political implications nor can a scientist consider himself alien to these implications." (Maturana and Varela, 118)

explanation of matter is analogous to using an identification of individual brick types as

an explanation of Hagia Sophia.' (62, p.638) (Arnheim, 29)

Since the State's macrostructure *does* affect the social interaction between individuals, which leads (or not) to their reproduction, it is possible to depart slightly from Maturana's and Varela's condition that distinguishes autopoietic systems from other units, such as man-made machines (a car as a famous example of a complex system) and natural physical unities (crystals, with their frozen spatial relations of their components): "The autopoietic network of processes, then, differentiates autopoietic machines from any other kind of unit. … In fact, although we find spatial relations among its components whenever we actually or conceptually freeze it for an observation, the observed spatial relations do not (and cannot) define it as autopoietic. … A [complex man-made, or] crystal organization then, lies in a different domain than the autopoietic organization: a domain of relations between components, not of relations between processes of production of components; a domain of processes, not of concatenation of processes." (79).

It has thus been established that a State is a self-regulating system that follows (but does not fulfill) rules of self-regulating, autopoietic organization. It is a dynamic system in that it changes internally so that it withstands changes in its environment, or in interaction with other systems. The internal changes concern the system's components, the rules of their interaction, and patterns in which energy is distributed and spent (that is, used in a way that renders energy further unusable for the components of the system and is released from the system). The key to use this model is the humility accompanying the realization that what seems to be energy "spending" depends entirely on the viewpoint of observation. It is important to keep this underlying truth in mind, as it is a crucial difference in one's judgment of when a society/culture faces destruction.

Changes in an organization of a system follow observable tendency (i.e. change over time), such that has been described as entropy, "the degree of the dissipation of energy it [the system] entails, the amount of 'tension' available for work in the system" (Arnheim, 22). All ordering processes in a system have the only aim to reduce the tension in the system to ease the relationships and interaction of components. "Tension reduction is achieved also when, in the interest of orderliness, superfluous components are eliminated from a system and needed ones are supplied; for any gap within an order or any surplus element produces tension toward completion or removal, which is eased by

ordering. All such ordering increases entropy" (Arnheim, 51) because it spends energy and transforms it into a form that is no longer usable by the system. The tension reduction strives to install homogeneity (with human societies, one speaks of uniformity) as an order but the dissipation of a system also ends in a homogeneity. Order based on rules for interaction of components in a system (institutionalized rules of behavior of members of a society) spends energy and thus increases entropy. The aim is homogeneity, or at least homeostasis. However, dissipation, or destruction is a form of order (where there are no rules at all, all interactions may be the same because there are no constraints for the behavior). Similarly to what was said above about destruction that a society/culture faces, "Homogeneity is the simplest possible level of order because it is the most elementary structural scheme that can be subjected to ordering … To be sure, what looks like disorder today may turn out to be the order of tomorrow. This has happened before and is likely to repeat itself in the future." (Arnheim, 51–54)

Once a society becomes a State, its entropy leads to appropriation of an attribute that changes it internally, in qualitative terms: the attribute is the War Machine (cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*). This happens because the State must react to its own complexity and its environment, that is a "not-State." The appropriation of the War Machine happens at the very same moment when the space is appropriated and becomes a territory. The two occurrences of appropriation do not only coincide, they are mutually conditional. In other words, the State does not appropriate *space as a territory* until it has appropriated the War Machine. And, concurrently, space cannot be commodified and ascribed the meaning of territory until there is a State that appropriated the War Machine to do so.

However, the truthfulness of the two mechanisms of appropriation is not mutually exclusive – the War Machine is the invention of the nomads (a societal organization standing in binary opposition to the State). Nomads invented the War Machine (Deleuze and Guattari, 49), yet in their use, its objective is not war as a conflict (112) – its objective is the Nomads' mode of being-in-space, and, as such, resistance to the State (where encountered). In the hands of the nomads, the War Machine's objective is the resistance to the striated space of the State but also the nomadic mode of being. Its objective is, then, the nomadic self-preservation, the balance of nomadic stillness in a smooth space.

> The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space, he occupies, inhabits, hold that space; that is his territorial principle. It is therefore false to define the nomad by movement. Toynbee is profoundly right to suggest that the nomad is on the contrary *he who does not move*. Whereas the migrant leaves behind a milieu that has become amorphous or hostile, the nomad is one who does not depart, does not want to depart, who clings to the smooth space left by the receding forest, here the steppe or the desert advance, and who invents nomadism as a response to this challenge. *…* [the nomad] is in a *local absolute*, an absolute that is manifested locally, and engendered in a series of local operations of varying orientations: desert, steppe, ice, sea. (Deleuze and Guattari, 51, 53)

When, in the course of its expansion, the State arrives at the inexorable conclusion that to counter the nomads and to impose strata on the smooth space—and to thus turn it into the striated space with limits, enclosures, and boundaries that can be appropriated as a territory—it must appropriate the nomads' invention, and transform itself from within accordingly (117).

The appropriation of the War Machine is complete, yet in the State, the War Machine is re-defined, reconstituted for the needs of the State that are opposite to those of the nomads. The War Machine's objective is now war, limited and total (the tendency towards total war follows the rules of efficacy of constraints within a system, its embedded in the entropic pattern of the behavior of the State as a dynamic system), its objective is the annihilation of the adversary. In so doing, the State changes itself from a sedentary spatial organization of a society into a set of societal institutions with the singular aim: war as a purpose.

> States were not the first to make war: war, of course, is not a phenomenon one finds in the universality of Nature, as nonspecific violence. But war is not the object of States, quite the contrary. … 1) The war machine is that nomad invention which does not in fact have war as its primary object, but as its second-order, supplementary or synthetic object, in the sense that it is determined in such way as to destroy the State-form and city-form with which it collides; 2) When the State appropriates the war machine, the latter obviously changes in nature and function, since it is afterward directed against the nomad and all State destroyers, or else expresses relations between States, to the extent that a State undertakes exclusively to destroy another State or impose its aims upon it; 3) It is precisely after the war machine has been appropriated by the State in this way that it tends to take war for its direct and primary object, for its "analytic" object (and that war tends to take the battle for its object). In short, it is at one and the same time that the State

apparatus appropriates a war machine, that the war machine takes war as its object, and that war become subordinated to the aims of the State. (Deleuze and Guattari, 112)

It may be so that the War Machine is appropriated as the nomads' invention but it is fully realized as a qualitative change in the State's structure only when the war as its aim, is turned against another State. In other words, the War Machine is fully integrated into the fabric of the State and its potential for the aim of the State fully realized only when the State turns it against another system with the same internal organization of institutionalized interactions, another State.

When the State war machine makes war its overall aim: that is the institutionalized, qualitative change in the State as a system that follows the logic of the appropriation. War ceases to be, therefore, a visible objective, and its physical violence with it. It is, rather, the notion of violence as a permeating principle, that is, a sustainable exercise of power. Exercise of power cannot be only manifested through physical violence. Such behavior is not sustainable for social institutions that must present themselves to society's members as centripetal tools of coherence for the system of sedentary societal spatial organization.

The objective of war must be incorporated in the everyday peaceful appearance of the State. The institutional change that epitomizes the shift between the State before it appropriates the War Machine and the State war machine is best seen when the State clashes not with the nomads but with another State – when great empires clash and a mutual showdown ensues, the State learns quickly that sustaining the ongoing conflict is easier than a resolution or a victory. It is, therefore, more beneficial for the State to let war as the aim permeate its entire structure and subject all social behavior to what is called "war effort" in a total war against an adversary that is indestructible and vaguely defined.

The factors that make State war total war are closely connected to capitalism: it has to do [begin 118] with the investment of constant capital in equipment, industry and the war economy, and the investment of variable capital in the population in its physical and mental aspects (both as warmaker and victim of war). Total war is not only a war of annihilation, but arises when annihilation takes as its "center" not only the enemy army, or the enemy State, but the entire population and its economy. The fact that this double investment can be made only under prior conditions of limited war illustrates the

irresistible character of the capitalist tendency to develop total war. (Deleuze and Guattari, 117-8)

State appropriates the War Machine because its entire structure is invested in expansion of striated space, of conversion of the smooth space into striated space. It must appropriate space and commodify it from its absolute form to a territory. It does so by imposing a new meaning on the smooth space, it prints strata onto the surface of the smooth space. The process earned a neologism that has become famous for its difficult definition – however, it encompasses the entire process well from the onset of the appropriation of space and its conversion from smooth to striated. Because it is so concise, and because the process has been elucidated above, the process called *territorialization* from now on.

Smooth space is characterized best by its intensity and the nomads best uncover this characteristic by their speed. Striated space, on the other hand, is defined by extensive movement. The nomads' speed is a vector following the lines of flight that go along the landscape respecting and making use of the smoothness of the space. Their lines of flight follow ridges, dunes, mountains, and rivers. The movement of a regiment is that of march from a fort to a camp, from one sector to another, segmenting the space, "covering" it according to its nodal usefulness in a territorial extension of a grid. Its march crosses lines that impose a border, a *limes*, onto a territory, cutting through the landmasses as obstacles with highways, tunnels, and bridges.

This is why, for the State, surveying work, along with great-scale landscaping (as well as organized gardening and building of parks) is the ultimate tool and symptom of territorialization. The notion of "uncharted territory" is a contradiction in terms: not only because a territory is always accounted for (by its "proprietor") but also because chart making, map-making (cartography) is a direct precursor to landscaping.

What takes form in physical reality of the Sate war machine coincides closely with what happens on the ideological and social levels of the State as a sedentary societal spatial organization. It is impossible to determine which has the primacy: whether it is the level of ideas or social institutions imposing itself on physical reality, or whether it is physical reality that determines the ideas, results in a fruitless debate between cultural idealism and materialism, respectively. Clearly, it can neither be understood only in terms of perception or cognition, nor only in terms of classification, or interpretation. The three realms necessarily presuppose each other in a triad: power of ideas, norms imposed and

executed by social institutions, and physical determination by the environment (natural, or artificial – created and shared lifeworld).

To fully accept this triad, it is instrumental to consider map-making as an act of both (1) space appropriation in physical terms and (2) imposing ideas on the world in terms of "making sense," or interpretation. Both types of act result in addition of lifeworld to the world-in-perception, in an imposition of meaning on physical world, thus building a human-only reality. It is grasping space as an idea, virtualizing possession and executing the appropriation that brings about qualitative change in the State. This is because map-making uses the two types in a curiously explicit manner when it transfers the date of the three-dimensional space into a two-dimensional realm of recorded information. A map is an image of reality, yet it is its representation insofar as it is symbolic, and therefore imprecise, and conventional.

A map is symbolic because of the size of the representation at hand: real objects must be minimized, scaled, represented by a mere metonymy, and as such, the symbols open the representation to interpretation – an approach that quickly surpasses a unilateral, single-direction, signifier-signified denomination with a symbolic, open-to-interpretation, relationship that is two-directional. More importantly, this relationship is unlimited in terms of finitude of the number of possible "bounces" between the signifier and the signified. It is symbolic in the same terms that symbolization works for language: it works on the mechanism of distance between the signifier and the signified that must be bridged by interpretation.

Map is imprecise, because the representation is *not* the object. A map as a thing is *not* the physical world it represents. Such a claim may sound banal but its ramification is more complex. A map creates, by the means of *re*-presenting physical world a lifeworld *reality* that belongs to the realm of the artificial, second-nature of human adaptation to the environment. In other words, it distorts the physical world so much as it re-creates it in a manner conceived by, and conceivable for, humans. It must, therefore, obey the norms by which human perception is limited, defined, and delineated. It becomes a product of such principles as dogmatic faith or ideological beliefs. That is why a historical map re-creates the world in a manner that depicts social space governed by power rather than the physical world.

Finally, map as a product of principles shared by members of a society is thus conventional. It is an act of communication, and as such, it is limited by the semiotic setting in which it is created by and for the members who have agreed on the way, and all

the possible contents, of this setting. If map-making is an act of communication, it is also always an act of power, for while limits of the particular mode of delivery are valid, the content/meaning of the message imposes on both the space that is appropriated in this way, and on the recipients of the message the map aims to convey. It is a perfect example of communication as an act of power, and, of course, of appropriation of space. For it chooses, omits, distorts, and embellishes a neutral, smooth space and thus turns it into a territory, which is open for landscaping (striating).

Map-making lies in representation of space in the sense of ideation of physical world. Map-making imposes meaning, comprehensible from the perspective of human beings, following principles and limits of communication between individuals, subject to exertion of power in the imposition that forces upon the external physical world a human, internalized interpretation of this reality. Maps devour space, they dissect it for human hunger for power. By internalizing physical space, map-making objectifies that which was outside of human cognition, with-out human perception and comprehension.

> The mapping of the globe enabled space to be interpreted as available for appropriation by private ownership and established part of the material basis for the imperialist expansion of capitalist economic systems and social relations. [Since Renaissance,] Maps became strictly abstract and functional systems for the factual ordering of phenomena in space, defining territorial boundaries, property rights, trade and communication routes, domains of administration and social control (Jarvis, 1998)

Maps, in their *image* of the physical world, bridge the distance between the known and the unknown – they bring the distant and the unknown within one's grasp and knowledge. It is possible to "know" an area by studying it from the map *before* one enters it. It is, therefore, possible to use, change, control, and destroy that which is in the area *before* one physically reaches it. "Maps constitute a system of communication that involves transactions between mapmaker and mapreader similar to those between writer and reader." (Ljunberg, 160) Arguably, post-colonial artistic effort employs maps as metaphors to convey extent of the distortion the subject cultures were exposed to during colonization precisely because "Many of these [maps] have been imposed upon them from the outside, such as the maps that their colonizers made of their land and which thus not only served to legitimize the colonial enterprise but also became part of their territorial appropriation." (Ljunberg, 165)

Another example that corroborates the triad of the power of ideas, societal (institutional) norms, and physical determination by the environment must be included here for reasons of elucidating better how ideas, ideology, and societal norms ascribe meaning to the physical world, thus creating the man-made reality, or lifeworld, by adding to the world something new. It is the example of architecture and construction of buildings. What architecture imposes as an idea, construction executes as a reification thereof. It would be banal to simply state this without considering what actually happens with space during an erecting of a building that explores a new architectural set of ideas. In a construction, space is always enclosed by material, or, it is carved out off its original openness; this enclosure is determined by the size, amount of light, and shape of the structure. If smooth space is embraced by the nomadic triangle or a circular layout, striated space is determined by a rectangular shape that inhibits the intensity of speed, and limits curvature to a predictable degree. In other words, vectorial speed is no longer possible once a rectangle encompasses it. What used to be an expression of intensity and speed is bound into a description of extension of limited reach and motion.

> The model is a vertical one; it operates in an open space throughout which thing-flows are distributed, rather than plotting out a closed space for linear and solid things. It is the difference between a *smooth* (vectorial, projective or topological) space and a *striated* (metric) space: the first case "space is occupied without being counted," while in the second case "space is counted in order to be occupied." … Smooth space is precisely the space of the smallest deviation: therefore it has no homogeneity, except between infinitely proximate points, and the linking of proximities is effected independently of any determined path. It is a space of contact, of small tactile or manual actions of contact, rather than a visual space like Euclid's striated space. (Deleuze and Guattari, 18, 34)

Architecture is the exact opposite to map-making, yet it accomplishes the same imposition of an idea on space. It allows for an idea to be externalized, expressed by physical means of production. Construction reifies the idea of space that is in an architect's imagination, it is a production of space that is always already an object, an element of the second nature, an artificial environment that humans construct as an adaptation to the natural physical world. A building is physical in the most acute sense of the word, and yet it is a product of something-that-has-not-been-there-before. Once again, a construction is to the natural world, something that succeeds it because it is so much more – and, at the same time, always secondary to nature and to the previous experience

the builder had in either natural world or artificial reality. As Gaston Bachelard argues in his famous *Poetics of Space*, an "edifice" refers to more than just a building, it is a construed space, that tames the unknown to something that the species creates, something finite, contained, manageable – yet always absolutely artificial, necessarily incongruous, on the basic level of analysis, with the natural world that was *there before* it.

After making note of the examples of map-making and architecture, it is possible to move on to landscaping itself. Landscaping is the ultimate application of appropriation of space and it illustrates the process of turning smooth space into a striated space. It is the ultimate amalgamation of the ideas of map-making and the principle of enclosure in architecture. Landscaping delineates the connection between the two human activities: design of the ideal and construction of an artificial space, or, imposing meaning of ideas onto the physical world by adding something new, created, to it. It stands for the activity that changes nature so that what is "natural" is redefined, re-created – landscaping uses human ideation of space but minimizes addition of the artificial to nature, thus creating a "natural" lifeworld that is, by definition, successive to what the natural world has been.

As a result, landscaping, especially on a large scale, is neither mere interiorization of a physical world or natural environment, nor a simple production of something artificial. Landscaping is an act of power informed by ideas and principles of a given society's communication (in terms of its symbolism, imprecision, and conventionality), working with ideas of representation of nature, that is, what *nature ought to be*. The process is to improve the natural world for economic, military, aesthetic, or other societal purposes. Landscaping strives to produce a "natural," albeit new and altered, environment that should appear as if it were originary, not artificial. In other words, landscaping is a re-presentation of space that combines the communication with production on the level no other human activity does, and is, therefore, both evidence and a proof of the means of territorialization as the process of the State's appropriation of the War Machine.

Through territorialization and the change of smooth to striated, space becomes a product, and a commodity. The imposition of meaning, of ideation and norms, lends smooth space to systemic exploitation and commodification. In other words, ascribing a semiotic value to a natural, external (to the State) entity such as smooth space, it is transformed into a striated, consumable material that offers itself to commodification (i.e. it has a value that can be expressed by exchange for other products).

Now, it is remarkable that in the process of appropriation of space, there is an analogy between the State and an individual. The analogy is a simile, not an equation: it is

important to distinguish the two levels at all times, while accepting the analogous manner, in which the State and an individual behave towards, and in reaction to, exposure to space. While individuals do respond to their being-in-space by appropriation, which lies in creating, and subsequently imposing thereunto a meaning, ascribing a personal value to space, they do not territorialize the space. It is impossible for an individual to perform the process of territorialization because an individual does not (and cannot) appropriate the principles of the War Machine. The War Machine, once appropriated by the State, requires specialization, labor division, and mass conduct in terms of normative behavior, and in terms of production. An individual cannot, and does not want to, diversify his or her actions simply because of the limitations that the physical extension of their body dictates.

The War Machine is not a mere principle, idea, or a norm. The War Machine is all of that but it is much more at the same time: it is a system embedded in a societal structure, both in the case of the nomads and in the case of the State. It is a system that subscribes, if looked at closely, to the mechanisms of all systems as organizations within structures. It consists of levels of elements, parts, or building components that compose it. Yet, their participation in such an organization raises it from a mere assemblage towards a system with determining principles, conventionalized patterns, and traceable changes over time. The War Machine, in other words, can be described in terms of the maxim "the whole is more than a mere assemblage of its parts." The War Machine, therefore, changes the State qualitatively when it is appropriated by it.

As was said above, the War Machine permeates the structural ligaments of the State and changes its characteristics of societal organization. As such, the War Machine behaves as any other system: at the moment of its emergence as a complex set of relationships among its components, it embarks on the path towards changes that are described by the principles of entropic development.

What does the trend entail? The War Machine, is subject to the principle of entropy, or the tendency towards sameness of components that leads to the loss of energy from the form usable by the components of the system to a form no longer usable by the components (in thermodynamics, energy is no longer usable when turned into heat that escapes the system to its surroundings). The State war machine accumulates energy for institutionalized relationships among its members that takes the form in four traceable entities, however roughly defined: manpower, raw materials, certain technological know-how, and even fuzzier entity of a "socio-cultural momentum."

Manpower does not consist merely of a number of those capable of service in an army (or whatever form is the War Machine expressed in a given society – it may be also a warrior caste, a free soldier class, or perhaps an enslaved, ethnically defined warrior group). It rather encompasses the societal potential (i.e. group resources) to produce, sustain, equip, and sacrifice its members for the sole purpose of war. To translate this enumeration into the systemic analogy: the system needs to have sufficient energy to find and bring together its components in an auto-poietic manner. The components are organized in the system's structure – their interrelations must comply with the structural requirements of the system; when interaction of the elements breeds new constellations (relations of power among the components), the system's structure must be flexible enough to preserve its organization in a form that does not change the system's potential to respond to the system's interaction, as a whole, with its environment, or other systems. In other words, the society must be capable to preserve itself when exposed to changes both in its physical environment and in an encounter with other societies. It is therefore vital, for a society, to be able to lose its members without diminishing its productive potential (in terms of societal interaction and material foundation).

Technological know-how entails the material wealth of a society and the society's capability to respond to changes in the physical environment. In addition, technological know-how refers to the society's material capacity to sustain its members and to corroborate social practice (interaction among the members of the society). Too often in history—especially in the period of imperial geographical expansions—did technology changes bring about a fall of a society: in a peculiar way, this is true for both sides of imperial conflicts. If the State fights nomads, it changes itself qualitatively by appropriating the War Machine, with often disastrous strategic consequences for the nomads that result in their annihilation (destruction of their socio-cultural organization as well as physical extermination). However, this very same process invigorates the State's territorial expansion to the degree at which the State spreads horizontally without having the chance to reinforce its structure vertically. This results in a distension, or "spreading too thin," which may subsequently lead to the implosion of the empire.

When the State encounters another, and both subscribe to technological solutions governing their societies' interaction with the environment and the principles of the War Machine, the clash threatens to result in an environmental catastrophe that would render the current means of technology obsolete in terms of their applicability to the newly arisen conditions. In other words, when the war effort changes the lifeworld of the

members in the said societies so dramatically that the current technological solutions may cease to work, the State war machine strives to come up with new technological input into the war effort, so as so it can maintain its existence and reproduce its members, and its societal organization (i.e. it behaves as a self-reproducing, auto-poietic system), and at the same time win an edge in the struggle.

It is then, that the State's technological know-how thrives most within the structure of the War Machine: the war effort leads to profound changes in technological solutions to everything that pertains to all areas of the society's activities, to innovation.

Finally, the "socio-cultural momentum" unites the afore-mentioned entities. The socio-cultural momentum is composed of the manpower and the technological forms of accumulations of energy. It requires both, but it is not their result, rather a synthesis that in itself possesses a form (not dissimilar from the desiring machine of Deleuze and Guattari). Once formed, the momentum contributes in a decisive degree to the productive process of harnessing and changing energy for the War Machine's use. Examples include religious fervor, ideological hatred, racial bias, and fear of society's own destruction, as well as any combination thereof.

It was already said that the State war machine is, as a system, subject to entropy. It was also said that the State war machine struggles to reduce the degree, or the rate at which entropy grows with the sameness of relationship among its constituent components, members of the society. In short term, the State may even conjure a self-reference that contributes to an illusion of permanence, or *neg*-entropy. What seems to be valid, flexible, and creative, and thus underlines the image of stability and continuity without the danger of dissolution appears so only because of the observers' limited frame of reference, or emotional response to the disagreeable, yet factual tendency towards sameness and "loss" of energy. This is by no means a prelude to a doomsday argument or message of inevitable decay and dissolution. It is important to remember that systems, just like energy, are actually not destroyed.

A system transforms into something else, a different kind of order that is only categorized and recognized as a unit by a human observer. Such observation, of course, evaluates different forms of energy use, or different forms of order according to the observer's needs (often entirely subjective to the individual doing the observation, and hence, interpretation of what transpires). In other words, what may seem as dissolution of a State (and its appropriated War Machine) as a dynamic system, and therefore *interpreted* in a negative evaluation, may to another observer seem as a threshold leading

to a new stage of societal, cultural, or even epistemological development in, or of the State. Empires may collapse because of changes outside, or implode because of changes within, but they do not entirely disappear. The energy that is no longer usable in its particular societal institutions is transformed into another form that gets used outside of the frame of reference of the empire. Even if it takes *only* the form of the loot that "barbarians" take away from burning cities, this is an observation that hides ascription of values to the process, an interpretation of in which direction the energy flows, and what social relationships does it express.

A State that appropriates the War Machine only insofar as it serves in the clash with the nomads and in the ensuing conflict recedes to its former stage of societal organization before this appropriation, and may well seem to fail to have evolved in the new conditions of the environment. The observer may place the point of the beginning of its subsequent geographical dissolution right at this moment of recession from the State war machine stage. Conversely, a moment in the State that appropriates the War Machine not with the sole purpose of turning it into a tool against the nomads but to let the War Machine permeate its structure fully, may be interpreted by the observer as a nodal point of the said State's chronological and/or societal development that is irreversible precisely because it changes the State's structure. This may be evaluated as a point when socio-cultural momentum declines, as the beginning of the end of a "polis," a societal organization that strives to reproduce itself. Rightly so, for if the War Machine changes the State into a different system whose aim becomes war, and not only its self-reproduction, it arguably does away with the initial State's purpose of self-reproduction. It is truly the mere point of observation that imposes a value, or a meaning, on the gradual increase of entropy in the State that appropriates the War Machine. What remains is the fact that in the State, as in any system, entropy increases. What is remarkable, in the case of State, is how this principle, twofold in its characteristics, indeed applies.

It is fascinating that the increase of sameness produces more stable, more predictable relationships but only to the moment when *all the components* are identical. At that point, the measure of predictable relationships disappears because every new behavior among the components is possible, and the behavior of the system becomes, inversely, absolutely unpredictable. What this means is that in any set of components, when all of them are different from each other, the predictability is zero, just like when all of them are the same. Every behavior brings about a total change to the system. The State strives for sameness of its components, or uniformity of the member of its society. This is

in order to better organize the societal relationships so as to increase the usability of the energy these relationships produce, for the War Machine, for the war effort. However, the State can never succeed in creating a sameness of its components, or rather uniformity of its members, for a perfect uniformity would threaten with dissolution of the State into something else. The behavior would become too unpredictable. That is why the State thrives on social stratification (whether it be economic, ethnic, or religious classes and groups) and bureaucratic institutions (once again, in any area of social or economic activity) that keep the State in the dynamic balance of acceptable uniformity and inner differentiation of components. Such a balance leads to a hope that such a level lead to a period of successful, perpetual self-reproduction in terms of longevity and further propagation of its members. In return, the members ensure the continuity of institutions and the existent flows of energy that maintain the State war machine. Institutions propagate themselves, organize themselves and strive to limit both the sameness and differentiation among its members at the same time, all in order for the balance within the State to continue.

Earlier, a rather grand analogy between the behavior of an individual and the State has been drawn – an analogy in appropriation of space for the needs of an autopoietic system. The analogy may seem fascinating, and perhaps stretched, yet it will become clearer when it is outlined how this analogy functions, and when it is observable. The State is revealed as a complex, dynamic system that employs territorialization as a chief response behavior to its environment and appropriation of the War Machine as a response to its self-reproduction vis-à-vis the nomads. These are, in other words, *liminal states* of the State, that is, states in which the system defends desperately against such a change (from either within—behavior of its members, or from without—when the changes in the environment threaten the State with physical destruction). The same goes for an individual, in whom moments of the easiest observable occur when the Dasein may lose its being.

What is to be learned from this analogy – or rather, what can be observed from the subjunctive state at which both the State and an individual must find themselves in order for the analogy to be successfully drawn? It is, actually, quite remarkable that the *condition under which* the said analogy works is that of an extreme danger, a liminal state. For it seems that until the struggle for homeostasis is not too difficult, the behavior of the macro- and micro-level does not really resemble each other. And yet, individual is the basic component of the State, irreplaceable and truly *sine qua non* for the State.

Likewise, it seems implausible to contemplate an individual who would live without State (or society with complex interactions and institutionalized relationships). Therefore, to discuss such a concept of an individual would also be rather useless, since it does not really apply to human lifeworld.

If the State's struggle against entropy is a tendency to organization through institutionalization of its members' interactions that in effect makes individuals more uniform (and in so doing it gradually obliterates the potential of these individuals that lies in their differences), then what could be individual's response but to resist such a uniformity? Deleuze and Guattari assert that territorialization of space by the State is always, immediately, and in an equal strength met by the process of de-territorialization.

What they really describe is the principle of an ever-incomplete effort of the State to stratify society, commodify individuals' creative energy, and turn any smooth space into a striated one in order to maintain the dynamic balance in which the State nears its homeostasis as a system. Why is this effort ever-incomplete? It originates in its constituent components, the society's members, that is, human individuals.

It is in the process of equalizing all its members that the State threatens most actualized being of its members. Put from the perspective of the individual, it is when the State presses against the "I" of the Dasein when an individual realizes that their being can be removed from them, that it is the inherent quality of their Dasein that is being threatened. What a luminal state for Dasein to be in – and thus, what an analogy to the situation in which the State find itself threatened by dissolution from within or destruction from without.

The response originates on the level of an individual, and it is de-territorialization as a means against the encroaching possibility of losing one's being. For an individual, such a loss lies in losing one's identity to an enactment of a social role, or negation of one's mode of being through an institutionalized (i.e. arbitrarily and forcibly shared) behavior.

The process of de-territorialization is immediate, Deleuze and Guattari claim, observing the macrostructure of the State. It happens, never becomes, just like the autopoiesis of a system. That is true, for the number of the components going through or initiating their response to the pressures of equalizing forces within the System is ever-changing, and virtually unfathomable in any given society. In other words, constituting components of the State, individuals in a societal organization, cannot be truly identified at the moment of actualization of their being, which may coincide with the process of de-

territorialization. For what is an individual's being but a becoming in the interaction with others, or with the Other. As was shown above, being-with is indeed a becoming through (or *becoming-through*) socialization and individual actualization of one's Dasein.

This deserves a further interpretation, however. It is crucial to understand how de-territorialization originates on the level of individuals, precisely because that is how both territorialization and autopoiesis of the macrostructures is interpreted. And it is through the interaction with *others*, or *the Other*, where the interpretation is most fruitful.

3.3. The Other

Dasein's being is rather a being-with than a being-on-its-own, as was argued above, and it is rather synchronic becoming that moves through *nodal points* or moments of intensity than diachronic being-toward-death. The basic characteristic of this being-with, this becoming, is velocity (vectorial speed) that indicates how it is "propelled" along "lines of flight" from one nodal point to another in physical space as well as in human, second-nature, reality (Lifeworld). What arises is the question how can one reduce this theoretically complex image of a process (i.e. change that is perceivable in temporal and spatial terms to man) to a level at which it can be analyzed, and perhaps comprehended in order to provide an inspiration to the interpretation of the text that follows in subsequent chapters.

To perform such a reduction, one can, once again, look for the mechanism that makes it possible for the Dasein to actualize itself. Individual actualization of Dasein's becoming lies in perception of, and interaction with, the Other – in short with all that is "not-I," physically, spatially, epistemologically, and, therefore, ontologically.

To actualize itself, Dasein is forced to grasp the ontological mode of being, and thus it cares about its being. It does so dialectically, that is, in an opposition of its own, ontological being, to the ontic being of the world, as well as to the ontological being of another Dasein.

Dasein is, however, trapped in the physicality of its corporeality and cannot transcend it. It can do so in the process of actualization only if its own corporeality becomes the Other (that is, one's relationship to pain and suffering is not the relationship to self, cf. Levinas) but it cannot do so in the process of some kind of reaching out to another being. Pain and suffering are unshareable, as is death. Yet, Dasein become *through* being-with with another. This other is not a mere specific other, it is rather the Other that encompasses the

ultimate differentiation between "I" and "not-I." It is not an existence that would be somehow inserted into environment that is pre-existing, or sub-existing. With Nancy, one must realize that while Dasein's being is appropriated, and while this appropriation is based on the mechanism of bridging distance between "I" and "not-I," there is no difference in how one exists, how a "we" exists, and how "the world" exists:

> The difference between humanity and the rest of being (which is not a concern to be denied, but the nature of which is, nevertheless, not a given), while itself being inseparable from other differences within being, … does not distinguish true existence from a sort of subexistence. Instead, this difference forms the concrete condition of singularity. We would not be "humans" if there were not "dogs" and "stones." …
>
> I would no longer be a human if I *were* not a body, a spacing of all other bodies and a spacing of "me" in "me." (Nancy, 18)

This Other provides an ultimate experience, through which Dasein actualizes itself and becomes (alive, afraid, in love). The ultimate Other, epitomizing the "not-I," is a corpse, an enemy, a lover, and—most importantly—Death as the perfect negation of Dasein's being. Once again, it is in the liminal state (that is, a state in which Dasein is threatened by the possibility of losing its being) that this mechanism, for lack of a better term, is discernible.

Understanding of the "not-I" comes, inevitably from the states in which the corporeal dichotomy of the "I" and "not-I" is of essence for the Dasein's dialectic ontology. It is when in presence of a body that lost its being and is dead; when exposed to an enemy who can kill me; and, also, when in presence of a loved one. The essence lies in the realization of "the body is dead but I am not, not yet"; in realization of "the enemy is capable—usually by canceling the distance between him and me—of taking my being away from 'I'"; and "the loved one, however close to me, can never become me, and even when most intimate, our physical closeness merely accentuates the corporeal division between us."

Death is, however, ultimately not an opposition to Dasein's being but rather its *a*pposition, that is, not *of* the being at all. It is not so much a negation of being as a lack thereof, one that was always empty of it and cannot be somehow filled by it. Death is unshareable, inexperienceable (in the sense of a Dasein experiencing it and relating it to others or learning from the experience), and unthinkable (in the sense of ontology of Dasein's care about its being).

> No one can speak with us and no one can speak for us; we must take it upon ourselves, each of us must take it upon himself (*auf sich nehmen* as Heidegger says concerning death, our death, concerning what is always "my death," and which no one can take on in place of me). (Derrida, 57)

Death, in other words, is the Other, being so different that it does not bear any comparison or contrasting, so different that it cannot be pinned down as a moment. One can concur with Levinas who labels Death an Event, a-temporal (outside of time that is informed by change in existence, in the realm of things that are), and illocal (without a space that a being-with requires to be in relationship with).

> Death in Heidegger is an event of freedom, whereas for me the subject seems to reach the limit of the possible in suffering.
>
> This is why death is never a present. … The now is the fact that I am master, master of the possible, master of grasping the possible. Death is never now. When death is here, I am no longer here, not just because I am nothingness, but because I am unable to grasp. (41)
>
> [begin 42] This approach of death indicates that we are in relation with something that is absolutely other, something bearing alterity not as a provisional determination we can assimilate through enjoyment, but as something whose very existence is made of alterity. … The exteriority of the future is totally different from spatial exteriority precisely though the fact that the future is absolutely surprising. (Levinas, 41–42)

There is an interesting analogy at hand: Death is inexperienceable, unthinkable and, based on the impossibility of sharing, untouchable. It is shrouded in mystery, in a secret that is not concealed but truly invisible (Derrida, 56). The use of this distinction from Derrida's text deliberate—for if Death is all this and is indeed the ultimate secret, how is it different from the image of God in the religions based on the Book?

> God doesn't give his reasons, he acts as he intends, … Otherwise he wouldn't be God, we wouldn't be dealing with the Other as God or with God as *wholly other* [*tout autre*]. … Discourse also partakes of that sameness; we don't speak with God or to God, we don't speak with God or to God as with others or to our fellows. (Derrida, 57)

It seems that both Death and God share the very same qualities that posit them in the relation to the being of Dasein, and rightfully so. For, in an instance of religious belief, it is precisely God who *gives death* to the believer, or "delivers" them from it. It other words, if death means "to be with God," in one way of afterlife or another, it is curious to see God as merciful. Since God's mercy and delivery from death actually denies the believer to be with God, a believer is thrown into life by the *gift of life*. It is only through faith that one can accept and understand this distantiation which involves the dissymmetrical exchange between God and the believer, and, the present brief, simplified sketch cannot do the relationship any justice.[28]

Whether there is any being-after-being or not, the limits of Dasein and the apposition to Death (and/or God) corroborate the importance of actualization of being in relationship to another, to other, to the Other. This actualization lies in becoming at a moment of intensity, one after another, in succession (chronological and topological alike). And it is precisely this succession of moments of intensity, together with the ever-present possibility of Death (the "not-yet" of the loss of being for Dasein as discussed above) that add to Dasein's "care" for its being another *ontological affect*,[29] as it were, that of Dasein's *responsibility* for its being. Derrida is absolutely right in his claim that philosophy that does not deal with—or, rather, aim at—ethics is void of import to thought of human being. For the human being is always, however suppressed the affect may be, aware of the limits of their physicality, corporeality, and the looming possibility of loss of being.

The responsibility is for one's own being, but is not the same as the "care" for one's being. It is the responsibility towards being in relations to others, both as the other and as "self." That is because "self" is construed as an *image* of the "I" that represents Dasein. "Self" is thus a construct, painfully developed, and ever-malleable throughout one's life. It is something that should be "I" but is always ultimately something else, a more or less conscious creation of "I" as a distinctive category from "not-I." The mechanism for constructing the two dialectical components is the same: they are both construed through perception.

---

[28] Once again, all the wording here is chosen deliberately to allude to, and invoke the context of Derrida's text, to make the inspiration by the text apparent, yet treating it as a source to elaborate on, not merely to quote. (cf. Derrida, 91)

[29] For lack of a better word, the term borrowed from Spinoza's ethics is used here: for it is truly an *affect* that the ever-present possibility of Death (and, therefore, the belief of closeness to God), originating from Dasein's relationship with, and the same time apposition to, the absolute Other of the feelings, or emotions, that are symptomatic of the care for its being.

Once it is established that "I" is only related to, as opposed to equal to, a "self," then it is easily conceivable to reduce the mechanism and the relationship to "self" to precisely the same mechanism of the relationship to the Other. And again, this relationship is vested in the distantiation or bridging the distance between "I" and "not-I," that is, it is arguably a spatial relationship. Now, it is certain that the Other may become the Other in a different, non-religious reading of Dasein's lifeworld, in the reality construed by human perception. Once there is no difference between that which is, and the Other that exists without a place and outside time (as an absolute Other of Death or God), it is revealed that every other is totally other: "*Every other (one) is every (bit) other* [*tout autre est tout autre*], every one else is completely or wholly other. The simple concepts of alterity and of singularity constitute the concept of duty as much as that of responsibility."(Derrida, 68, italics in original). In an ethical extension, one needs to treat the Other neither only as a neighbor, as the Old Testament claims, nor as that who may be salvaged through God's mercy (in an dissymmetrical relationship), but rather as God themselves, who is at every instant unknown, silent and removed, always in the "not-yet" expectation, unpredictable.

> The trembling of the formula "every other (one) is every (bit) other" can also be reproduced. It can do so to the extent of replacing one of the "every others" by God: "Every other (one) is God," or "God is every (bit) other." Such a substitution in no way alters the "extent" of the original formulation, whatever grammatical function be assigned to the various words. In one case God is defined as infinitely other, as wholly other, every bit other. In the other case it is declared that every other one, each of the others, is God inasmuch as he or she is, *like* God, wholly other. (Derrida, 87)

Now, if the previously proposed analogy between the behavior of the State and an individual as far as the mechanism of appropriation of space is concerned, and the analogy between the characteristics of Death and God are both considered, the relationship to another, to all others, is analogous with the relationship to the Other. Put differently, if it is indeed possible to establish the relationship of Dasein to lifeworld in spatial terms, then it is equally possible to understand, and interpret, the relationship to all others as to the Other also in spatial terms – built on the distinction of distance between the "I" (or its image, "self") and the "not-I." The dead, the enemy, and the beloved one all encompass, in their establishing a liminality to Dasein's being a structure for a frame of

reference within which Dasein's actualization is best visible, best comprehensible, and most importantly, further irreducible.[30]

As with the liminality that best illustrates the State's struggle for its ordering, balancing dynamically the centrifugal and centripetal forces that threaten it with either dissolution or implosion, the Dasein's actualization of being, or rather its becoming, lies always against the frame of reference of its own liminality, its own death. One must not forget that, since space is a relation and not an entity on its own (a container of sorts), it is being-with rather being-in-space only that the Dasein's ontological care for its own being is brought for. It is as if it had to be "at hand," visible and relatable, when Dasein can most "feel alive," or actualize itself in its being. This is what Frank Herbert means, exploring philosophical aspects of ontology when elaborating on the concept of a super-human individual, when he has one of his famous characters speak of "the Sleeper that must awaken" in order to truly live and actualize his full human potential in space and in time as in a matrix of possibilities.[31]

That Dasein's actualization, considered in terms of space, is a synchronic becoming rather than a diachronic being-toward (haunted by the concept of a demoniacal origin) is attested to in a number of discourses: the synthesis of analogies these discourses offer is crucial to grasp the present attempt of a reduction of the complexity of the current issue. One finds the analogies in discourses of geography of nodal points which informs the postmodern theory of space (cf. Soja's criticism of temporality of Being and Becoming to dominate social discourse, ignoring the predominantly spatial characteristics of ontological concepts of Dasein, *Etre-la*, and Being-*there*, 118–156), in the ethics of authenticity (cf. Taylor's *Sources of the Self*), and in the ontology of actualization vis-à-vis the other (cf. Nancy's discussion on Dasein and his interpretation of being-with, 21–47).

Such actualization of Dasein is, in effect, the bringing forth of one's "self" as an image and that the corporeal "I" construes as an edifice to base itself upon. This bringing forth is nothing but a bridging of the distance between the signifier and the signified the "I" must exercise to create a "self," neither unconscious nor subconscious (terms that

---

[30] The terminology of "frame/horizon of reference" and "actualization" of individual being within it is inspired by Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (1992), and his *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1992), respectively.

[31] Quoting Frank Herbert's sci-fi classic *Dune* (1965) is in segue to the invocation of the masterful idea Herbert employed when telling the tale of the infinitely smooth space of the desert paid to the author by Deleuze and Guattari in their seminal work on space mentioned above, *Nomadology* (1986).

merely push back the limit for ethical complacency and allow for a barrier between one's being as such and one's actions in particular).

Actualization is always authentic to the degree of rawness. Dasein's actualization lies in minimizing the distance between the "self" as an image of "I" and the lifeworld that encompasses all the "not-I." Because Dasein is ontologically, it cannot but care, in a sense, also for the being of the lifeworld. That is the source of responsibility by which Dasein's interaction/relationship with lifeworld that it created is characterized. Since all others are reducible, and often reduced, into the Other (is it an act of reduction, or promotion, a pontification of sorts of all the other to the Other?), the Dasein cannot but care for, or feel the responsibility for, every other as the Other.

One can concur with Levinas proposing an "I-you" relationship that is based on the self having the other "in front of itself" against the concept of *miteinandersein* of the "we" that incorporates every other and thus reduces it by one's side: into an assemblage of crowd, in a construct of control resembling a mass that dismisses its individual components and becomes a mere desiring machine with surface and no inside.

> Beginning with Plato, the social ideal will be sought for in an ideal of fusion. It will be thought that, in its relationship with the other, the subject tends to be identified with the other, by being swallowed up in a collective representation, a common ideal. It is the collectivity that says 'we', that, turned toward the intelligible sun, toward the truth, feels the other at its side and not in front of itself. This collectivity necessarily establishes itself around a third term, which serves as an intermediary. *Miteinandersein*, too, remains the collectivity of the 'with', and is revealed in its authentic form around the truth. It is a collectivity around something common. … it is in terms of solitude that the analysis of *Dasein* in its authentic form is pursued. … Against this collectivity of the side-by-side, I have tried to oppose the 'I-you' collectivity, … It is the face-to-face without intermediary, and is furnished for us in the eros where, in the other's proximity, distance is integrally maintained, and whose pathos is made of both this proximity and this duality. (Levinas, 53, underlined emphasis mine, italics in original)

While it has been argued that Dasein only distantiates itself from, or bridges distances toward, the Other, the argument never assumes a process of emptying-out of the Dasein that would turn Dasein into a desiring machine, a body-without-organs with only surface interaction possible. This is not true of Dasein because at that instant, the Dasein would lose the care for its being. In other words, it would cease to be ontologically. As a consequence, responsibility to the Other as "not-I" and the Dasein's lifeworld would also

be lost. Dasein cannot empty itself out without losing the care for its being. If that happens, the human individual becomes schizophrenic in the sense of losing touch with their ontological being. Such existence results in "self," a mere construed image of Dasein, to become the only reality of being the individual refers to, effectively believing they are something else than a being – thus thinking about themselves in a schizophrenic, demoniacal manner. Distantiation does presuppose a surface, a boundary between the inside and outside, but this is only insofar as the Dasein distinguishes between "I" and the "not-I" of the lifeworld.

The surface of the individual body that ontologically cares about itself as Dasein may, in the psychology of communication sense, manifest the "I" but it cannot, and does not, in any way express the Dasein and the construct of "self" at the moment of actualization. The instant of actualization of Dasein, or its raw synchronic becoming, is authentic and indeed cancels the distance between the "I" of Dasein and the "not-I" of the lifeworld. Once again, though, this does not imply an emptying-out of Dasein of the ontological care: it merely relates to the lifeworld as to the Other just like it does in relation to the "self." The relation and interaction with the Other underlies the process. It is a common denominator of both the construct of "self" and the relation of Dasein to the lifeworld.

This has profound ramifications for interpretive reading of literary characters. For what does it mean when one quotes "Slothrop, as noted, at least as early as the *Anubis* era, has begun to thin, to scatter" (Pynchon, in *GR*, 517)? Or, an oft-reiterated literary critic's phrase "Pynchon has Oedipa find out that …?" In fact, what is the relationship of literary characters to the lifeworld of the writer's, the critic's, or the readers', Dasein? Can such a relationship be truly extrapolated and investigated? The answer is naturally no, for literary characters are fictitious characters who have no ontic existence in the world. However, a reader can develop a relationship *to* literary characters—and since the relationship must be between the Dasein of the reader and the character, it is, inevitably, a relationship between the "I" of the reader and the Other of the character. The same goes for the writer, who must, having created the characters, and having conjured a set of characteristics for each and every one of them, relate to them in the very same fashion. Finally, and most interestingly, the characters are set in a world of the narrative, with its rules and limiting structure. This world, through and alongside with the characters, demands a certain level of cooperation from the reader to construct the context (and the plot of a narrative, or *fabula*, as will be argued later). The narrative context *is indeed* the

characters' lifeworld in the precisely same way human reality is the lifeworld for human beings. Thus, the manner in which literary characters actualize themselves in their context/lifeworld arguably yields very fruitful interpretive results for the reader and the critic. For the in characters' relationship to the other, their "not-I," one can look for a "meaning," a source of imaginative, creative approach to being-in-the-world that may *inspire* the reader (for lack of a better term, with no evaluations attached) outside the literary context/lifeworld. It is when examining this relationship and interaction that one can truly exercise interpretation, and perhaps offer an inspiring reading of the text. As an exercise, this can indeed be what makes literary criticism worth the status of a discipline important for the human discourse toward the real world. It is in this way that literary criticism adds to the multifarious manner people see and construe reality, the lifeworld of their creative adaptation to the environment. And that is, arguably, at the core of the aesthetic pleasure of reading.

Having said that, it is inevitable to mention, however shortly, the category of aesthetic value: it derives from the mechanism the reader employs to develop a relationship toward a literary character and the narrative. As a result, it is aesthetic value that may inform the reader's actualization in reality, the reader's Dasein's lifeworld. The "value" rests in how the narrative, the characters, and the *fabula* (plot) work as means toward a perceived actualization of characters and, subsequently, the ways in which the reader draws analogies and parallels from the text to their own epistemology of being-in-the-world, to the semantic level of their being. It is because the text is a "lazy machine" based on reader's cooperation and a set of "presuppositions" constantly changing in order to keep up with the unfolding *fabula* (Eco, 37).

In other words, change that is introduced into the narrative and constitutes the *fabula* must coalesce with the structure of perception of the reader, resulting in the reader's enjoyable experience based on the structure of communication shared between the text and the reader, or on the cooperation the reader is able and willing to exert to "make sense" of the text. This process of "making sense" of the text is, in terms of perception and epistemological structure built upon such perception, much the same as the process of "making sense" of the reader's real lifeworld. The reader experiences pleasure from the text when the process of "making sense" of the narrative mirrors, amends, or even enriches, their perception of the reality the reader routinely "makes sense" of every day. Put differently yet, the reader is prone to enjoy the narrative text when the experience is acceptable for the structure of their "reading" of reality, or

lifeworld. To be sure, this theorizing on a reader and a text does not concern itself with any particular individual and a specific text, two real subjects: the concept of "textual cooperation," to be useful in discussing an aesthetic value must occur between a "Model Reader and a Model Text/Author," that is, two discursive strategies. (Eco, 80–81)

What drives a plot? What makes an enjoyable narrative? It is necessarily a change of an outlined situation, an unfolding of events, be it dependent on what characters "do" in the narrative, or what "happens" in the text. This parallels, arguably, events that are ontologically understood (i.e. events that are perceived and "made sense" of by Dasein that cares of its being). For the being of Dasein that is conceived of in diachronic sense, that is as being-toward-death, every decision or circumstance has an irrevocable impact on the next, as well as on the whole of one's life.

For lack of a better term, this "chain of events" and decisions (i.e. decisions generated from Dasein or in the lifeworld it finds itself in) is both causal and accidental. It can be causal for the instances in which one decision "leads" to another, or one event "results" in the next. That is both for changes generate by one's will and by coincidence in the lifeworld, beyond one's control. However, at the same time, such a chain may speak of non-causal sequence and yet the irreversibility of the events' impact on one's being remains qualitatively the same.

Once again, an analogy offers itself between lifeworld and text. Writing is identical to ordering: as long as nothing is written, any text can unfold; as long as there is no order, anything can become a rule to found a future organization. Yet at the very moment something does get written, or an order is formulated based on a trait or a characteristic of a constituent member, ordering and limiting of what can ensue, what can follow, is conceived. This is, arguably, the same for ontological existence of Dasein: as long as there is no being that cares for itself, anything can happen. Once something is, it exists in a particular way, and it has a certain mode of being (for Dasein appropriates its being, which results in both the care and responsibility for it).

Thus one particular mode of being is established, one particular narrative unfolds, and a set of possibilities is available. Which in turns means that possibilities *outside* of this set are not available. Structurally, possibilities are not equal – a particularity of situation leads to a necessarily limited set of events that is inevitably more plausible than another. Because an event is "ambivalent … as something 'simultaneously' *experienced* and *signified*" and always entails an "open relation to a certain *futurity* within the structure of the present" (Armand, 9), one must inquire the realm of the possible through

language. In language, this is best corroborated by modality of the predicate (when a subject is predicated by a modal verb). The "stronger" the modal verb (such as "must," "should," "ought to"), the more it is apparent that the predicate is not certain (in epistemic sense of a modal verb in Germanic languages, such as English), since certainty is expressed by a normal verb, in contrast. In ontology of an individual's being, its best example is probably the human construct of gender. Based on biological sex of an individual, opposite genders are formulated – certain possibilities are either strongly reduced in their plausibility (they are modal insofar that they *can* occur but are unlikely, and therefore not often actualized) or outright rendered impossible. So, while homosexual intercourse is less plausible than heterosexual, it is never impossible, whereas pregnancy is outright impossible for almost half of the population (male individuals).

With every decision, every road one takes whenever there is a fork in the path of one's being, some possibilities are "sacrificed," a possibility is reduced to unreal modality, that is, a road not taken. It is necessary, so that the chosen possibility can be actualized. Such a decision leads by a causal chain to a narrower set of future possible choices. Even when a decision does not bring about a clear causality in following events, the decision-making process still participates in the structural inequality of all possible decisions, rendering some less probable, less plausible, than others. This is what Derrida describes in terms of relationship to the Other, using the terms of sacrifice and the gift of death (as the ultimate sacrifice *for* and at the same time *of* the beloved one to God) (cf. Derrida, 60–77).

It has thus been established that Dasein's being is appropriated and then actualized through the other, others, and the Other. If this is true on the level of the Dasein of an individual, it precipitates the analogy between the individual and the society as an assemblage of such individuals. A society, a culture builds an image of "self," much the same as an individual. Whether this image is called a Jungian social unconsciousness that lies in archetypes,[32] or a Levi-Straussian set of structural interpretive motifs, or Gilbert Durand's mythemes, it suffices to say that a society establishes itself around a set of motifs that together express its identity to a degree within which the interaction of its constituent components is energetically productive and, at the same time, limited by the

---

[32] For a discussion on Jung's contribution to the understanding of symbols, see Borecký's *Porozumění symbolu* (2003), among other works on the topic of "restitutive" (as opposed to "reductionist") concepts of social and cultural imagination on both individual and societal levels. Borecký explains that Jung's "[a]rchetype is not a concrete image or symbol. It is its form that is concretized in symbols and images with respect to social and cultural circumstances. Archetypes are universal, while images are unique." (Borecký, 37)

rules of tension reduction. As a result, a society is a group of individuals and a self-organizing system that appropriates what constitutes it, in an opposition to what it does not. Arguably, a system built of components that are ontologically reacts to inner and outer changes by re-organizing itself cannot fail to define itself and distinguish itself from what it is not. Once again, this is clearest in spatial terms, in terms of where something begins and ends, in terms of inside and outside, in terms of the relation of what one *is* in the opposition to what one *is not*.

In terms of society, the "I" and the "not-I" of the individual perception acquires the plural forms of "us" and "them." These terms are loaded with negative connotations that need not be avoided, quite on the contrary: however politically liberal a society may embrace a set of ascribed values, it is certainly identifying itself precisely in these terms. Therefore, however fashionable it may be to claim "us" and "them" have more in common than not, it is nevertheless a dialectic without which a self-identification cannot happen, and it is constituent of any sense of identity, cultural and societal alike.

As with the "I" and "not-I" on the individual level, the concepts of "us" and "them" are precisely that—concepts, images based on perception and epistemology. They are constructs based in the dialectic of binary oppositions, where what is not supported by material evidence is supplied by image-making, or interpretation that is derived. In other words, the concepts start as comparisons but whenever data is missing, the interpretive power creates that which is not available or that which is unknown, and builds a narrative of the others with great effort to maintain the dialectic balance of self-identification and to supply the missing parts of the current binary. This is a matter of degrees: where nothing is known, an entire narrative or mythology is construed that supplies the image of the others.

What is beneath this process is an exercise of power, of course. The question of power is already complex within a society (the formulation of the "in-group" derives from the "power distance" research of individual societies[33]), yet the mechanism of "making sense" of the others is still analogous to the individual level distinction of ontological being. Once power is introduced into the dialectic of the interaction between "us" and "them," avenues are made to appropriation of the others in terms of geographic, and subsequently cultural, expansion. That is how an empire must be created, and how

---

[33] A thorough analysis of the construction of "us" within a society, however based on reductionist methodology of sociometrics, is offered in the famous work *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* by Geert and Gert Jan Hofstede. See especially the chapter "I, We, and They" (73–114).

the appropriation of space by State changes the smooth space of the unknown into the striated space of the ruled and limited.

The analogy between the individual's appropriation of space and the State's is not without problems – societal construction of others is multilayered, depending on who is in position of power to create the image of "us." In society, the construction of others changes with time and it does not follow the same tendency as the individual one: while individual's construct of "I" and its relationship (being-with, becoming-through) to "not-I" may arguably follow a developmental decentralization (in terms of Jean Piaget's benign, and socially controlled dissolution of ego into the society),[34] the societal image of "them" lies solely in power relations (in terms of Schmitt's concept of societal, political interaction *as conflict*[35]).

Even though the "us" and "them" is founded on power distinction, there comes a dissolution of the two images, just like with "I" into the societal "not-I." The more intensive the interaction with the others (or "clash" as it was coined by Huntington, the author of the seminal controversy of *Clash of Civilizations*), the closer the dissolution of "us." For what is the interaction than appropriation, in which power decides the direction of the flow of ideas, values, and norms (motifs and archetypes) between two groups. However, since territorialization is always immediately opposed by de-territorialization, the flow is never purely one-directional and subversive influence from the outside penetrates the society's "us" with glorious but, more often, disastrous consequences for either of the societies. What this means is that if a society, organized into the State that expands itself as an empire, clashes with another society and does not physically destroy it in a short amount of time (as with the conquest of the Aztec and Maya empires by the Spanish), a counter-influence commences that arguably "corrodes" the center (as may have been the case of the colonization of India by the British). While the "empire starts at home," it projects outward and must expand.[36] In terms of the State as a societal

---

[34] See, among others, Borecký (2007).

[35] For Schmitt (whose concept is included, once again, to allude to Derrida's discourse of the Other, cf. Derrida, 103), the Other is construed as "friend" and "enemy" precisely because of the structural notion of "not-I," that is, a physical alterity that threatens the "self." In ontological terms, this is analogous to the threat of loss of being for Dasein. This construction is formative for epistemology of the lifeworld because it is part of "making sense" of the world: "The friend, enemy, and combat concepts *receive their meaning* precisely because *they refer* to the real possibility of physical killing." (Schmitt, 33)

[36] The empire starts at home with an oft-violent unification of homeland, an imposition of brutal tools of tension reduction within the system – examples abound from all over the world and from all historic times: the Greek city states' unification by Sparta and subsequent Macedonian conquest, Roman destruction of the Etruscan neighbors on the home peninsula, Spanish *reconquista* the exact end of which marks the voyage to the New World, British enclosures of Scotland, U.S. destruction of American Indian cultures and expulsion

organization, the system that achieves minimal tension reduction by uniformity of its component parts extinguishes energy sources within itself, from their interaction, and requires energy from the outside. What this expansion brings, however, is not only energy in shape of material wealth to the center but an emergence of periphery of the empire that must be continuously maintained at all costs (since there is a tension that produces energy) by economic, political, and military force. The maintenance drains the center off the energy that could otherwise be spent on further tension reduction within the system. What ensues, some may argue *inevitably*, is a dissolution that is manifested by loss of peripheries, violent changes in the center, or an utter implosion of the State empire that brings down the center and dissolves the current system beyond repair (by currently available means). It is because the effort to maintain the periphery requires centrifugal exertion of energy that may empty the center, or vice versa, the effort to keep the center without changes requires centripetal import of diversified elements to bring energy in. This incessant import of energy in shape of manpower, raw materials, technological know-how, or a socio-cultural momentum (as was discussed above) subverts the center.[37] Hence the claim that "the center cannot hold": the empire ultimately strikes back at itself and the undercurrent of de-territorialization subverts the expansive, outward appropriation of space.[38]

As was suggested above, however, a disaster for an empire in the form of dissolution, revolution, or implosion is a qualitative, evaluating interpretation, the wording of which inherently sympathizes with the societal organization of State. Stripped off the emotional approach of pathos that yearns for order and growing tension reduction (uniformity) inside and outside of the system, the end of an empire is but a change in cultural flows, often followed by great renaissance in the ex-peripheries, often opening vistas for new centers to arise, to thrive, and to claim energy from the environment that

---

of the French and the Spanish, Genghis Khan's unification of Mongolian clans, Japanese Shogunate marking the end of the Sengoku Jidai, repeated unification of China (with the earliest marking the end of Seven Warring States period, the latest marking the foundation of the People's Republic of China).

[37] The case of the Roman empire bringing in ever more "barbaric" influences, or the more evident rise of Mamluk empire and the end of Kiev Russia, where troops brought in as elite forces take over the State power.

[38] These concepts have been adapted from the literary application of power (in language, in being, and in event) and "un-power" in *The Dialectics of Late Capital: James, Balzac and Critical Theory* by Erik S. Roraback (2007). For a much deeper analysis of the concept, which is taken here as a mere inspiration in terminology, see especially the author's readings of such theorists as Jean-Luc Nancy, Maurice Blanchot (e.g., 4, 246–248). Here, the concept of power/un-power dialectic is directly applied in the spatial terms of center/periphery and combined, of course, with the Deleuzian terrirorialization/de-territorialization.

used to be consumed by the State in centripetal demand. This energy is manifested by raw materials, manpower, capital, and, of course, power.

Nevertheless, the end of an empire is disastrous for the center, one way or another, and often brings a lot of human suffering to both the center and peripheries. While the collapse of great empires brought an end to vast economic systems based on, for example, slave labor imported from peripheries at the cost of great human sacrifice, the same collapse brought about epochs of long uncertainty and insecurity, also marked by loss of human lives, descent into cultural chaos, loss of technologies, wisdom, and destruction of cultural artifacts. Thus, it is important to consider the dissolution of an empire as neither good or bad – it is a nodal point of human history at which great changes can occur, and a lot of potential "at hand." In other words, the disorder that is brought about by an end of any large societal organization (State in any form) results in highly elevated levels of tension among the surviving constituent elements (pockets of remaining bureaucracy, clans or social classes, surviving institutions, or even individuals) that translates into energy: energy that can feed into a new system. This situation presents human individuals and groups with tremendous possibilities for new development, with outstanding chances to attempts for the different.

From yet another perspective, destruction of an empire is a cataclysmic moment at which individuals, as well as societies face death – either epistemologically, in terms of the collapse of cultural systems (with norms, values, ideas), or physically, when material reality, the lifeworld construed by a society crumbles or is destroyed as spoils of war. It is a moment when their being may be lost, may be taken from them, and as such, it is a moment at which actualization lies in physical survival, depends on appropriation of the physically immediate space, and in building a distance between their Dasein and the looming destruction or suffering. This is a moment ripe with opportunities for appropriation, new waves of territorialization by societies but also a chance for de-territorialization by individuals.

A society may rebuild the State trying to find and employ new mechanisms of tension reduction in the system, new rules of ordering and power distribution. Individuals can, at the same time, explore new avenues for deterritorializing the State-created striated space by establishing and following different lines of flight from power, vectors of energy flows that allow for actualization of being and becoming-through-others.

Pynchon's novels thrive on such liminal states of societies: whether the narratives unfold within or on the backdrop of cataclysmic events, or offer alternatives to the State,

they explore avenues for de-territorialization. On the level of individual characters, of narrative strategies and techniques, or of global organization of the text opening opportunities for meta-textual interpretations, Pynchon unveils the nodal points, moments at which tension reduction is at its minimal and energy can be funneled into newly available flows, creating alternative lines of flight that have always one focus: actualization of the individual, liberation from the striated space of the State and the War Machine.

4. LIVING PYNCHON'S SPACE

4.1. Literary Character in Space – Development in Pynchon's Work

When discussing Pynchon's works, one cannot fail to notice that most of them involve a motion in space that is significant for the plot and for the characters. In other words, Pynchon always has his characters travel for revelation, always displaces them from their initial environment. The emphasis in narrative technique, textual organization, and plot development on the characters' motion in space of is the leading reason to include Pynchon's work among postmodern fiction prose.

It is obvious that pairing, juxtaposing, or outright connecting characters in between the novels is highly specious. To do so within the novels is a stepping stone on which it an inter-textual comparison can be founded. The inter-textual comparison tries to establish the relevance of the resulting reading and interpretations as that which is, in fact, supported by text (and by the work as a whole). To open this method to a further doubt: The intra-textual comparison of characters and their engagement with literary space of the narrative is based on the assumption that Pynchon's novels indeed come from the hand of one writer. Thus, together they constitute a grand narrative, a single discourse that must be, by definition, coherent to a certain degree. Only when this is accepted can one discern regularities, reiterated themes, and observe a development of any sort.

The requirement for displacement in the novels correlates with the creation of a "small world"[39] of the narrative, through which the author, any author, introduces change to the characters' being: the change predicates the static, reificatory quality of the character. To which extent Pynchon's works actually do this (or defy this requirement) offers itself to an interpretation that explores how the characters interact with their environment. That said, the interaction within the "small world" of the narrative requires cooperation—not only on the level of narrative strategy, that is, from the reader—but also from the characters themselves. For if the notion of their propensity to change did not allow for a change valid in the "small world" of the narrative, the plot could not unfold, and the predicate would not become actualized, it would remain a mere possibility (cf. Eco's discussion of Peirce's semiotic pragmatism 58–61). This ontological nature of a

---

[39] The concept of "small world" is understood here in terms it is explored in Lubomír Doležel's *Fikce a historie v období postmoderny* (2008). Its application to narrative strategy and text interpretation is quoted here from Umberto Eco's *Lector in fabula* (2010).

text, an epistemological instrument *par excellence*, reiterates the mode of being of the reader, any reader.

The displacement does not have to be necessarily spatial for a text to develop, but Pynchon's works are constructed around a motion in space: in many aspects, and from many critical perspectives (travel literature, postmodern geography, and postcolonial discourse), his work is geographic in the proper sense, always embracing a number of locations and—given the chronological fragmentation of the narrative—emphasizing the spatial, as opposed to the temporal, aspect of the narrative as such.[40]

Con Coroneos observes in the introduction to his brilliant *Space, Conrad and Modernity* (2002), that "a number of distinguished thinkers […] elevated that remarkable split between 'dead space' and 'live time' into a cultural logic. What was modernity but the embodiment of time consciousness or, more finely, of the emancipatory value of time? […] Postmodernity, on the contrary, is the advent of live space and dead time. Space is our limit and our emancipatory horizon." (Coroneos, 4) While building on the distance in time created by modernist interpretive narration, Coroneos elaborates the shift towards the fascination with space in postmodernity. He ascribes it to materialism that sprang from the fact of *closed space*—a spatial representation of the world in which everything has been mapped and discovered. However, Coroneos asks an open question "Why is e-mail any more 'spatial' than a smoke signal?" (Coroneos, 5) to highlight the possibility that the identified focus on the spatial in postmodern writing is not so novel, rather it is the concept of spatiality in literary criticism that has changed paradigmatically.

In some works, and in case of selected characters, the journey is self-imposed. It may take shape of revelations of a mystery, discovery of a plot or of a self—this is the case of Herbert Stencil in *V.*, Oedipa Maas in *COL49*, Tyrone Slothrop in *GR*, Yashmeen's or Kit Traverse's case in *AtD*, and in certain aspects the memories of Zoyd Wheeler and Frenesi Gates in *VNL*. In one novel, Pynchon's protagonists cannot but obey the traveling urge, for it is required by their occupation: that is in *M&D*. Put differently, there are various degrees, to which Pynchon has his characters follow a trace or he has them "thrown" into motion, in order to formulate the world of his narrative. This is unlike modernist literature that "throws" characters into a static world and explores the conscious or unconscious depths of characters (cf. Camus, Faulkner, Woolf), unveiling

---

[40] On Pynchon's works (and *V.* as one example) as a travel literature, see, among others, Russell (2000). For attributing Pynchon's work major significance in being informed by, and at the same time epitomizing, postmodern notion of geography, see Horvath and Malin (2000). For inclusion of Pynchon's works in a discussion on postcolonial discourse (comparing Pynchon with Morrison), see, for example, Patell (2001).

layers of time (emotions and memories). Pynchon, as will be argued below, does not have his characters "inhabit" a literary space, but rather "create" it: "one feels that instead of the characters living *in* their environment, environment lives *through* the characters, who thereby tend to become figures illustrating a process. ..." (Tanner, 53). Tony Tanner, writing about *V.* as early as 1976 captures in a lucid manner what is postmodern about Pynchon's work: it is the emphasis on the spatial, and therefore synchronic, as opposed to the temporal, diachronic (and obsessed with being-toward-death or a demoniacal origin, as was outlined in the discussion of methodology above).

Pynchon's work undergoes a gradual development, and so does the engagement of his characters in literary space. The development was noted early on, as Mendelson notices when only Pynchon's earlier novels had been written (*V.*, *COL49*, and *GR*). Divorcing from the modernist insight of delving into character's psyche to uncover "the origins of human action in the depths of personal psychology" (Mendelson, 5), Pynchon initially seems to have sought the action in one's exterior, albeit within the sight of his characters. Yet, as Levine observes not long after the first publication of *GR*, Pynchon suggests a shift from the character to a figure: from an individual shaping the object world to a human engaging the environment. "Character, in traditional fiction, is the clearest emblem of the elect—dominating and controlling the action of the world. And Pynchon creates character by imagining it as participating in the energies of the world created around it." (Levine, 123–24). Engagement stands here for a dialectic, twofold, and two-directional, influence between the character and its environment.

In spite of the difference in the origin of characters' displacement (for setting out for a journey seems to be but a euphemism in some cases), there is a discernable theme that connects them. It does not matter whether the characters plunge themselves into the unknown in hope of reaching a revelation, or whether they are sent onto a mission involuntarily: Pynchon makes it clear that no such thrust is possible without a full investment of oneself into the process. Therefore, an appropriation of the space on the individual level cannot be done without a complete immersion of one's being into the space: in other words, the "I" of the character, the "self" that a character develops becomes fully possible only if the division between the "I" of the character and the "not-I" of space is blurred, and ultimately erased. Because the "I" is in no way immaterial, this immersion into space is *corporeal*, or rather, *visceral*, that is, not merely epistemological ("making sense" of the lifeworld) but rather ontological (being-in-the-world).

If Pynchon's gradually takes the agency away from his characters, it is to make the reader more clearly aware of this immersion. The characters' displacement in earlier novels (*V.*, *COL49*) starts off as a voluntary journey, but the mission careers in *GR*, *VNL*, and *M&D* the motion in space and into space takes on a more pressing tone. It is in *AtD* where the epistemological is swept aside and the ontology of characters come into forefront: Chums of Chance are exposed to the raw possibility of ceasing to be should they choose to abolish their clandestine motion in space – their improbable existence is derived from the never-ending mission they are on, sharing the fate of comic-book heroes. The readers is never absolutely sure what their existence in the small world of the narrative is – whether it is fictitious even in the fiction of the narrative, or whether it is supposed to be real in the context of the narrative. Their reality depends on interaction with other characters, and their mission.

In his first two works, Pynchon's characters seem to exercise a degree of free will, following their personal agendas (Herbert Stencil searching for V., Oedipa Maas in her open-ended search for the meaning of Pierce Inverarity's estate). In *GR*, however, the level of choice is drastically reduced, and the characters find out they may well be controlled by, rather than in control of, the events around them. The prime example of Tyrone Slothrop and the search for the past hidden from him, veiled by his unconscious infancy, offers a more sinister look at the control a character can exercise: the more Slothrop finds out, the less he is sure about his own control, his search turns into flight from control that he feels about, and culminates in the famous physical dispersion on the crossroads of possibilities. Yet Pynchon elaborates on the principle by applying it to other characters, again and again, throughout the novel. Whether it is Enzian, the charismatic *Oberst* of the *Schwarzkommando*, leading his people to their ultimate goal as a race and culture of the Zone (firing the Rocket 00001), or his counterpart, Weissmann-Blicero, searching in vain for the resurrection of pleasure that power used to bring him, or the members of Counterforce—Pirate Prentice, Roger Mexico, Katje Borgesius—turning against their former masters or employers in an effort to retrieve Slothrop from the web of lies and danger: they all ultimately perceive their effort dwarfed by the grand function of the (institutional) machinery that needs to continue, and will, with or without them.

Unweaving a mystery "There is more behind and inside V. than any of us had suspected. … God grant that I may never be called upon to write the answer, either here or in any official report."(*V.*, 49), revealing a plot "Things did not delay in turning curious. If one object behind her discovery of what she was to label the Tristero System

or often only The Tristero … were to bring to an end her encapsulation in her tower, then that night's infidelity with Metzger would logically be the starting point for it; logically. That's what would come to haunt her most, perhaps: the way it fitted, logically, together. As if … there were revelation in progress all around her."(*COL49*, 31), or unfolding one's past (*GR*) all invite the decision to plunge into the unknown knowing one's perception is about to fail, because "The act of metaphor then was a thrust at truth and a lie, depending where you were: inside, safe, or outside, lost.**"** (*COL49*, 105). It is unthinkable to stylize oneself into the place of a private eye without the personal, physical involvement. It is also impossible to discover own infant past that connects one to the secret weapon everyone is after without risking personal involvement that is gets out of one's control, and what Slothrop may have thought was his own body turns out to be Their product just like the *Gerät* "He wants to preserve what he can of her from Their several entropies, from Their softsoaping and Their money: maybe he thinks that if he can do it for her he can also do it for himself … although that's awful close to nobility for Slothrop and The Penis He Thought Was His Own."(*GR*, 307).

This stems from the highly individualized approach the characters employ. It is their sense of individual freedom—however arguably conceived of—that they fully adhere to when beginning their quests. As Patell argues (110–126), Oedipa Maas's quest in *COL49* alludes to, exploits, and mocks detective fiction precisely on the basis of the firm belief in individual freedom. This could be said about Stencil's effort in *V.* as well, but the private detective genre does not come back to the center of the plot in Pynchon's work until the newest of his works, the *noir* novel *Inherent Vice* (2009).

Patell's work *Negative Liberties* (2001) discusses the relation of individual freedom of characters in Pynchon's works and the social environment. He departs from the notion that Pynchon diagnoses individualism as either "inherently pathological" to the society or as "a dream yet to be realized, marred by its historical but not conceptual relation to certain forms of oppression." (Patell, 30). Patell exemplifies how the novelist employs either of the two concepts in respective works; *V.*, *COL49*, and *GR* depict individualism according to the former concept, leaving the individual characters struggle against society/State and eventually getting crushed by it; *VNL*, according to the latter concept, thrusting a communitarian effort of characters onto the society, thus creating an island that makes the liberal ideal possible.

He continues by exploring individualism as *possessive individualism* in Locke's concept of human nature and in Jefferson's political application of it along the lines of

materialistic philosophy, equating the pursuit of happiness with pursuit of property. That, he explains, classifies life "next to food, clothing, land, and other goods as property, as something to be owned." He then notes that "Pynchon worries that this is a dangerous way of thinking about individuality because it leads us to think that what we have determines who we are." (Patell, 93).

Patell then debates how the struggle for individual freedom against the societal impersonal pressures brings characters in Pynchon's novels to a standstill, or destroys them in the process. This is the ominous entropy that has been observed as a dominant principle in so many Pynchon's works. It is the exhaustion of character throwing meaning on clues from reality. It becomes more, as the characters throw themselves onto the web of meanings, trying to decide validity on the—mistaken—basis of intensity of clues. Yet, such reading treats characters as doomed actors, perceiving reality as a passive environment waiting for them and reacting.

Tony Tanner, elaborating on the theme of entropy in Pynchon's early work, confirms that Pynchon may be wary of the individualism defined against the environment. When noticing the omnipresent hints at processes that dehumanize the world, Tanner connects them to the objectification of people almost thirty years before Patell. "What [Pynchon] shows—and here the juxtaposition of the historical and the personal dimensions is vital—is a growing tendency, discernible on all levels and in the most out-of-the-way pockets of modern history, for people to regard or use other people as objects, and, perhaps even more worryingly, for people to regard themselves as objects." (Tanner, 54).

However inconclusively insane it seems, Stencil sustains his animate nature by deliberately avoiding closure on V.: "Finding her: what then? Only that what love there was to Stencil had become directed entirely inward, toward this acquired sense of animateness. … To sustain it he had to hunt V.; but if he should find her, where else would there be to go but back into half-consciousness? He tried not to think, therefore, about any end to the search. Approach and avoid." (*V.*, 51)

In the course of the mystery unfolding in *COL49*, the pursuer runs out of her reasons, allies, and supporting evidence. The odds mount against her, and at last she is left with indeterminacy, and only a vague hope for a more conclusive resolution "to restore order to the process of signification" (Patell, 123). Oedipa Maas ends up with nothing but an uncertain chance that a Tristero representative will make an appearance as a bidder at the auction of Inverarity's postal stamps—yet she remains clueless as to what

should follow: "She had only some vague idea about causing a scene violent enough to bring the cops into it and find out that way who the man really was." (*COL49*, 151)

Towards the end of his search for his past in *GR*, Tyrone Slothrop is on a run from his omnipotent enemies, however vaguely-defined. His absorption is too deep into the realm of the unconscious past, yet his predators can intercept him even there. Thus his "self"—as long as it is represented by his physical being—remains the only part of him they can reach, and he takes upon himself disguises that gradually consume him and disperse his "self." From Iain Scuffling (war correspondent), to Rocketman, to Max Schlepzig (a Russian soldier), and Plechazunga (a pig hero), he dissolves in the countryside as a cross himself in order to escape his final siege: "At last, lying one afternoon spread-eagled at his ease in the sun, at the edge of one of the ancient Plague towns he becomes a cross himself, a crossroads, a living intersection where the judges have come to set up a gibbet for a common criminal who is to be hanged at noon." (*GR*, 637).

The characters' initial reliance on the certainty of individual freedom and the possibility of choice, however, is not drained out of Pynchon's discussion. While seemingly uncertain or annihilated, the individual freedom they entertain enabled choice of their inconclusiveness or their demise. Pynchon, in these works, adheres to the idea that such an option exists and there is such a way out of the impossibility of their situation as a personal agenda or plan, or even a self-imposed dissolution. While Stencil's search leaves him to the insanity of looking for more clues without him ever wanting to, in fact, approach or find V., Oedipa Maas's search results in her doubting her own sanity and questioning the meaning of Inverarity's legacy, which is productive in terms of making sense of the lifeworld she is, together with the reader, one of the inheritors of (and perhaps that is Inverarity's true legacy). She is given the resolution of open-ended, yet defined options, and a chance to verify one of them (i.e. either that Tristero exists and she is not insane, or that her quest was a spin-off of her own unsolved problems with the America she projected). Slothrop's case seems worse, and yet Pynchon does not leave him abandoned, without means of flight. Although Slothrop's options run terribly narrow, he does escape all attempts of his enemies to destroy him (Pointsman's failed mission to castrate him) and dissolves into a concept rather than a physically autonomous entity.

When Patell brings the discussion of individual freedom to *M&D*, he seems to shift the question from characters to the overall context. He identifies the question on the level of human proprietorship, and the social status derived from it: slaves or wage-

earners, depending on their position from the Line the astronomer and the surveyor delineate, drawing the reader's attention to the concept of tyranny, and turning a blind eye to the characters' involvement. Pursuing his argument about the possibility of communitarian thrust against societal oppression, while preserving the ideal of individual freedom within, Patell continues to explore *VNL* in comparison with *COL49*, leaving *M&D* aside.

In his later works, Pynchon derives the action totally from the "outside" of his characters' being, always just beyond the grasp of his characters: Mason and Dixon are sent to go to South Africa and to America, they are stranded on the island of St. Helena (Mason, with Maskelyne mad, and the apparition of his deceased wife roaming the coast), and they go back to England when they have no other work, and no money, always almost involuntarily, with a sense of nostalgia (however they are fleeing the horrors of the places—South African colony, or nightmares from the past—Mason's deceased Rebbekah encountered on St. Helen). Ultimately, in *Against the Day*, Chums of Chance are assigned a mission without which they would cease to exist, let alone thrive. They *are only* characters, that is, they do not have a being on their own in the small world of the narrative: their existence derives precisely from the narrative imposed on them, mythological creatures (or graphic novel heroes) who are brought into the reality of the narrative only as long as they obey their purpose that predicates them.

4.2. Characters Engaging Space: Immersion or Visceral Investment?

Throughout Pynchon's work, there is a tangible preoccupation with space. Space is not a neutral element, it is an ontological concern, a field of troubled epistemological exploration of one's mode of being.[41] Space is not a passive literary environment which Pynchon would let his characters (as well as his narrative voices) simply inhabit, move about, and populate, playing the backdrop and do little or nothing in the unfolding of plot(s). It is a lifeworld which they need to engage actively, changing it—and being changed by it—in the process: once again, there is a discernible development of the

---

[41] Among others, for example, Schieweg writes in her article on geographical representations and cultural identities in Pynchon's works: "A plenitude of historico-cultural layers lies beneath the wastelandish depictions, rendering landscape as substantially more than just contextualized scenery. Indeed, landscape in Pynchon's works figures as a sort of reflective matrix." (108), continuing the tradition of the emphasis on the spatial in Pynchon's novels: "On all sides the environment is full of hints of exhaustion, extinction, dehumanization; and *V.* is a very American novel in as much as one feels that instead of the characters living *in* their environment, environment lives *through* the characters, who thereby tend to become figures illustrating a process." (Tanner, 53).

power that space has over the characters in terms of the actualization of their mode of being, ranging from the diachronic being-toward-death and the synchronic becoming. By assigning different characters either of the two modes of being, Pynchon urges the reader to discern the ethical implications the two modes of being generate.

If Stencil in *V.* pushes forward to pursue another clue, another trace (real or imaginary), and ends up at an unknown, random spot without any clue or previous plan, or Oedipa in *COL49* is led by clues into places she wouldn't venture before, they are both *consumed* by their search and by the geographical locations (with Oedipa set in California, and negotiating the meaning of America, while Stencil lost in the traveling mayhem of a constant gazer and interceptor). In *GR*, Slothrop ultimately *becomes* a part of the landscape of the Zone, which only saves him from the pursuers male- and benevolent (White Visitation or Counterforce). In *M&D*, the surveyors actively *create* the environment, by the virtue of their occupation (mapping the Earth's position in the universe), and, even, carving out future historical division of America from a previously untamed, subjunctive continent by running the Line. In *VNL*, characters defend the space that *means* their community, and finally, in *AtD*, "bilocations" and "double refraction" of light (through "spar") *allow* characters to move about in the actualized space of reality and live in the potential space of fiction *at the same nodal point* (time-space).

It is precisely in the engagement of the space that the characters' knowledge, will, and freedom to make decisions are crucial. Whatever the level of their individual liberty at the moment (as far as power over their "next move"), Pynchon makes it clear that ultimately, his characters become a part of a greater, and more sinister, endeavor (i.e., the stratification of space as the means of territorialization through State space appropriation) unless they embrace the potential not to, refuse the commodification, and become nodes of de-territorialization, the sparks of de-ordering of the system that has striated the space, and produce pockets of smooth space of the possible. The appropriation of space is executed by individuals but never for them. Individuals take part in creating networks of unlimited reach (be it secret societies in the U.S. of the '60s, industrial cartels across the Atlantic of the '40s, or the British imperial enterprise of the 1700s) rendering the individuals obsolete as actors in the world. The endeavor turns them not merely into the proverbial pawns, but rather into carriers of whatever the network requires (raw materials, labor, new realms and markets). They partake in the process of encapsulating unlimited, non-quantified space into a well-defined, delineated territory. Characters who refuse this do so by defying entropy by acts of ethical decency (sacrifice, help, love). Such acts bring

about risk to their corporeal existence but liberate their epistemology of being, thus making is possible for de-territorialization to begin, subverting the grand inexorable ordering/appropriation of space in the process of State's territorialization.

How can this be achieved, if the characters are exactly those who escape power, avoid pressure, and resist impersonal enterprise? Pynchon serves his readers the disturbing image of using individual human beings, or rather, their innate ability to subdue to the principle of "making sense": assigning meaning to objectified world through language. As was discussed before: If language grows in volume by ever-increasing number of signs and their combinations—based on the mechanism of productive metaphor, which is necessary for converting the distant and the past into the reachable and the present—it is subject to the process of entropy on its level of communication. In other words, the growing complexity leads to bifurcations of meaning. This multiplication of meaning(s), however productive on the level of language itself, makes the process of signification increasingly opaque, and strips it of its function as denominating reality. In effect, it creates a gulf between the natural environment and provides less and less guidance as to what such and such thing actually *is*, while elaborating on what it *can be* through numerous simulating meanings. It distantiates speakers from what they actually need to express. Pynchon has little hope for Stencil who loses himself waiting for yet another "trace" or clue, showing it even on the grammatical level (Stencil always refers to himself in third person). Or, for that matter, for Oedipa, to whom the web of suspicions and indirect clues brings a dialectic of reason and insanity (paranoiac ordering against open bifurcation of possibilities).

The process of distantiation in language complements that which culture does on the material level. In *GR*, Slothrop witnesses the ultimate distantiation from the natural in the wonderland of chemistry, bringing about the inanimate, the anorganic, perfectly new, detached and unaddressed death-machine culminating in the *Gerät*, the weapon of mass destruction. However, Slothrop escapes this, in an arguably post-modern victory over the matter, by dissolving into a concept that others can perceive but cannot pin down (thus he may no longer be targeted by other humans, or by the Rocket, for that matter). The glimmer of optimism finds its way to Pynchon's doomsday fiction of the human effort to lose touch with the world.

Pynchon's elaboration on the process occurring within the super-human networks that invite de-territorialization could be interpreted as mythological, political, or ethical. In ontological terms, the process could be attested to by a level of what may be called

visceral investment. It appears that while Slothrop achieves this on the very physical level meaning his dissolution, later characters can entertain an even more optimistic chance: it is a chance to re-negotiate the epistemological relationship between the individual and their lifeworld, thus bringing ontological possibilities from the realm of the potential to the realm of the actualized. At the beginning of the process, there is undoubtedly the requirement of physical immersion into space. However, it does not stop in there: Pynchon's narrative is synchronic, that is, there is no space awaiting his characters passively. Pynchon's characters co-create the space epistemologically, with the logic of the "small world" concept as a process. This he accomplishes through layers of narrative, in which characters' voice gives shape to the literary space. The omniscient narrator that objectifies what transpires for the characters is subdued or at times abolished altogether because the reader can only follow what the characters perceive, project, and "make sense" of. The characters are, by definition, unreliable narrators, but Pynchon makes sure that this is enhanced by their delusions ("stencilization" of information in *V.*), paranoia (Oedipa's seeing the W.A.S.T.E. signs everywhere), drug-induced hallucinations (Slothrop's dream of his harmonica), wishful thinking (subjunctive world of slave-free world in *M&*D), hidden agendas (Zoyd's and Frenesi's half-truths to Prairie in *VNL*), or lies and fantasies (Vibe's version of Webb's death to Kit or Chums of Chance's flight under the sands of Gobi in search for Shambhala in *AtD*). In *Inherent Vice*, Pynchon seems to blur the layers of reality of the past and what is present in the protagonist's personal history (Doc Sportello insists more on what he remembers rather than admitting what he sees). Thus *visceral investment* requires the individual to plunge themselves into space, realizing it as an active element in the actualization of their becoming, stripping themselves of their cultural protection of tools that produce meanings – *investing* themselves fully without an existential alternative.

This is a chance to create new matrices for meaning, new patterns that provide one with a structurally new environment for different interpretation. Thus, a chance for a new world, where Bad History has not happened, arises. In other words, Pynchon maps and identifies nodal points of intensity in which his characters can and do invest themselves thus. This is where Pynchon allows the Preterite to stand a chance, where the fight against the global, omnipresent mechanisms of appropriation by the impersonal or anorganic is possible.

In other words, Pynchon gradually shows his characters as less free in the sense of possessive individualism, but with more possibilities of resistance. Thus, in *V.*, Pynchon provokes the reader to take pity on Stencil, for he may represent us all:

> [Stencil] had discovered, however, what was pertinent only to his purpose: that she'd been connected, though perhaps only tangentially, with one of those grand conspiracies or foretastes of Armageddon which seemed to have captivated all diplomatic sensibilities in the years preceding the Great War. V. and conspiracy. Its particular shape governed only by the surface accidents of history at the time.
>
> Perhaps history this century, … is rippled with gathers in its fabric such that if we are situated, as Stencil seemed to be, at the bottom of a fold, it's impossible to determine warp, woof or pattern anywhere else. By virtue, however, [begin 165] of existing in one gather it is assumed there are others, compartmented off into sinuous cycles each of which comes to assume greater importance than the weave itself and destroys any continuity. … Perhaps if we lived on a crest, things would be different. We could at least see. (*V.*, 164–65)

Later in the novel, Pynchon supplies the reader with an approach closer to V. (or one of her incarnations) and to those who are not doomed to an unceasing, paranoid search for places but to a colonial, power-ridden discourse that reveals how unsettling the commodification of reality may actually be:

> Godolphin laughed at her. "There's been a war, Fräulein. Vheissu was a luxury, an indulgence. We can no longer afford the like of Vheissu."
> "But the need," she protested, "its void. What can fill that?"
> He cocked his head and grinned at her. "What is already filling it. The real thing. Unfortunately. … Whether we like it or not that war destroyed a kind of privacy, perhaps the privacy of dream. … The discretion, the sense of comedy about the Vheissu affair are with us no more, our Vheissus are no longer our own, or even confined to a [begin 269] circle of friends; they're public property. (*V.*, 268–69)

As was said above, Oedipa Maas in *COL49* may doubt her sanity (140–41), but her "thrust at truth" (cf. *COL49*, 105) leads her on to see the America's disinherited (148–49) and to unveil what "making sense" of her lifeworld brings to her, and how it liberates her mode of being:

> Either Oedipa in the orbiting ecstasy of a true paranoia, or a real Tristero. For there either was [begin 151] some Tristero beyond the appearance of the legacy America, or there was just America and if there was just America then it seemed the only was she could continue, and manage to be at all relevant to it, was as an alien, unfurrowed, assumed full circle into some paranoia. … She was not sure what she'd do when the bidder revealed himself. She had only some vague idea about causing a scene violent enough to bring the cops into it and find out that way who the man really was. (*COL49*, 150–51)

In *GR*, Pynchon's anti-hero Slothrop famously dissolves into the countryside crossroads (*GR*, 637, see quote above). However, it is in the gradual failure to perceive Slothrop by other characters that the reader is introduced to the idea of ultimate liberty through scattering as a subject, precisely because Slothrop finds out that he has never been a subject, but always an object of someone else's machinations and schemes (industrial-military research). The character of Pig Bodine, refusing the commodified vision of the lifeworld and creates it actively through ethical decisions that negate the seeming inexorability of entropy in others' being is the last one who can "see" Slothrop:

> Seaman Bodine looks up suddenly, canny, unshaven face strung by all the smoke and unawareness in the room. He's looking straight at Slothrop (being one of the few who can still see Slothrop as any sort of integral creature any more. Most of the others gave up long ago trying to hold him together, even as a concept—"It's just got too remote" 's what they usually say). Does Bodine now feel his own strength may someday soon not be enough either: that soon, like all the others, he'll *have* to let go? *But somebody's got to hold on, it can't happen to all of us—no, that's be too much … Rocketman, Rocketman. You poor fucker.* (*GR*, 755, italics in original)

Mason and Dixon learn, towards the end of their service to the sinister mission to separate the free world from the world of the slavery (since Pynchon entertains the notion that the surveyors are aware thereof), that it is in America, in the truly New Continent, where the possible can become actualized, where space is not yet striated and can be engaged in novel ways that may bring about a better world:

> There is a love of complexity, here in America, Shelby declares,— pure Space waits the Surveyor,— no previous Lines, no fences, no streets to constrain polygony however extravagant,— especially in Maryland, where, encourag'd by the Re-survey Laws, warranted properties may possess hundreds of sides,— their angles pushing outward and

> inward,— all Sides zigging and zagging, going ahead and doubling back, making Loops
> inside Loops,— America, 'twas ever, Poh! to Simple Quadrilaterals.
> [begin 587] "Eeh," Dixon nodding vaguely. He's never regarded his Occupation in quite
> this way before. His journeyman years coincided with the rage then sweeping Durham for
> Enclosure,— aye and alas, he had attended at that Altar. He had slic'd into Polygons the
> Common-Lands of his Forebears. He had drawn Lines of Ink that became Fences and
> Stone. (*M&D*, 586–87)

This is the spark that brings on the fire of Dixon's ultimate wrath when fighting the slave-rider and liberating a gang-line of slaves. It is here where both Mason and Dixon realize that they have been serving evil masters, whose goal was not to map and discover the world but only to partition and appropriate it for the center of the empire.

The development of the call for individual resistance that brings about de-territorialization culminates at the end of *AtD*, in which the Chums of Chance find peace with their opponents and continue to grow in a fictitious world of adventure, free and defying the descent of the world into the chaos and destruction of the Great World.

> Their motto was "There, but Invisible."
> "The Boys call it the supranational idea, … literally to transcend the old political space,
> the map-space of two dimensions, by climbing into the third. … [begin 1084] And on
> they fly. The ship by now has grown as large as a small city. There are neighborhoods,
> there are parks. There are slum conditions. It is so big that when people on the ground see
> it in the sky, they are struck with selective hysterical blindness and end up not seeing it at
> all. (*AtD*, 1083–84)

It has thus been established that (1) Pynchon's text employs space as an active element of the narrative, as a structural requirement for the logic of the "small world," by which his characters and plots unfold, and (2) that the reading of his texts offered below lies in the interpretive notion of *visceral investment* of the characters in this active literary space, in order to deliver a message of the ethical implications of becoming in world. The notion rests on the argument that becoming in space is synchronic rather than diachronic, and that it is actualized through other individuals rather than a causal chain of events.

4.2.1. Characters in Space: *V.*

Some contemporary Pynchon's criticism agrees that *V.* is a novel about perception (cf., for example, Karpinski on utopian moments or Celmer on the rhetoric of Cold War, both

critiquing this novel [1993]). It is a disturbing narrative that sets out to relate, question, and offer suggestions about how the man-made reality, the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) reverberates with one's ideas, desires, and decisions. *V.* makes the reader keenly aware that the world one lives in is what one makes it, and what one makes *of* it. It is a treatise on dialogical versus monological epistemology that one's perception subscribes to (cf. Karpinski's article that, does not however, focus on individual characters, rather on the deconstruction of V. and on perception of "others" in colonial discourse).

In the juxtaposition of the two perceptions of two protagonists, Herbert Stencil and Benny Profane, Pynchon debates two vastly different discourses. It is, the reader may realize, a matter of control and exercise of power. If Stencil tirelessly construes the world of malice on his quest for V.'s identity, Profane is passive in letting circumstances around him jerk him (being the "human yo-yo") in his search for no responsibility. Pynchon does not judge either of them: the narrative allows for evaluation of the two discourses only through ridicule, exaggeration, and irony.

Herbert Stencil might be the obvious buffoon in the comparison. The reader is invited to laugh incredulously at Stencil's folly and the quixotic quest to impose meaning onto facts that are just that – mere facts, unrelated, non-contextualized. One is tempted to enjoy the irony of "stencilization" of any information the character acquires only to bend it to fit his image of grand scheme,[42] fed by a paranoiac mind and a restless soul paying for the debts of father. The reader is seduced by the ironic distance while not seeing that the narrative mocks the reading process as "making sense" itself:

> Randomness, of course, is what neither Stencil nor we can live with. Thus, we read the "irrelevant" details thematically, make them relevant not to the particular passage, but to the themes of the novel as a whole. (Levine, 123)
>
> …
>
> To "make sense" of the narrative we must exclude most of the evidence. We become tourists, like the characters whose fate most absorbs us, and though the natives tell us the story, we read it as though their lives don't matter. Entropy is high: the expenditure of energy and the rejection of material entailed in the reading creates order at great expense. To read the story right, we must come to terms with disorder." (Levine, 122)

---

[42] Stencil as a character is seldom portrayed as doubtful when it comes to his selection of information: "I only think it strange that he should remember an unremarkable conversation, let alone in that much detail, thirty-four years later. A conversation meaning nothing to Mondaugen but everything to Stencil." (*V.*, 269)

However, Pynchon does not offer any particular comfort in Benny Profane's rootless wandering, his temporary alliances and shallow loyalty to a variety of groups (the Whole Sick Crew, the Alligator Patrol, the Navy). His mode of being, however bold in defiance of control, is still parasitic in terms of resistance to something without which his underground would not be nearly as seductive and intriguing.

Pynchon's narrative opens more than one Pandora's box, letting in light on some really dark, questionable epistemological business. While a rigid control resulting in a monological discourse leads to a manic refusal of anything that does not bend to the imposed order, a total let-go threatens one with parasitic passivity that may empty out one's being (cf. Levinas on "I-you" collectivity of Dasein's relationship to the Other). Such emptying-out turns an individual into a body-without-organs, a desiring machine that is paranoid because it only actualizes itself on its surface in the contact with the "not-I" (a contact which it requires, propelled by the desire as the only agency), and strips one's being of ethical circumstance.

If Stencil lives in a world shrouded with mysterious plot that he desperately wants to pursue but fears to uncover, Profane yo-yos here and there by forces beyond his grasp, both in terms of power and understanding. Stencil's paranoia may verge on insanity but at least he has a semblance of control corroborating his identity, however jeopardized by the "stencilized" input:

> [Stencil] only felt (he said "by instinct") when a bit of information was useful, when not: … the obsession was acquired, surely, but where along the line, how in the world? Unless he was as he insisted purely the century's man, something which does not exist in nature. … Many of them had already decided this was his Problem. The only trouble was that Stencil had all the identities he could cope with conveniently right at the moment: he was quite purely He Who Looks for V. … and she was no more his own identity than Eigenvalue the soul-dentist or any other member of the Crew. … If she was a historical fact then she continued active today and at the moment, because the ultimate Plot Which Has No Name was as yet unrealized, though V. might be no more a she than a sailing vessel or a nation. (*V.*, 244)

On the contrary, Profane's openness to the flow of the world power seems to liberate him but in fact renders him similarly powerless. Profane's mode of being in his lifeworld is almost parasitic. That he has no control of, but also no desire for, no interest in, and no responsibility towards. In other words, Stencil's character's mode of being may be

interpreted as an extreme allegory of epistemological fervor (with Pynchon's intention being supported by the metaphoric name of the character), with an effort to impose, ascribe meaning to world.[43] Stencil orders the world into a paranoiac system, contorting facts into his own reality. Profane waits for the world flux to throw him, embracing alternative modes of being, but giving up ontological care for his being. Profane may be seen friendlier, more humane, but only insofar as there is another who he can project on, mimic or bounce off of (varying according to emotions generated by the interaction).

In a careful extension of the argument, Profane may serve as a premonition against an individual's being as a body-without-organs (cf. Deleuze and Guattari), whose Dasein is emptied of the care for his being, and whose surface is the only reactive part of his body. If *V.* is a meditation on epistemological strategies and the ethical ramifications they are imbued with, Pynchon analyzes the discourse of "gazing" and the power exercised within the visual perception – this will be discussed in the section on spatial discourses, but the issue stems from Pynchon's elaboration of his characters' being-in-the-world. Therefore, as Tony Tanner commented, visual perception as the only interaction with the other leads to voyeurism as the inability to relate to others and to engage space as lifeworld:

> "Voyeurism is another way of evading true selfhood and denying or avoiding the possibility of love. Most of the characters "retreat" from the threat of love when it presents itself, and even the sympathetic Benny wastes himself in avoiding dependencies, and disengaging himself from any field of gathering emotional force. It might be added that Pynchon finds it difficult to suggest what genuine love would be like in this world." (Tanner, 56)

Pynchon's work with characters in further novels (esp. *GR*) seems to corroborate this extension of the argument. However, already in *V.* the reader is invited to spend considerable energy to grasp the cognitive strategies employed by various characters.[44] If the two protagonists represent two extremes in the dialectic of epistemologies, what

---

[43] This interpretation is by no means new: "… Pynchon is able to explore the possibility that the plots men see may be their own inventions. The further implication of this—that such things as the concentration camps may be simply meaningless accidents—is responsible for the sudden depths of horror in the book." (Tanner, 52–53)

[44] The cognitive strategies construing a meditation on epistemology are identified in critical readings of *V.* as dealing with "vision and perception, or about signification." (Karpinski, 34). For further consultation on this generally accepted notion of what *V.* is predominantly "about," see also Madsen (1991), McHoul and Willis (1990), Newman (1986), and, of course, Pearce (1981).

should be made of the character that lends its name to the novel's title? V. is certainly an enigmatic construct that the reader gets only to guess at through others' "reading" of her, highly unreliable it is, necessarily. However menacing V. may be portrayed in Stencil's view, the question arises: who is she a menace to? Pynchon does not reveal that V. is actually involved in a plot to execute something horrible in the world, in fact, to do anything at all. One must bear in mind that V. does not exactly get to talk for herself – while the plot unfolds around the supposed representation of a woman, already Sidney Stencil's (father of Herbert, the seeker) question epitomizes the almost mythological genderization of the unknown menace, while keeping the possibilities of a truth wide open: "There is more behind and inside V. than any of us had suspected. Not who, but what: what is she. … / Marg: A woman. / Sten: *Another* woman." (*V.*, 49, italics mine).

Arguably, V. is not, and does not need to be, a real person. As far as a grand conspiracy narrative is concerned, "she" is more than a concept that haunts Stencil. Pynchon's narrator cleverly coerces the reader into interpreting disjointed facts and episodes into a tale of a plot, "stencilizing" the fragments much like Herbert Stencil does. The reader ends up agreeing with Stencil, however detached and dissociated the reader wants to be from the mad character, that V. is a menace, an individual, and a woman. At the same time, it is not any one woman (the reader witnesses an entire train of women characters: Vitoria Wren, Vera Meroving, Veronica Manganese, and V. as Melanie's lover in Paris), it is always someone else, someone who is not quite there (see the emphasis in italics above). Stencil is never satisfied with any one identification of V. With him, Pynchon's maneuvering leads the reader to increasing doubt, rather than certitude, who or what V. is.

Toward the end of the novel (379–383), Fausto Maijstral's "confession" (as is the title of the chapter) invites the reader to witness a disassembly of the Bad Priest, a figure who, during the incessant air raids on Malta, is finally immobilized by a fallen beam. Maltese children, in pack, with no parents and no protection but their common scavenging effort, find the person and take it literally apart. It is hinted that this was the last of V.'s impersonations. For V., growing inanimate in her fight against age as entropy with mechanical prostheses, is literally half-composed of man-made parts. And it is thus to be inferred that V. may have been, all the time of Stencil's search, a place – Valletta, in Malta (V.M. initials reiterated). This stunning revelation is, in effect, a de-stencilization of V. It is an undoing of the elaborate composition Herbert Stencil leads the reader to participate in.

Pynchon warns against the encroachment of the inanimate as a mechanistic solution to human limits. It will be shown that his concern for this epistemological standpoint increases in further novels (esp. in *GR*). Already in *V.*, the reader witnesses the "otherness" in the world man creates as oppressive, dehumanizing:

> The escalating hegemony of the "inanimate" is evident across the landscapes of *V.* Stencil traces its designs in the imperialist history of reducing places to colonies and people to subjects. Outside, on the street, Benny experiences at first hand the metastasis of reifying technologies and commodification in a culture laid waste by consumerism: "He walked; walked, he thought sometimes, the aisles of a bright, gigantic supermarket, his only function to want" (*V.*, 36–7). Imperialism and consumerism, according to Pynchon's plottings, are part of a continuum. […] *V.* splices together Old World *fin de siècle* colonialism and the colonization of subjectivity and desire in the brave new world of commodity capitalism. Both are seen to be involved in an insidious annexation of the animate and subsequent subjugation of moral consciousness. (Jarvis, 57)

What has Herbert Stencil done, when he composed the monster-plot mystery? It is crucial to remember that his quest starts from a *written note* in his father's diary. Pynchon has Stencil construct a character from a text, in search not for an individual but rather in order to make sense of what Stencil needs to be. Stencil is thus making sense of the world as he inherits it from his father: creating, construing, rather than revealing any truth. However flawed, stencilized, or outright paranoid the re-construction is portrayed as, Pynchon's narrative makes the reader cooperate and participate in it. Pynchon unveils the fact that all readers are Stencils – what seems to be an object of ridicule is not a particular discourse (a spy-like paranoia, a Communist plot conspiracy, or colonial abjection[45]) but rather the whole business of epistemological effort everyone is guilty of, whether construing a lifeworld from an environment or interpreting text as one.

To this end, Pynchon uses the fragmented narrative (both in global terms of the organization of the novel, as well as in specific terms on the level of interrupted narration by characters or even unfinished utterances in dialogues[46]) that corroborates, as a global trope, the meta-motif of the novel. For if the novel is about Stencil's mad search for the

---

[45] The term "colonial abjection" is derived from Kristeva's concept, *abject*, that is "neither the subject nor the object," characterizing the relationship to the Other in colonial discourse. It was successfully employed to connect the level of the individual and the societal organization in Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire* (Chapter 5 "Debasement," 76–91).

[46] For a good treatise on the novel's fragmentation and the use of the technique for narrative purposes see Celmer (1993). In his article, Celmer promotes the technique to a mechanism on which he founds a rather reductive, however fascinating, interpretation.

mystery of V., it must be as disjointed as the "leads" that take him places in a navigation through the world. This provides the reader with a meta-narrative of distantiation, a perspective from which the narrator gives away that what Stencil does is not to be taken and understood on Stencil's own terms, but it terms of someone who Stencil is not, and who "understands" the irony in the character's folly. In other words, the reader is given means for interpretive distance, clues to unreliability of Stencil's voice.[47] When cooperating in this manner, the reader is rewarded by the text with an insight into the epistemological uncertainty, and an offer to review one's ontological being, that is, an opportunity to question one's mode of being in the world and making sense of it.

The fragmentation of the narrative can be used, without subscribing to a set of rhetoric rules of a genre, for a more open interpretive approach, if the mechanism is in spatiality. For what is the world Stencil, Profane, Godolphin (the British Intelligence agent obsessed with South Pole and a legendary colony called Vheissu) or even Mondaugen (the physicist with quite an *un*colonial experience in the formerly German colonial expansion in African *Südwest*) make sense of? It is a world to live in, be part of, control, or distance oneself from, respectively: it is a space that needs to be engaged, turned into a "reality," or a lifeworld. In spatial terms, it is a world of the ultimate Other, the "not-I," which needs to be negotiated – relational space of other individuals (women, strangers, suspects, rivals), or human groups as societies (either ones that one believes one belongs to and must participate in, or ones that one wants to control and distance oneself from). Herbert Stencil must invest himself in the world of supposed danger posed by the mysterious V., Sidney Stencil and Godolphin work for their empires, Mondaugen shrinks the (human) horror an empire brings, Profane lives *on* (as a human yo-yo) or *under* (as an Alligator Patrol member) the surface of the world but never quite *in* it (with the trap of ethical non-commitment, see above).

All the characters also add to reality, construct a lifeworld, employing the ultimate force of appropriation of space: Stencil adds to the world a scheme that is embodied in V. but never actually happens. Profane builds pockets of resistance to the crushing

---

[47] The fragmentation of the narrative sequence of time and place, the disruption of chronology and a sense of unity of place is a trademark of modernist writing (e.g. Faulkner) that post-modern prose retained for the core of the aesthetic pleasure derived from the text. Should one read an untangled, chronologically ordered story of Stencil's search for V., or Profane's quest for freedom, one would end up with a rather boring account of a paranoiac search for a nonexistent conspiracy, and a flight from responsibility, respectively. With the unity broken, the reader must supply the energy to make the connections work: and then Stencil's madness becomes quite exciting, worth following and, despite the frustration of any expectations or desire for revelations, the "lazy machine of text" (Eco, 37) produces immense enjoyment.

impersonality of crowd/institutions (the Navy, State, or even the anonymous hundreds of children who unleash the sewage horror of alligators by flushing their Christmas presents down the toilet) through love and partying (the Whole Sick Crew). Mondaugen yearns to add a "spheric" layer to the world's physical reality, listening to radio disturbances in the wilderness of Africa, trusting the science as a discourse that reveals the truth about the world. Godolphin's example is the most vivid and extreme: the secret land of Vheissu is a *non-place*[48] in which the idea of colony is brought to perfection and, at the same time, is reversed (it is the mysterious Vheissu's "they" who exercise control over the world known to a British officer – it is "they" who beat Godolphin to the South Pole and plant the "spider-monkey" under the ice).

Each character, each level of plot, rests on epistemological uncertainty of one's spatiality: where is the "I"? where are the boundaries between the "I" and the Other? where are the limits between "us" and our "culture" and "them" and their "chaos"? and, finally, where is the beginning and the end of one's body in the world – or, rather, what is the bodily "I" when there is a V. that defies the body's life (and death) with every inanimate part she reportedly adds to herself, construing a super-human structure? To answer these epistemological doubts of one's being, the characters engage the space with a varying degree of will and power to control, to impose order on the world and carve out a reality, a lifeworld out of space.

To exemplify the desperate effort to impose order onto the "not-I" of the space with*out* one's body, and in that manner, ascribe a meaning, make sense of an appropriated lifeworld, *V.* includes the character of Kurt Mondaugen, and his mission to capture "spherics." The chapter "Mondaugen's Story" (247–304) deserves the critical attention because it (1) dramatizes the unclear, as if grainy, historic backdrop to characters later appearing elsewhere in the novel (and even in the following Pynchon's novel, *GR*); and because (2) what the novel as a whole appears to gradually deals with in a more involved (or maddening) manner, converges into an intensified shorthand, explanatory tale of extremes. As with other fragments in Stencil's search, this one too is re-narrated manifold (Mondaugen reportedly tells the story to Stencil, who then retells the story to Eigenvalue a week later, yet the story becomes "Stencilized") and quite incredible to listen to – and it is a prime example of how Pynchon requires the reader to expend energy on cooperation with the text. With Stencil re-telling the story, the narrative voice essentially forces the

---

[48] The concept of *non-place* is elaborated upon in the following chapter as one of the two major mechanisms for Pynchon creating the literary space in the "small world" of his narrative.

reader to view the narrative with Stencil's eyes only and submit to the belief that what is, in fact, yet another unreliable facet of V.'s mystery is somehow an explanation of thereunto unclear and dubious aspects of it. The reader thus overhears Vera Meroving's conversation on Vheissu, as if to confirm both V.'s identity and the existence of a non-real place. It is remarkable that Stencil only finds Mondaugen's story worth listening to after Mondaugen informs him "he had worked, yes, in Peenemünde, developing Vergeltungswaffe Eins and Zwei. The magic initial!" (*V.*, 246).[49]

It is symptomatic of the chapter that it is told as a story inside of the narrative, by a character, who is by now established as highly unreliable, if not outright gone mad. Not only is this a well-honed toll of distancing the narrative voice from the content and underline the account's unreliability, but it is representative of postmodern literary discourse: giving voice to those who may be silent, or, at the same time, jeopardizing the vantage point of those who do get to speak. It is possible to identify the speaker but almost unattainable to track the trope to Pynchon's authorial voice. Contradictions abound, room for speculation grows exponentially with each new utterance. While discourses and vantage points multiply, none is given primacy. Interpretation hides beneath the proliferation of voices. The reader may feel lost but only insofar as the reading insists on a reliable narrative establishing a truth. In so doing, Pynchon brings to the surface of the text the troubled epistemology – making sense of the world that is beyond an individual's comprehension because of the proliferation of what *can* mean something, or what *may* mean something only *to* the individual whose cognition is at work at the moment.

> (Here Eigenvalue made his single interruption [to Stencil's account]: "They spoke in German? English? Did Mondaugen know English then?" Forestalling a nervous outburst by Stencil: "I only think it strange that he should remember an unremarkable conversation, let alone in that much detail, thirty-four years later. A conversation meaning nothing to Mondaugen but everything to Stencil." (*V.*, 269)

---

[49] This is one of the many intertextual references one finds *ex post* in *V.* (1961) to *GR* (1973) and other works (e.g. *M&D*, 1997). *Ex post*, since *V.* was published years before the following novels. However, the reference is quite exquisite here, offering a great opportunity to playful "inference wandering" (Eco) between the texts: for if *GR*'s focus is, in fact V-2 (the A-4 Rocket), the title of the novel that succeeded in 1973 Pynchon's first book may have been rightfully "*V2*," a true sequel to *V.* It is only appropriate that in 2006, Pynchon fills the (in some aspects chronological) gap between the events of *V.* and *GR* with *Against the Day*, truly exploring the time right before the world descends into the era of the world wars.

Mondaugen listens to "spherics," which are no more than radio disturbances, a negation of transmission, white noise. Yet, in the ongoing vein of the epistemological uncertainty and the imposition of order on the world to make sense of it, Mondaugen quickly starts discerning a pattern in the disturbances. And because his belief is reinforced—however negatively—by Weissmann, who accuses Mondaugen alternately of high treason or of non-cooperation with the rising power in Munich because he does not want to "admit" there is a meaning in the "spherics," he starts to believe the white noise actually contains a code, and thus a message. As his experience at the Foppl's Dinner Party (or siege, in the colony whose subjects turn against all the whites) spirals down to a feverish adventure of insanity, Mondaugen loses last trace of scientific approach: it is then, that a message finally appears from the perceived code:

> One night he was awakened by a disheveled Weissmann, who could scarcely stand still for excitement. "Look, look," he cried, waving a sheet of paper under Mondaugen's slowly blinking eyes. Mondaugen read:
>
> DIEWOELDTIMSTEALALENSWTASNDEURFUALRLIKST
>
> "So," he yawned.
> "It's your code. I've broken it. See: I remove every third letter and obtain: GODMEANTNUURK. This rearranged spells Kurt Mondaugen."
> "Well, then," Mondaugen snarled. "And who the hell told you you could read my mail."
> "The remainder of the message," Weissmann continued, "now reads: DIEWELTISTALLESWASDERFALLIST."
> "The world is all that the case is," Mondaugen said. "I've heard that somewhere before."
> (*V.*, 302)

Tony Tanner (1976) comments on this moment in Mondaugen's story when saying that Pynchon subversively mocks the business of the narrative itself, as well as that of interpretation. For Tanner identifies in Pynchon the postmodern debate of dialogical construction of meaning, and the author's conscious effort to make the reader aware of the debate:

> Extracting certain signals from the overall noise, he demonstrates that they add up to Mondaugen's own name, plus the statement DIE WELT IST ALLES DAS DER FALL IST. This of course is the opening proposition in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. As a coded message it would be the supreme irony, like discovering that the secret is that there is no

secret. The assertion that the world is everything that is the case repudiates the very notion of plots, and arguably leaves things and events standing in precisely describable inexplicability. (Tanner, 63)

4.2.2. Characters in Space: *Crying of Lot 49*

If Pynchon in *V.* embarks on an epistemological quest, he certainly takes the topic to a new level in *COL49*. What that means is that the stakes are higher and the problems intensify (by bringing the plot "home," indeed). Stencil's search for V. is a project of a madman who inflates his father's legacy to monstrous dimensions. His search is meaningless insofar as one expects a cataclysmic encounter with whoever V. may turn out to be – as he himself admits, his strategy is to "approach and avoid" (*V.*, 51). This is an attitude of someone who may be obsessed with his search but never wants it to end, for it would bring an end of his mode of being.

Oedipa Maas's quest is different and while it shares structural parallels of the epistemological questioning in the debate of what things *are* (as opposed to what they *appear* to be), hers is a quest for meaning of her own life that is openly admitted, and brought to the level of conscious, doubtful reasoning by the character herself. The quest is also far from self-imposed obsession. To begin with, her pursuit dawns on her in the shape of a civic and human duty as a co-executor of the late Pierce Inverarity's last will. However dead, Inverarity was once very real to her (unlike Stencil's father's note in his journal), and quite crucial to maturing as a person and a woman. Once a lover of Inverarity's, her relationship to him is best described in the dream image of a painting in which she acts as a maiden in distress – the redemption to be thwarted, the saviors in her life failing and abandoning her. This unfolds into a disturbing pattern in the text that yarns off of the loss of male figures.

> In Mexico City they somehow wandered into an exhibition of paintings by the beautiful Spanish exile Remedios Varo: in the central painting of a triptych, titled "Bordando el Manto Terrestre," were a number of frail girls with heart-shaped faces, huge eyes, spun-gold hair, prisoners in the top room of a circular tower, embroidering a kind of tapestry while spilled out the slit windows and into a void, seeking hopelessly to fill the void: for all the other buildings and creatures, all the waves, ships and forests of the earth were contained in this tapestry, and the tapestry was the world. (*COL49*, 11)

Oedipa is left to face the horror of a possible alternative to the world she thought she knew alone. This alternative's horror lies in the revelation that (1) there is an alternative to what one knows and considers normal at all, and (2) that it is Oedipa's world, not the alternative, that comes out of the comparison as the worse, and dystopian. For what her "Tupperware party" (*COL49*, 1) life offered seems to have been an elongated process of personal entropy, of distantiation from any means of actualization, a process of emptying herself out:

> What did she so desire escape from? … what really keeps her where she is is magic, anonymous and malignant, visited on her from outside and for no reason at all. Having no apparatus except gut fear and female cunning to examine this formless magic, to understand how it works, how to measure its field strength, count its lines of force, she may fall back on superstition, or take up a useful hobby like embroidery, or go mad, or marry a disk jockey. If the tower is everywhere and the knight of deliverance no proof against its magic, what else? (*COL49*, 11–12)

It is only when she leaves the ordered, safe, but numbing stability of her Southern California life when she uncovers layers of reality seemingly fantastic but at the same time much more humane, filled with emotions and avenues for actualization. What her search for Tristero brings is not so much the dread of a secret menace (as in *V.*) but rather a personal deliverance from the limits of organized existence. She enters a life with possibilities for actualized being-in-the-world through active making sense of the world, and through relationship with others.

Pynchon plays with metaphoric and/or allegorical names of his characters. It is not this work's goal to construe an interpretation of the author's novels limiting its method by a metaphor that is either intertextual or inviting to the above-mentioned "inference wandering." Such denotation is, however entertaining and loaded in meaning, only marginally useful for the current reading. However, where necessary, the metaphors that emphasize allegory in names or are particularly productive for a part of analysis (especially on the level of characters and their visceral investment in space), they must be attended to. While Stencil's name in *V.* alludes to his epistemological effort to impose an order onto facts randomly encountered, Oedipa's name invites the reader to liken it to an intertextual comparison with the Greek myth made so influential in the modern discourse through Freud's psychoanalysis.

One can argue that Oedipa's quest, if likened to the tragedy of her mythological namesake, ends right before the Greek hero achieves his revelation, and punishes himself for his epistemological blindness. While both find themselves isolated in their struggle to understand what happened, and horrified by their respective revelations, *COL49* leaves its protagonist at the moment of a great opportunity (to reveal Tristero, to recognize its representative, or to at least unveil the mystery for herself as madness), a moment of high intensity. It is a mercifully open ending: a set up for an event that is ever-looming yet forever suspended in the future, a moment of "not-yet." The tragedy is postponed and may never come. The ancient Oedipus is not this lucky: having learned the full extent of his crime that breaks the taboo, he inflicts a permanent blindness on himself in the symbolic regret for not having "seen," or rather, understood, his own perversion and wishes before. Oedipa's truth is an alternative and it is a possibility, allowing for her own growth and actualization. The ancient tragic hero's revelation brings him his demise – Oedipa stands forever at a multiple forking on a road into the future. The "small world" of Pynchon's narrative stays wonderfully unfinished, untainted by any "final solution" of the mystery. Oedipa's moment is a nodal point, built up toward throughout the narrative, gradually intensified by an accumulation of evidence for both a grand conspiracy (Tristero), and a mounting doubt of her cognitive ability to truly make sense of reality, not to indulge in a paranoia, in which she kept "'bringing something of herself'—even if that something was just her presence—to the scatter of business interests that had survived Inverarity. She would give them order, she would create constellations; …" (*COL49*, 72).

What Oedipa seems to reach at last is an epistemological skepticism that liberates her from falling for a simplifying, yet ultimately false sense of cognition: unlike Stencil, she maps the space of San Francisco by her motion only, revealing traces of Tristero (through the W.A.S.T.E. delivery system) everywhere, in every aspect of human urban existence, culminating in an encounter with an individual's death (Chp. 5).[50] The bifurcation (with multiple directions, not just two) of possible meanings is uncovered in a

---

[50] The death of the homeless sailor is itself allegorical, for if he dies in the flames of his mattress, it is a conflagration of his universe, the Viking version of the entropy, the final heat-death of the world. "So when this mattress flared up around the sailor, in his Viking's funeral: the stored, coded years of uselessness, early death, self-harrowing, the sure decay of hope, the set of all men who had slept on it, whatever their lives had been, would truly cease to be, forever, when the mattress burned. … it astonished her to think that so much could be lost, even the quantity of hallucination belonging just to the sailor that the world would bear no further trace of." (*COL49*, 104)

concluding self-doubt that Oedipa goes through and survives with her rationality altered but not destroyed:

> … the true paranoid for whom all is organized in spheres of joyful or threatening about the central pulse of himself, the dreamer whose puns probe ancient fetid shafts and tunnels of truth all act in the same special relevance to the word, or whatever it is the word is there, buffering, to protect us from. The act of metaphor then was a thrust at truth and a lie, depending where you were: inside, safe, or outside, lost. (*COL49*, 105)

The points of relevance connect moments in time flux just as a word's interpretation connects singular meaning and provides epiphany – yet Oedipa gradually learns to keep the connections under control, she masters paranoia, in which the connections are beyond one's conscious. In so doing, her character changes Pynchon's debate on "making sense" of the world quite significantly from Stencil. This difference can be best observed in how the two characters' relationship to their "self" evolves throughout their respective quests. While Stencil is quite aware that he cannot and should not (if he wants to preserve himself and his mode of being) find and unveil V., Oedipa converges upon a revelation of herself as much as of Tristero, and Pierce Inverarity's legacy. In this respect, it is Stencil, who is truly picaresque, for his obsession does not change him, does not make him grow or develop as a character – he is the true madman in the sense of hoping to achieve a goal by repeating a clearly failing technique over and over again, hoping for different results.

Because the search defines his mode of being, Stencil cannot be stripped of it as a character. This is certainly true if the real chronology of events in the V.'s story, rather than the fragmented account the narrative presents: V. dies and is disassembled by the children (anonymous internally displaced persons), fascinated by V.'s inanimate femininity, in the aftermath of the bombardment during the siege of Malta in WW2. Stencil's search, however, does not start until 1946; tracking one V.M. initial after another, only to be frustrated (or blessed?) by blind alleys. Oedipa, on the contrary, leaves the orderliness of suburban married life (and its zero energy because no attempt is made at tension reduction in the organization of the social life thereof) and delves into the seeming chaos of her investigation, with clues populating and multiplying around her: she grows gradually more aware of the dissipation of order in her life, in her world, and it is then that she becomes more, and her being intensive. Her "Tupperware party" life ends and she becomes aware of her being as a living human being, as if for the first part. It is

not a revelation in any sense of answer to questions but rather an epiphany about the mode of being as such:

> As things developed, she was to have all manner of revelations. Hardly about Pierce Inverarity, or herself; but about what remained yet had somehow, before this, stayed away. There had hung the sense of buffering, insulation, she had noticed the absence of intensity, … (*COL49*, 10)

This can be addressed on many different levels of the individual psychology, but with an emphasis on spatial organization of the narrative, it is attractive to explore how the character development can be interpreted in spatial terms of epistemological and ontological being. Oedipa's narrative world starts off in Kinneret, in a house, and in a stable relationship with an unstable man, ever-demanding more of her attention and support (Wendell "Mucho" Maas's name gives the potential to devour energy away in a metaphoric way). Another relationship Oedipa is a reluctant party in, is with a psychoanalyst who may be obsessed with her, however implying the opposite (exploiting the stereotype in popular culture). It is only when Oedipa's search spins out of control, so to say, that she discerns additional layers of the world (and of America). From terrible secrets hidden on the bottom of the Lake Inverarity and in cigarette filters (bone charcoal from WW2 G.I.s), to shelters of the homeless under highway overpasses, Oedipa uncovers a conspiracy that is not so sinister in a menacing violent manner (although violent acts abound) as in posing an alternative to the U.S. Postal Service system that has never been vanquished, never really destroyed. The plot seems to be historical, preserving a thing from the past that simply refuses to go away with time and instead seeps through years from the past all the way to Oedipa's present. Yet, she discovers an alternative society, a legacy cued to Inverarity's estate that turns out to be a responsibility for America, for what Oedipa will make of her.

Besides Oedipa, the world of the *COL49*'s narrative is set among encounters with characters who embody the lifeworld they co-create, all linked by Tristero or Inverarity, however tenuously: Mike Fallopian in his study, Randolph Driblette in his shower after the Jacobean *The Courier's Tragedy*, the philatelist Genghis Cohen who first notices the W.A.S.T.E. postal stamp, Jesús Arrabal in the open of the beach, living his resistance, or even the Paranoids traveling and tripping at the same time, never quite on stage but always eager to perform. While these characters may seem static, only to fill in the puzzle

of Tristero conspiracy, they can appear so only insofar their being-in-the-world, in the "small world" of the narrative, stands unparalleled by others in the novel. Pitted against these characters is another kind, bringing in the machine-like, cold world of theory and discipline, whether it is the employees at Yoyodyne (Stanley Koteks, who confirms the existence of W.A.S.T.E.), John Nefastis who tries to find a "sensitive" to communicate with Maxwell's Demon in order to fight entropy by exploiting the mythological creature, Dr Hilarius in his drug-imposed fear, and, of course, Pierce Inverarity himself, the real estate mogul, "[to which] her love, such as it had been, remaining incommensurate with his need to possess, to alter the land, to bring new skylines, persona antagonisms, growth rates into being" (*COL49*, 147–148).

Oedipa oscillates between the two kinds of characters but it is she who undergoes a change toward an individual keenly aware of what her world is made of and what she may be able to do within it. Initially, she is determined to impose order on the lifeworld represented by Inverarity's estate: "She had caught sight of the historical marker only because she'd gone back, deliberately, to Lake Inverarity one day, owing to this, what you might have to call, growing obsession, with 'bringing something of herself'—even if that something was *just her presence*—to the scatter business interests that had survived Inverarity. She would give them order, she would create constellations …" (*COL49*, 72, italics mine). It is through this visceral investment that she avoids the trap of mere objectification of the "non-I." Quite poignantly, at the very end of the novel Oedipa poises herself open to the futurity of the event, defying the Oedipian myth and embracing the potential for both directions at the fork she stand at. This is not a paranoiac stance, for her position is based on critical epistemology, in the ultimately dialectical knowledge that whatever comes, she must deal with, and respond to, so that her mode of being stands uncompromised.[51]

Stencil's epistemological search in *V.* delves into past that is distant by the nature in which the relation to it is limited through narrated accounts, traces gone long cold, all

---

[51] Thus, Oedipa is indeed able "to understand the world […] in terms of mobility and multiplicity, how elements and individuals can change meaning as they phase and interface with others, internal and external" (Gochenour, 46). While she does "think either/or, ones or zeros, binaries, something or nothing" (ibid.), Oedipa is later able to discern that Inverarity may not be the only signifier and think both possibilities of the dialectic at the same time, employing paranoia as a method opening her to actualization through becoming-with and expecting futurity as an event. Therefore, the outcome is *not* powerlessness as Gochenour (2003) argues further on. Rather, I would concur with Decker (2000): "Oedipa realizes that the Trystero may be a[n] hallucination, a fantasy, a real historical phenomenon or an elaborate plot mounted by Inverarity, but she also realizes that she cannot decide which alternative represents the truth. Although this discovery may seem like a moment of immobilizing aporia, it is actually the point at which Oedipa can being thinking more in accord with what Lyotard would call the operation of time." (151)

the indirect clues that necessitate a paranoiac connecting, and an elaborate construction of web of meaning. Oedipa's search for the meaning of Inverarity's legacy for herself and for America requires her to risk (and lose) much of her certainty but she is a detective in a case only loosely related to her life. In comparison with these two protagonists, Slothrop's search in *GR* brings the mystery very close to his mode of ontological being. Tyrone Slothrop searches in his own past the reasons for what is happening to him at present, which predicates the mode of being he needs to resort to, in order to escape a discourse that takes away his humanity away from him. Slothrop's construct of "self" shatters and Slothrop's "I" appears naked to his perception, without the buffer of concepts that formulate the image of "self" to others. His famous dissolution as an individual characters perhaps owes to the fact that his ontological being is stripped of the epistemological buffer layers that protect one from one's raw ontological experience for the most part (with the few exceptions discussed above – the encounter with the enemy, the beloved one, and the dead).

Slothrop's gradual development to decomposition goes from an individual character to many personas to a "scattered concept." This he shares with characters in previous novels. In *V.*, Stencil is the master of impersonations as a "quick-change artist" (Chp. 3), and V. herself is a composition of artificial, prosthetic body parts that may be clues to her identity and her perceived immortality but are only revealed to the reader at the moment of her death as the Bad Priest (see above V.'s demise due to the disassembly by children in Malta). In *COL49*, Oedipa witnesses a multiplication of personalities in her husband "Mucho" Maas, in a witty twist of his name's metaphor: while at the beginning, he is the one who requires all her energy to stay put in the "Tupperware party" orderliness of suburban reality, at the end of the novel he leaves her with possible LSD-induced multiple personality, not quite schizophrenic and yet destroying him as an individual in yet another event of Oedipa's isolation on her quest for the Tristero: "'Is this what Funch means when he says you're coming on like a roomful of people?' 'That's what I am,' said Mucho, 'right. Everybody is.' … At the station they kissed goodbye, all of them. As Mucho walked away he was whistling something complicated, twelve-tone." (*COL49*, 117, 119). However, she resists to give in to the seeming post-mortem security of a prosthetic existence: "Oedipa sat on the earth, ass getting cold, wondering whether, as Driblette had suggested that night from the shower, some version of herself hadn't vanished with him. Perhaps her mind would go on flexing psychic muscles that no longer existed; would be betrayed and mocked by a phantom self as the amputee is by a phantom

limb. Someday she might replace whatever of her had gone away by some prosthetic device, a dress of a certain color, a phrase in a letter, another lover" (*COL49*, 133).

4.2.3. Characters in Space: *Gravity's Rainbow*

In *GR*, Pynchon pushes the dissolution of a subject into an object further, in a twofold manner. First, the dissolution takes place on the level of the narrative – just like V., Slothrop becomes a character referred to but no longer appearing himself in the novel as an agent in any event, that is epistemologically known but with no real existence in the "small world" of the narrative. Secondly, character's dissolution happens *in* the plot, is by itself an event that drives the narrative – much like V. may have been a number of women sharing the magic initials V.M., or a vessel, or even Valetta, the capital of Malta, Slothrop appropriates a number of personas (Ian Scuffling, the English war correspondent, 260; Rocketman, his famous Zone identity, 365; or *Plechazunga*, the Pig-Hero in Cuxhaven, 579). Finally, just like V.'s disassembly by children, Slothrop physically dissolves into a crossroads, which cancels his presence but saves him from being ultimately objectified (in other words, his disappearance prevents his pursuers to finish him off as a failed object of an experiment).

> At last, lying one afternoon spread-eagled at his ease in the sun, at the edge of one of the ancient Plague towns he becomes a cross himself, a crossroads, a living intersection where the judges have come to set up a gibbet for a common criminal who is to be hanged at noon. (*GR*, 637)

In *GR*, Pynchon explores more radical epistemological avenues, and derives more extreme ontological modes of being. While in *V.* the concept of gradual construct of subject in literary space was constructed by Stencil's mad search from a note in his father's journal into a shape of a person (Vera Meroving, or any other instantiation of V.), who is never fully present and always elusive in anyone's perception, Slothrop's personas follow the opposite direction: from a character that is seemingly solid and central, all his personas lead to a gradual scattering of his individuality. Slothrop's unity falls apart, and finally other characters need to "give up on" him (last being "Pig" Bodine "letting go of" Slothrop, 755). Where Oedipa doubts her sanity and braces herself against paranoia in *COL49*, Slothrop has no other recourse but paranoia – it is his only method to proceed with his search. Finally, whereas in the first two novels Pynchon endows his protagonists

with the fear of the inanimate and gives them free will to fight the growing entropy of super-human systems (whether it is international espionage in Stencil's case, or an underground sinister conspiracy in Oedipa's), in *GR* it becomes clear that the machine-like, engineered, systems extending far beyond an individual human will and understanding have come to rule the world and the characters stand very little chance against their expansive tendency.

Pynchon goes from Stencil's epistemological uncertainty and Oedipa's epistemological skepticism that are both, however, vested in ontological being that exercises personal liberty, to Slothrop's paranoia as a epistemological tool that lies in recognition of one's own commodification. If Slothrop recognizes his "self" has been, in fact, produced in a lab as an experiment, and as the only escape he chooses (in the dissolution that is hardly an act of free will, rather a lack of any other option) bodily dissolution, it is through the other characters who still retain their subjectivity in the narrative that Pynchon discusses two opposing modes of being: (1) a being-toward-death within the system of production following the order of the imposed sense on reality, dehumanizing individuals by ordering them, as constitutive elements of an organization, to reduce any tension among them; and (2) a becoming-through-others (being-with) that thrives on individuality and difference, raising the tension within system but maintains a creative energy necessary for change.

Pynchon writes *GR* as an exercise in dialectics, entertaining the concept of "mirror metaphysics" (103). The concept explores the possibilities of binary oppositions and their ramifications in interaction of characters with opposing modes of being in the world. With the exception of Tyrone Slothrop (whose being is revealed as objectified to the degree that renders him a mere product of the IG Farben[52]), almost all other major

---

[52] IG Farben purchased baby Tyrone Slothrop from his father, Broderick Slothrop, as part of the deal for Tyrone's future tuition at Harvard. Laszlo Jamf, the chemist at IG Farben, was an avid behaviorist who conditioned the baby's erection to the smell of the plastic polymer. Hence the connection of Slothrop's sexual adventures in London and the map of V-2 hits on the city: wherever Slothrop reaches orgasm, the Rocket is, in reverse, attracted to fall. More importantly, Tyrone realizes his entire life could have been run as an experiment, or at least closely observed as one:

> Come to think of it, Slothrop never could quite put the announcements, all through the Depression, of imminent family ruin, together with the comfort he enjoyed at Harvard. Well, now, what *was* the deal between his father and Bland? I've been sold, Jesus Christ I've been sold to IG Farben like a side of beef. Surveillance? Stinnes, like every industrial emperor, had his own company spy system. So did the IG. Does this mean Slothrop has been under their observation—m-maybe since he was *born*? Yaahh … (290–291)

The etymology of Tyrone Slothrop's name runs in several interpretive directions. Besides the obvious anti-Puritan "elect" principle and the "city on the hill" represented in popular culture by the name of John Winthrop (a combination of "sloth" as the opposite of the Puritan belief for self-improvement that became American *modus operandi*), there are other: Tyrone, for example, may be a reference to Tyrone Power

characters in the book can be found as balanced with each other, paired in a dialectic debate of opposition and mutual negation. Their opposition lies in their respective modes of being in the world – on one side, it is the being-toward-death of entropic diachrony and obsession with origin and death, manifested through selfish preservation of one's Dasein at the expense of others. On the other, it is being-with, or becoming-through-others of synchronic communitarian altruism, allowing for prevalence of ethical imperatives that disregard the zero-sum game of survival of the fittest. In spatial terms, these binaries operate through control in the former mode of being, and through actualization in the latter.

The three characters utterly consumed by the pursuit and invocation of the inanimate with the goal of self-preservation or conquering death are: Cpt. Weissmann/ "Dominus" Blicero who launches V-2s from a mobile base; his lover, African Südwest elite SS-kommando (Schwarzkommando) Oberst Enzian; and Enzian's half-brother, Soviet intelligence officer Vaslav Tchitcherine. All three yearn for the Rocket technology, albeit for slightly different reasons. All three fear and loathe the smooth, disorderly space that threatens spatial organization and the epistemological matrix in which they "make sense" of the world. The Rocket is a material, tangible expression of the order through power and control – all of them subscribe to it, and have been consumed by the super-human desire to effectuate existence in the face of entropic decay.

Weissmann/Blicero is an officer whose obsession with orderliness of the perfect weapon lies in his frustration stemming from the loss of colonies and the failure of the Third Reich. The symptoms of this frustration are subdued only when his personal power enslaves others in sexual perversion, which is supposed to attenuate the loss of shattered dialectic of power – Weissmann's ("White Man") subscription to the doctrine of white, Western supremacy, over the colonized, or otherwise controlled space. His being-in-the-world is defined by an inexorable increase of entropy as disorder in a system, with the desire to transcend the inevitable death. Weissmann does not avoid, or postpone death, he is in love with it (328). Weissmann wants the power to make death his own decision, an act of his own will. His effort is doomed because just like the empire that Blicero[53] sold

---

(1914–44), a Hollywood star in *A Yank in the RAF* (1941); a tribute to T.S. Eliot (Slothrop's initials T.S.), one of the few influences Pynchon admits; Bruce Heinly, *New York Times* literature reviewer, suggested "Slothrop" is an anti-Lothrop Stoddard (1883–1951), a popular American racialist and eugenicist (Pynchon Wiki).

[53] "And Enzian's found the name Bleicheröde close enough to "Blicker," the nickname the early Germans gave to Death. They saw him white: bleaching and blankness. The name was later Latinized to "Dominus Blicero." Weissmann, enchanted, took it as his SS code name. Weissmann brought the ne name home to his

his life and soul to, life too ends in an event that is so ultimately other to it that no measure, analogy, or will can really grasp it. Death remains out of touch and out of control, at least Blicero's own. He is too cowardly to commit suicide and so only disseminates death around him, almost randomly (by launching V-2s over the Channel) or deliberately (when he mans his final Rocket with Gottfried, the last lover—and a binary opposition to Enzian, the last object of Blicero's sadistic exercise of power in sexual perversion). Failing to control his own death by will, he enlists in mass killing others in false semblance of being able to decide death and life.

Weissmann, in his days of colonial military service in the African Südwest, found an African boy and fell in love with him. When he names him Enzian, "… den gelben und blaun/Enzian," the "Rilke's mountainside gentian of Nordic colors," the boy protests the logic, but Weissmann explains "'Liebchen, this is the other half of the earth. In Germany, you would be yellow and blue.' Mirror-metaphysics. Self-enchanted by what he imagined elegance, his bookish symmetries." (*GR*, 103). Experiencing the massacre of the Herero people (described in detail by Foppl and Mondaugen in *V.* (262–265, and 280–298, respectively), Weissmann no longer aspires to find either the animate, or the physical spatiality, in the world. Along with the decline of German power (pre-WW2 as well as Nazi) as an empire, and in fact, the decline of the entire colonial power era, Blicero is witness to what he perceives as a general decay of civilization. He perceives the world through romanticized, yet fascist, love for the Apollonian principle of the ideal of symmetric, organized, stilled beauty. He loathes the common man and therefore searches for a destiny worth following, crowned by dignified death as an ultimate act of individual will and a supreme expression of esthetic value. He thus finds it only fitting to define himself as an instrument of the War Machine that distributes equality and order through destruction and mass killings.

His obsession with the *Gerät* (Rocket) is, therefore, twofold. On one hand, Blicero strives for symmetry and perfection finding it in the inorganic matter (plastics and steel). Since organic matter, the disorderly animate, is doomed to imperfection, he teaches conveys the belief to Enzian, converting him to the same love for the machine:

---

pet, no showing it off so much as indicating to Enzian yet another step to be taken toward the Rocket, toward a destiny he still cannot see past this sinister cryptography of naming, a sparse pattern but one that harshly will not be denied, …" (327)

> There are few such islands of down and velvet for him [Enzian] to lie and dream on, not in these marble passages of power. Enzian has grown cold: not so much a fire dying away as a positive coming on of cold, a bitter taste growing across the palate of love's first hopes. … Beyond simple steel erection, the Rocket was an entire system *won*, away from the feminine darkness, held against the entropies of lovable but scatterbrained Mother Nature … he was led to believe that by understanding the Rocket, he would come to understand truly his manhood. … (*GR*, 329)

On the other hand, Blicero aims at control over death and the physical spatiality in the world. His effort to control the lifeworld through naming, imposing meaning, and appropriating space according to human perception pitted against natural environment, leans on the mythological. Toward the end of the war conflict, Blicero becomes highly mobile with his *Bodenplatte* (the concrete and steel base for launching the V-2s), traveling the space not as a front against the Allies but a web of meaning in mythological sense, in an effort to write his own saga of *Todeswunsch* (death wish).

> Blicero had grown on, into another animal … a werewolf … but with no humanity left in its eyes […] *Islands*: clotted islands in the sea. Sometimes even the topographic lines, nested on a common point. 'It is the map of my Ur-Heimat,' imagine a shriek so quiet it's almost a whisper, 'the Kingdom of Lord Blicero. A white land.' […] he was seeing the world now in *mythical regions*: they had their maps, real mountains, rivers, and colors. It was not Germany he moved through. It was his own space. […] He did not fall back along roads, he did not cross bridges or lowlands. We sailed Lower Saxony, island to island. Each firing-site was another island, in a white sea. Each island had its peak in the center … was it the position of the Rocket itself? the moment of liftoff? A German Odyssey. Which one would be the last, the home island? (*GR*, 494)

Enzian is the leader of the Zone-Herero, one of the most fantastic features in *GR*. The Zone-Herero are clandestine elite SS-troops, originally designed by the Germans to fight in Africa and then brought to Germany as political prisoners and ambassadors of the idea of the Third Reich from the outside the boundaries of Germany. In *GR*, they embody the disorderly humanity in "the Zone," in the defeated Germany proper, where DPs (Displaced Persons) are wandering, pillaging, occupying, forming ephemeral pockets of new order in the destroyed landscape. The Herero troops, or *Schwarzkommando* (Black Commandos), are instrumental to depict the frenzied search for the Rocket as the embodiment of the ultimate expression of the War Machine.

Enzian is half African, but brought to Germany as Weissmann's love slave, he yearns for a return. While it is clear to him that physical return to Africa is impossible, he identifies the idea thereof with the Rocket, in a mythical understanding. Pynchon unfolds the narrative of how Enzian elevates the Rocket to the center of the Zone-Herero culture, with the missile to symbolize everything in the people's life: from spatial organization of the circular village to the death wish of the group of individuals doomed to perish as a people. In the "mirror metaphysics" of the *GR* characters, the Schwarzkommando stands as a possible balance to "the Counterforce," a rag-tag group of Allied intelligence ex-officers and ex-operatives who attempt to save Slothrop from the Firm (the Allied Intelligence task force tracing Slothrop to reveal the secret of the Rocket as the key to the future of WMD). No less importantly, the Schwarzkommando confirm the "mirror metaphysics" also by their obvious paradoxical, oppositional characteristics: for one, they are *black* troops in a State regime that institutionalized ethnic hatred as a societal organizing principle, for another, they attain the elite SS-troops rank after they have been deemed subhuman, utterly colonized subjects.

In and of itself, the Schwarzkommando and the Zone-Hereros contextualize Enzian's ambivalence in Pynchon's debate on being-in-the-world. The Zone-Hereros are uprooted ethnic group close to extinction as a people, a clamorous example of total appropriation by a systemic expansion of the State (massacred by von Trotha, an account playing a major role in the narrative of *V.*). In the Zone, during the last days of the war and the first days of peace, the Hereros are on the loose, observing the destruction of the empire that destroyed them in Africa. The response to the utter obliteration of humanity is—at least for some of them—what Pynchon terms a "racial suicide" and disbelief in both Destiny and their own existence, juxtaposing ontological possibilities with societal institutionalized ordering:

> [Enzian] "We were a surprise. There are even now powerful factions in Paris who don't believe we exist. And most of the time I'm not sure myself."
> [Slothrop] "How's that?"
> "Well, I think we're here, but only in a statistical way. Something like that rock over there is just about 100% certain—it knows it's there so does everybody else. But our own chances of being right here right now are only a little better than even—the slightest shift in the probabilities and we're gone—schnapp! like that. […] in Südwest, we were nearly exterminated. There was no reason. Can you understand? *No reason*. We couldn't even find comfort in the Will of God Theory. […] We have a word that we whisper, a mantra

for times that threaten to be bad. Mba-kayere. […] It means 'I am passed over.' To those of us who survived von Trotha, it also means that we have learned to stand outside our history and watch it, without feeling too much. A little schizoid. A sense for the statistics of our being. One reason we grew so close to the Rocket, I think, was this sharp awareness of how contingent, like ourselves, the Aggregat 4 could be […]" (*GR*, 367, 368)

In a matter of speaking, this is the power over one's destiny that Weissmann fails to find. In a twist of why Enzian seeks to launch the fateful 00001 (the second *S-Gerät*, a line of V-2s loaded with Imipolex G, the very same chemical that has orgasmic qualities, theorized and researched on infant Tyrone Slothrop), possibly the same rocket that falls onto L.A., USA (the 00001 is not launched within the scope of the novel). Enzian's pursuit of the Rocket is the alternative to the racial suicide: it is the only actualization the Zone-Hereros are left with. This mission is, however, machine-oriented in itself, and as a parallel to Blicero's launching of the Rocket 00000 (the first *S-Gerät* that is manned with Gottfried, as final thrust against heaven, in a death-defying gesture of a giving a finger to God), it embraces the desire for a prosthetic, expression of man's power over space and the world. The idea behind converging all effort to actualize one's being through a gesture of power is a subscription to the inanimate that renders humanity obsolete. Enzian's obsession with the Rocket is, thus, yet another iteration of emptying-out of one's Dasein in exchange of an attempt to conquer and control death. It is based on the understanding of one's being as being-toward-death, confirming the application of entropy onto a living system.

The last member of this triad of characters Pynchon delineates as obsessed with the inanimate in search for control is Vaslav Tchitcherine, Enzian's half-brother, "the mad scavenger" (342). Invincible by the Germans, he represents yet another power in the war effort, the Soviet Red Army. While against the Nazi Germany, toward the end of the war, and in the days right after Germany's defeat, the Cold War arms race starts right away – it is a point at which Pynchon concentrates (*GR* published as a parable of how deep the conflict of the great powers runs, in the midst of the Cold War, 1973). Tchitcherine's obsession with the Rocket stems not only from his mission (and the threat that if he were to fail accomplishing it, there would be grave consequences for him at the hands of TsAGI, the technical intelligence in Moscow), but also from his impulse to gather the "Nihilist stock," building a counter-State in the Zone, out of lovers and revolutionaries that do not abide by the Soviet officials:

137

> He comes from the Nihilist stock: there are in his ancestry any number of bomb throwers and jubilant assassins. He is in no relation at all to the Tchitcherine who dealt the Rapallo Treaty with Walter Rathenau. There was a long-term operator, a Menshevik turned Bolshevik, in his exile and his return believing in a State that would outlive them all, […] There is *that* kind of State. But then again, there is this other Tchitchrine's kind, a mortal State that will persist no longer than the individuals in it. (*GR*, 342–343)

Lastly, Tchitcherine seeks the Rocket because he fears his own legacy of the hand of the State. He is haunted by the Kirghiz Light, a failed divine experience from the steppe when he was assigned to Central Asia to bring NTA (New Turkic Alphabet), a Latin-symbol script, to Kirghiz tribes. This was, of course, in order to appropriate the tribes for the Soviet empire, and by the same stroke, eradicate their cultural energy for any resistance. The NTA is alien to the Russians (writing in Cyrillic) but it codifies the pre-literate languages, it binds the all-too-free expression based on intangible web of relations, something that the State cannot tolerate. "He had come to give the tribesmen out here, this far out, an alphabet: it was purely speech, gesture, tough among them, not even an Arabic script to replace." (*GR*, 343) It is another argument Pynchon creates in this sub-plot that illustrates the State's centripetal effort to appropriate through ordering (tension reduction), and to vanquish centrifugal energies that may threaten its unity: against entropy of an expanding system, the machinist response of control (that, however, only hastens the increase of entropy inside the center).

Tchitcherine's encounter with the Kirghiz Light stems from his acquaintance with Džaqyp Qulan, a local school-teacher, who remains too "native," despite the Russians' efforts to use him in their Stalinist cultural obliteration. It is Tchitcherine's failure to understand the meaning of the mysterious Kirghiz Light experience (or possibly a place where God and Death are one, and their otherness is revealed to man outside of the mediation of language) that drives him from the embrace of spiritual peace with himself. Tchitcherine cannot escape the system of codified language and subjects all his experience to the NTA, imposing a structure on the meaning of possible transcendence. Using NTA, Tchitcherine stratifies, appropriates experience into a structure that obviates such transcendence. When recording the *ajtys* (a singing-duel), using the NTA, he realizes it destroys its ritual magic. Tchitcherine then hears a song about the Kirghiz Light and decides to pursue its meaning subject to his structural limits, to thrust at the truth with a single attempt, a ride through the grassland and to the desert, accompanied by Džaqyp

Qulan. Pynchon shows that such an act of appropriation is doomed to failure: a mythical experience of transcendence cannot be reached in such an exercise of power. Obviously, Tchitcherine fails to find anything, and blames his origin (resorting to diachronic demonism), tainted by his father's intercourse in Africa: thus, he determines that to reach a fulfillment of his life, and an honorable death, he must destroy Enzian, his Other in the living-world. Pynchon has the native thinker Džaqyp Qulan try to intervene, in vain: "Didn't the look say, 'Nothing you do, nothing he does, will help you in your mortality'? And, "You are brothers. Together, apart, why let it matter this much? Live. Die someday, honorably, meanly—but not by the other's hand. …' The light of each common autumn keeps bringing the same free advice, each time a little less hopefully. But neither brother can listen" (346).

All three characters who have given themselves up to either the institutionalized State or the technological Gerät, share one characteristics—they all search for an escape from a past filled with the horror encounter with death. Their pursuit of the machine perfection, a man-made response to the inexorability of life's decay, is driven by fear and despair over the limits of their being. The object of their search projects outward, as a prosthesis of human capability to move in space, and to exercise power. For what else is the Rocket but the ultimate allegory of Icarus' flight to the Sun, clad in the concept of speed faster than sound, a speed that defies human senses, a "proof" that man-made reality is ultimately, as always, greater than humanity itself? it is indeed ironic that it is Slothrop, seemingly truly connected to the Rocket (by the nature of his conditioned reaction to Imipolex-G, the chemical used in the Rocket and tested on Slothrop's erection), who becomes the Rocketman, not only in his search for the Gerät but also in his flight from his past that was not really his to begin with. The reader must side with the character's travails as the Rocketman seeks the Gerät only to uncover his ignorance of himself, seeks to unveil his past, and understand his ontological being).

Weissmann, Enzian, and Tchitcherine all desire the secret of the Rocket because they believe it the power the machine can lend them to control their lives (and deaths). Launches of both 00000 and 00001 symbolize the desperate, and doomed, attempt to thrust out to the space in order to avoid death that always happens on the inside. It is an attempt to project death outward, to make a decision of someone else's death when the realization come that death is a lack of decision, it is the end of decisions. Yet their violent action is in vain—Pynchon gives them neither redemption, nor satisfaction. Weissman's Rocket does not reach the stars, Enzian's Rocket falls possibly on L.A. but

139

achieves nothing, Tchitcherine fails to see Enzian (through benevolent witchcraft of Geli Tripping) and thus does not destroy his other.

The characters who Pynchon sides with in *GR* are the rather powerless, for their definition of victory is vastly different from the power-ridden outward expression above. If Pynchon unveils the ugliness of the reach of an institutionalized pawn such as Weissmann or Tchitcherine, he seems to be quietly cheering for the "preterite" (Pynchonian version of the heresy of antinomianism drafted by a Slothrop's ancestor), the "little man" characters. Whether it is by creating pockets of resistance to the overall reign of death, where the otherwise overwhelming entropy of State war machine does not apply for a moment (Roger Mexico's love affair with Jessica, Tchitcherine's father and Enzian's mother, Seaman "Pig" Bodine's drug escapades, and all Slothrop's love adventures, especially his romance with Katje, Tchitcherine and Geli Tripping[54]) or whether it is merely by allowing the characters defy the powerful by surviving (Katje Borgesius, whose absolute self-denial of survival works as a karmic payback for what her ancestor had done exterminating the dodoes on Mauritius[55]).

In between the two poles of either co-opted ruthless seekers of man-made secrets against entropy or kinder, considerate human beings trying to survive the war frenzy around them is Franz Pökler, a German chemical engineer enchanted with the possibilities of rocketry (after encountering Kurt Mondaugen, who survived the misadventures in Südwest in *V.*). Pökler works enthusiastically on rocket fuel problems before the Nazis are in power, but then is coerced into cooperation by the SS on development of V-2. The leverage the Nazis (concretely, Weissmann) have over him lies in Pökler's wife's socialist inclinations, and then continues by blackmailing Pökler through his daughter Ilse. Ilse is placed in Dora Prisoner camp, and Pökler can see her only once in a while, doubting his daughter is in fact alive. He nevertheless gives in, and accepts the game of "his Ilse." The State obviously cheats and supplies Pökler with a

---

[54] McLaughlin (2002), in his review of David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire* attributes the improbable romances as revelations of imperial narratives. Whether the interpretation focuses on only imperialistic or State control, such reading ends with critical stance toward systems of societal organization: "We see a similar unmasking of the rhetoric of empire a few pages later in the transracial love story of Tchitcherine's father and Enzian's mother. This scene fits, in a sense, with others in the novel—Roger and Jessica early on, Tchitcherine and Geli Tripping near the end—in which two lovers, through their love, effect a quiet, temporary separation from the systems of control around them." (*Pynchon Notes*, 89)

[55] The entire detour to Mauritius of the 17th century is a great parable in which Pynchon has the Frans Van den Groov go slowly crazy, torn between his systematic genocide on the dodoes, and the compassion: it is the preterite versus elect question again. The dodoes must be exterminated, for their ugliness and deficiency in every bird-like aspect defies God's wisdom of Creation. However, Frans struggles with compassion and doubt his faith in the infallibility of God, should the creation of dodo be a part of the Godly Design. (110–112)

range of females representing his daughter over the years, finally overpowering him. This is the ultimate co-option to the State's institutionalized violence: however suspicious and gradually more certain that he is being tricked, Pökler accepts the Ilse surrogates. This allows him to let go of his paternal inhibitions, ending up in an incestuous relationship with the teenage "Ilse." It reminds the reader of the complex guilt-free yet self-condemning "double-think" (not dissimilar to Orwell's *1984*, in which citizens accept lies and modify their concept of truth out of fear). The State oppression forces Pökler into an ethical double-bind of self-loathing and self-indulgence: knowing that the girl in front of him may not be his daughter (and despairing her possible fate), Pökler makes himself into playing along and pretending to believe, for that allows him to face his own fear of Weissmann, and, more importantly, to enjoy sinfully the unfolding incest. A less inextricable situation would not permit him to commit such a break of ethical taboo.

The entire array is, of course, completed with Slothrop, whose "victory" over the "Firm" is a flight and disappearance. If in *V.*, Pynchon leaves Stencil's quest for-ever-unfinished because V. disintegrates in Malta, and in *COL49*, Oedipa finds out her epistemology of the world must fall apart to gather the refuse material in order to truly see the alternative of America (W.A.S.T.E. delivery system being a formidable critical metaphor to what she needs to uncover), in *GR*, Slothrop must dissolve into the very space of the Zone, becoming not only a scattered concept in people's perception, but submitting his mode of being to the spatial requirements of the moment. And, this comes out as his only refuge from the objectification the forces of socially institutionalized threaten him with.

GR is thus an encyclopedia listing and revealing in seemingly binary oppositions the various modes of being an individual can employ ontologically: they are all coexistent at the same time, and they bring forward what every individual may need to consider in their being in the lifeworld (cf. Dalsgaard, 111). Pynchon seems to suggest that if the method behind one's epistemological apparatus to relate to reality is paranoia, or the way of thinking in which dialectics is allowed to leap to mutually equal yet equivocal conclusions without checking against a structure of the "normal," one can discern the profound ethical ramifications in the differing modes of being. This owes to the double-bind of the Cold War era (and uses the WWII as a great backdrop for the debate[56]): on the

---

[56] It has been noted that *GR* is a very curious war novel: there is no combat, troops of either side are portrayed more as individuals doing everything else (trading, smuggling, eating, taking drugs, having sex)

level of an individual, one must struggle with dialectics of competing ideologies (oft-leading to the Orwellian "double-think," mentioned above); on the societal level, it is contingent on what the power-relations are between "us" and "them" (see below) and the ethical consequences of means-to-ends. It is paranoia that allows one to perceive behind either of the epistemological approaches the power exercises in relationships and interactions: the paranoiac fears the power so he or she is very much aware of its direction and magnitude, being able to construct web of knowledge with areas of meaningful intensity and, at the same time, allow for ambiguity and high levels of uncertainty.[57]

This is best illustrated by the characters' engagement with space: they either try to control it or become part of it. While the former engagement brings about a diachronic struggle in terms of fighting one's past (that of one's own and the power that controlled the space before one appropriated it), the latter opens an intensity of "now" that does away with the past and disregards the future as causality. The characters who exemplify their obsession with origin and with the entropy of their being-toward-death subscribe to space appropriation in order to control, exert power: and because theirs is an effort that has become part of the State as the War Machine, they are necessarily co-opted into the institutionalized, inanimate, process. The "preterite" characters, struggling on their own to win against the entropy of the State by actualizing their individual potential, by living-with others, and by physically engaging the space they live in, viscerally investing themselves. It is a plunge that removes systems of control (societal and inanimate), systems of mediation (language and naming), and fear of death that leads to cooption (double-thinking that removes guilt and modifies truth).

Future is pushed off as an event of "not-yet," the other present-to-come. It is an expression of personal liberty no longer in terms of possessive individualism that lies in defying the other (cf. Patell), but rather in terms of possible avenues of self-actualization. However, it is crucial to realize that Pynchon does not subscribe to a Marxist, communitarian alternative to the capitalist societal organization demanding the expansion.

---

but trying to fight each other, and there is never any mention of the Holocaust (except for the Dora Prisoner Camp at Nordhausen, where the V-2 assembly factory was located).

[57] "The pressure toward anarchy, in a world structured to resist anarchy at any cost, might release us, ironically, into a more humane order, where the human continuities with stones and mountainsides become visible and possible and not plastic reductions to SHROUD and SHOCK or even Imipolex G …" (Levine, 117)

Despite a continuing affinity with the marginalised within a capitalist economic order, it is important to note in any assessment of the counter-hegemonic potential of his dissident mappings, that Pynchon's fictions do not formulate the kind of collectivist and programmatic response to that system which is traditionally favoured by the left. Pynchon's relation to radical politics is equivocal. The hostility to capitalism expressed in his work owes less to classical Marxist understandings of its workings than to a neo-Weberian critique of the disenchantment of the world. (Jarvis, 64)

4.2.4. Characters in Space: *Vineland*

This is even more apparent in *Vineland* (*VNL*, 1990). In this novel, Pynchon continues his meditation on the opposites. The poles of the debate are even more easily identifiable in what, as far as the historical chronology of Pynchon's narratives goes, departs from *GR* as an obsession with Death and a wish to overcome its inexorability with a man-made machine of desire in WW2, and continues in *COL49* as an obsession with growth of capital "'Keep it bouncing,' he'd [Inverarity] told her once, 'that's all the secret, keep it bouncing.' He must have known, writing the will, facing the spectre, how the bouncing would stop" (*COL49*, 147). It is in *GR*, where Pynchon reveals the War Machine at its best: the war becomes an ideal environment for the forces of the inanimate capitalist growth as a system to fight its entropy (dissipation of usable energy).

"The World is a closed thing, cyclical, resonant, eternally-returning," is to be delivered into a system whose only aim is to *violate* the Cycle. Taking and not giving back, demanding that "productivity" and "earnings" keep on increasing with time, the System 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. The System may or may not understand that it's only buying time. And that time is an artificial resource to begin with, or no value to anyone or anything but the System, which sooner or later must crash to its death, when its addiction to energy has become more than the rest of the World can supply, dragging with it innocent souls all along the chain of life. (*GR*, 419)

In *VNL*, the violence is openly attributed to the State as a societal system of organization. This is a State at peace, with a self-ordering mission: the novel explores how a '60s student civil unrest to seize a fictitious "Surf university" ends in betrayal and a violent death, and parallels it with the '80s American War on Drugs in a two-time-layers

narrative. The ruthlessness with which the State approaches disorder illustrates how the War Machine, once appropriated by the State, transforms the societal organization into institutionalized violence that passes for self-ordering and demands conformity and compliance. Characters who may still dream of alternative avenues for actualization are ostracized: Frenesi Gates is coerced into witness protection programs; Zoyd Wheeler is pushed into pretending insanity in a deal to remain visible for the government; the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives are reduced to alternative commercial retreat; and, in extreme, the Thanatoids are restrained to an unreal community of beings with karmic imbalance, not-quite-dead because of the great injustices committed against them.

It is quite clear what Pynchon wants to depict the Americans of the '80s as individuals who have not identified themselves with ordering of behavior and the mode of being it requires are encapsulated in horizontal as well as vertical social ghettos. In other words, they are labeled, processed, and objectified, under constant surveillance – they are "the others" within the State. Within a society, they are regarded as members of "them," no longer part of "us." If Vineland is an area which is a pocket of resistance to the societal ostracization, it is also a product of the very same process, geographically a ghetto, normatively a community constantly at odds with the State majority.

VNL is filled with nostalgia of a certain kind: less fueled by a sense of pathos than by the memory of different times, during which the current ordering was not so mercilessly efficient yet. It is not nostalgia for a particular time in the past (for the '60s experiment of the campus-turned-republic, or PR[3], merely reveals how hopelessly powerless a group is against a systemic approach of the War Machine), some kind of societal youth. Rather, it is a systemic nostalgia pondering what happens to societies as self-organizing systems when they develop mechanisms, institutions for self-ordering, only to turn into machines that, by the nature of increasing order (and entropy), lose energy within themselves and scavenge for it outside. Reducing tensions among its constituent elements to minimum, the societal systems must subscribe to entropy that renders them inflexible and inanimate.

Thus, *VNL* is an elaboration on, and continuation of, the concept of preterition, the being of a common man. If the preterite were introduced and theorized in *GR*, where they stood as a mock-monument to the heresy of the Puritan antinomianism, in *VNL* they are given more depth and the mode of being of the preterite is central. In *GR*, the preterite were the background against which Slothrop always checked his epistemology of paranoia. Whenever he started to hope any event occurred because he had so intended, the

narrative voice intervenes with an inner monologue rather than reality check, to dissuade him from it: "He wants to preserve what he can f her from Their several entropies, from Their softsoaping and Their money: maybe he thinks that if he can do it for her he can also do it for himself … although that's awful close to nobility for Slothrop and The Penis He Thought Was His Own." (*GR*, 307) Slothrop's epistemological view of the world is delineated by the paranoiac self-deprecation, and his actions perceived as powerless (and not necessarily his own to begin with, given his conditioning and inanimate influences he is exposed to).

GR mocks the idea of free will, of individual actualization against the odds of systemic ordering. *VNL*, despite its tone of the long-lost hope of a more humane America, centers on the rejects of the society, and empowers them in the small victories over, and within, the system. Pynchon still poses the two opposite modes of being in the world (being-toward-death against being-with through others) in the characters on the opposite side of law, revealed as a mechanism of control solely aimed at accumulation of power. This accumulation lies in the fear of entropy an one's being's finality, aimed at fighting the entropy of life by exerting power outward into the world through appropriation of space. Thus, Hector Zuñiga, a DEA agent who menaces Zoyd Wheeler's into snitching, reproaches Zoyd for his non-cooperation over the years precisely in these terms:

> "Hey, all right fuckhead, try this — *you are goín to have to die?* Yeh-heh-heh, remember that? Death! after all them years of nonconformist shit, you're gonna end up just like everybody else anyway! *¡Ja, ja!* So what was it for? All 'at livín in the hippie dirt, drivín around some piece of garbage ain't even in the blue book no more, passín up some *really serious bucks*'t you could've spent not just on y'rself and your kid but on all your beloved bro and sister hippie fools who could've used it as much as you?" (*VNL*, 32)

The abuse of power peaks, of course, in the character Brock Vond, a US Attorney blinded with power. He is a true, easily identifiable "villain" in the novel, a maniac driven by his desire for possession of Frenesi Gates, capable of every humanly possible crime in order to appropriate her as an object of his violent lust:

> They faced each other in light from which all read was missing. She looked in his eyes, then at his penis — yep erect all right, creating pleats in the front of the pale federal trousers.

"Been thinking about you too," her voice ragged from a pack and a half of jailhouse
smokes a day.

Smart mouth. One day he would order her down on her knees in front of all these
cryptically staring children, put a pistol to her head, and give her something to do with her
smart mouth. Each time he daydreamed about this, the pistol would reappear, as an
essential term. (*VNL*, 273)

On the other hand, however, one sees an array of preterite characters, whose effort
to survive the "Nixonian Years," and later, the "Reagan Years," results in a varied, yet
somewhat successful response to systemic control. The overall tone of the novel is that of
concern. If this tone owes to the topic of what was identified above as a *care for* one's
being, the reason why human existence is ontological, Pynchon employs a tongue-in-
cheek popularized version of Eastern philosophical terminology (in concordance with the
time setting of his novel in both the '60s and '80s) to address it: by introducing "karma,"
and "karmic balance" in the narrative as a driving force, he meditates on the ontological
care of being of an individual in the world. Whether it regards The Sisterhood of
Kunoichi Attentives (a ninjette retreat/order that DL Chastain is a member of) and the
Ninja Death Touch requiring a precision not to disrupt the universe,[58] or the theory
behind Thanatoids' unavenged injustice, Pynchon's concern is for justice for, and the
mode of being of, individuals in a State which not only appropriated the War Machine but
perfected its violence into an institutionalized, "peaceful," form.

The opposition of these binaries is not as sharp, however. The plot of *VNL* set in
the '80s makes the narrative most recent, in terms of narrative time-span. None of his
other novels (so far) has reached into any more recent time. Thus, it Frenesi's betrayal,
Zoyd's coerced snitching, and Flash's (Frenesi's other husband) brooding over the loss of
privacy as a manner of co-option, willing or not: "Why should we lurk around like we're
ashamed of what we do?" Flash wondered. "Everybody's a squealer. We're in th' Info
revolution here. Anytime you use a credit card you're tellin' the Man more than you
meant to. Don't matter if it's big or small, he can use it all." (*VNL*, 74). This is when

---

[58] DL Chastain fails to kill Brock Vond by mistaking him with one Takeshi Fumimota, one of her
complications being the indescribable difficulty with which a ninjette needs to deliver the Vibrating Palm
assassination, in itself a very spatial concept: "Today, of course, you can pick up a dedicated hand-held
Ninja Death Touch calculator in any drugstore, which will track, computer, and project [begin 142] for you
as quick as a wink, but back then DL had only her memory to rely on and what she'd learned from Inoshiro
Sensei, obliged early, she and her brain, to enter a system of eternal repayment humming along with or
without her existence. Sensei called it "*the art of the dark meridians*," warning her repeatedly about the
timing." (*VNL*, 141–2, italics mine)

Pynchon identifies the true victory of the State as a societal organization by systemic means of control of individuals.

To be sure, the larger context is that of the Cold War global conflict, that outwardly deploys the State war machine abroad but self-orders internally, with increasingly crushing efficacy, and "weeds out" discontent (Weed Atman being the PR[3]'s unwilling leader and the victim that sent Frenesi into Brock Vond's clutches in the '60s, and the Vineland War on Drugs, especially marijuana, or "weed" growers in the '80s[59]). Unlike other Pynchon's novels (*V.*, *GR*, *M&D*, *AtD*), *VNL* focuses mainly on California,[60] and it is a heavily "localized" narrative. This has ramifications to the literary space of the narrative: while characters are still on constant move, the distances they travel are short and their engagement with space is indeed reified in the forests of Vineland and malls of L.A. The characters' appropriation of space, or, in turn, visceral investment spirals along their physical immersion into layers of the space their social interactions triangulate.

Much like in the Zone in *GR*, Vineland is a smooth space of impenetrable redwood forests. If the Zone as a smooth space lies expecting events to come, post-war history to unfold, sheets of human activity to cover it, or fears to be partitioned into striated space, "Vineland the Good" (*VNL*, 322) invites to meditation over what space looks like before and after it has been turned into the human lifeworld:

> Someday this would be all part of a Eureka–Crescent City–Vineland megalopolis, but for now the primary sea coast, forest, riverbanks and bay were still not much different from what early visitors in Spanish and Russian ships had seen. Along with noting the size and fierceness of the salmon, the fogbound treachery of the coasts, the fishing villages of the Yurok and Tolowa people, log keepers not known for their psychic gifts had remembered to write down, more than once, the sense they had of some invisible boundary, met when approaching from the sea, past the capes of somber evergreen, the stands of redwood with their perfect trunks and cloudy foliage, too high, too red to be literal trees — carrying

---

[59] "Zoyd had found a community living on borrowed time, as everyone watched the scope of the CAMP crop-destruction effort growing without limit, season after season — as more state and federal agencies came on board, as the ground jury in Eureka subpoenaed more and more citizens, as friendly deputies and secure towns one by one were neutralized, taken back under government control … Sooner or later Holytail was due for the full treatment, from which it would emerge, like most of the old Emerald Triangle, pacified territory — reclaimed by the enemy for a timeless, defectively imagined future of zero-tolerance [begin 222] drug-free Americans all pulling their weight and all locked in to the official economy, inoffensive music, endless family specials on the Tube, church all week long, and, on special days, for extra-good behavior, maybe a cookie.

[60] *COL49* is also set in California, as is *Inherent Vice*. It is important to note, however, that *VNL* is the only Pynchon's novel that bears a title of a geographic location, however imaginary.

therefore another intention, which the Indians might have known about but did not share.
(*VNL*, 317)

The smooth space is striated by, and covered with, institutions and mechanisms, both physical and abstract (but both of which are systemic mechanisms of self-ordering and tension reduction among its constituent elements) and Pynchon's characters struggle to go beyond and in between the strata to discover whether avenues for being-with through individual actualization still exist.[61]

Similarly to *V.*, wherein Benny Profane descends into the alternative space *under* the streets to escape the control of the modern systems, or in which "there are two worlds: the street and under the street. One is the kingdom of death and one of life," (325) in *VNL* the smooth space lies in the ability of the characters to penetrate the everyday, "profane" reality imposed on the space and enter societal alternatives, "sacral" lifeworld. What Pynchon offers as an ominous plot of the W.A.S.T.E. delivery system, its threat based on the discarded alternative to the well-ordered limited California, becomes in *VNL* an option of retreat to the landscape's past. It is an option to enter a mythological space of the people long gone (the Yurok tribes), people who are improbable to exist (the Thanatoids in the town of Shade Creek – see the "improbability of existence" of the Schwarzkommando in *GR* above), or people who are undesirable, and whose very existence confirms the imperfection of the State's effort for ordering (the Traverses and Beckers at their annual reunion).

> At the end of the book, Pynchon evokes the Yurok death legend to dispose of Vond. Rather than raising charges of romantic appropriation of native culture, Paul Maltby sees Pynchon's invocation of Yurok culture as a sign of utopianism in his characters' search for home as "a territory of the spirit," in which "men and women are figured in a non-alienated relationship to their world" (182) (Karpinski, 40)

---

[61] Cf. Berressem's exquisite application (*Pynchon Notes*, 1994) of *Anti-Oedipus* in reading Pynchon's texts. "Especially in *Vineland*, the perspective point of all these moments is the body of America as a body without organs: "the green America of their childhoods" (314). This unwritten and unwritable America is the image of a completely "deterritorialized socius" (*Anti-Oedipus* 33) [begin p.51] with a disorganized, "smooth [rather than striated], slippery, opaque, taut surface" (9) that resists even the schizophrenic cuts of a nomadic subject without "fixed identity" that wanders over this "body without organs" (16). Yet psychoanalysis, chaos theory and catastrophe theory all teach that conditions are never stable or linear. This is taken up by Pynchon in the juxtapositions and mirroring of *Vineland*'s several generations." (Berressem, 1994: 50)

In other words, if *GR* employs a wide array of groups (the "Nationalities on the move" in *GR*) to determine anew how being can be arranged within the smooth space of "the Zone," in *VNL* Pynchon meditates on what happened after such moments of dissolution[62] of a system (or State war machines) failed to bring a more humane environment, a space in which actualization of individuals would be possible not only under the conditions of utter submission and commodification to societal organizing principles. As Hubbel Gates (Frenesi's father) experienced, in his search for various jobs in Hollywood – and was scorned and abandoned by Frenesi's mother, an incessant revolutionary from the Traverse family: "Not that he hadn't taken a hit or two, beginning the first day he reported to the Warner studio and found out there was a strike on and his "job" was to be one of a thousand IATSE goon hired to break it. Turned out they were looking for a larger, meaner type of individual anyway, but Hub just stood there for a while, bewildered, shaking his head — he'd thought he was fighting World War II to keep just this happening to the world." (*VNL*, 289) *VNL* seems to resonate with such systemic nostalgia for what opportunities were missed to take a different, alternative route. This reading allows for an inter-textual comparison and discernible development of ideas for dialogical epistemology, in a continuation of the issues raised in *V.*, *COL49*, as well as in *GR*.

4.2.5. Characters in Space: *Mason & Dixon*

It is in *Mason & Dixon* (*M&D*, 1997), that Pynchon clarifies the argument for systemic nostalgia: what may open as a reminiscence of good old times (and a good old novel, stylized into the 18th-century English), swiftly unfolds into a contemplation on Bad History (*M&D*, 615).

---

[62] It is important to reiterate the concept of *nodal points*, being both space- and time-related that represent bifurcations for humanity, with the explanation Berressem provides (1994):

> In the Lorenz attractor, this catastrophic shift is caused by the fact that the outwardly-spiralling flow never hits the identical point when it reaches the border area to which it is attracted by the other force—and thus "side." At these moments, there is "an intersection of the boundary" (Abraham and Shaw, OLA 23), so the border actually belongs to both sides [begin p.45] simultaneously. Pynchon ceaselessly brings the story to such ambiguous intersections. […] At such bifurcation points, or, as Pynchon calls them "timeless bursts," everything becomes possible: (qt VI 117–18). At each of these invisible borders, one system folds over onto the "side" of the other. In this continuous and catastrophic shift the movement itself is continuous, the systematic shift catastrophic—the bifurcation point, whose function I take to be analogous to that of the Lacanian *real*, function 1) as the "point at infinity" where opposites are identified and 2) as a "chance generator." (Berressem, 1994: 44–45)

As will be argued further, Pynchon explores, in his further novels (especially *M&D* and *AtD*) nodal points at which the humanity missed an opportunity. It will be demonstrated that his plea for learning from past mistakes has intensified in the more recent novels.

> As all of Pynchon's novels—but especially *Gravity's Rainbow* and later *Mason & Dixon*—make clear, America has never, at any point in its history, been exempt from the burden of its European past. Rather, it has continued that past under new conditions. It has functioned as a screen on which Europeans have projected their desire for origin, paradise or new beginnings and then proceeded, even as settlers of a "new world," to create structures of oppression. […] Alternative visions—which Pynchon always locates between parody and hope—can therefore only point in two directions. Either they are directed nostalgically backwards toward a vision of Nature as yet untouched by Western man; or they push sideways and against historical linearity toward the niches or the marginal spaces of the passed-over. Therefore, Pynchon's novels place value on people and objects out of order—on "waste" in the largest sense—and on moments of malfunction and anarchic openness when a system breaks down and the new order has not yet taken shape (as in the Zone of Gravity's Rainbow or the Visto in Mason & Dixon); or they invest hope in those (most of all in children) who embody a continuous promise of the possible. (Ickstadt, 44–45)

Pynchon has the two astronomers/surveyors (Mason is the astronomer who scorns the surveying mission, Dixon is the surveyor who doubts the credibility of astronomers' methods as *charlatan*) cover areas not only geographic but mainly social, with an eye clearly focused on the injustice and inhumanity with which peoples are treated by both the State and its institutions as well as ruthless individuals, agents of the inanimate exercise of power. To this extent, he introduces the narrative with a likeness to the "decapitated time" (a concept introduced by Sartre in his famous reading of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*). The reader learns of the voyages and adventures of Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon through a 18th-century-style narration (à la the narrator in *Tristram Shandy*) of the Revd Wicks Cherrycoke, who not unlike Scheherazade, can stay in Ives LeSpark's home as long as he entertains the children with stories. This is some time after both Mason and Dixon had died, passed along with the time they had belonged to: the time before the U.S. independence (Mason dies 1786, Dixon 1777), and, more importantly, before the "quest for longitude" was over (Harrisson's marine chronometer perfected between 1760–70).[63] The plot is known but unfolds into more and more detail, with many interruptions, sub-plots, and, most importantly, subjunctive twists that could have happened but, ultimately, did not.

---

[63] For an exquisite yet very accessible account of "quest for longitude," see Dava Sobel's *Longitude: True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time*. (1995)

Unlike previous novels, the plot is not a focal point of the narrative, with characters more or less related to it (Schaub, McHale, 2000). There is no singularly unifying theme (V., Tristero, Rocket). This is due to the fact that in *M&D*, the plot is not a secret, a mystery (as is in *V.*, *COL49*, or *GR*) but the Line, something the reader knows of, and something a single narrative voice of the Rev[d] asserts. However unreliable, self-stylized "untrustworthy Remembrancer," (*M&D*, 8) Cherrycoke represents a narrative voice that owes to 18th-century novel (as in Fielding, Defoe, or Sterne[64]) because he is a single voice that tells the story: all sub-plots, or sub-narrations are "nested" within the "Tale of America," (7) as Cherrycoke yarns it.

> With *Mason & Dixon*, Pynchon has jettisoned his use of the detective genre, the central figure in search of V. or Tristero or the rocket, and with this abandonment he has dispensed with the epistemological doubt that he had used to bedevil and provoke his readers. More accurately, from a narrative point of view this doubt remains but is transformed (or solved) by an intermediary storyteller—Wicks Cherrycoke—a device that makes clear from the get-go the contingency of what follows. (Schaub, 190)

Perhaps because of the known plot, the result that the "small world" of the narrative is converging onto, Pynchon's Mason and Dixon are the first characters who, rather than unweaving a mystery of their past or of a conspiracy, unfold into two human individuals thrown in, struggling with, and coming to terms with their mission(s), and the gradual realization of their mode of being in the context of the Age of Reason, and the State as an expansive empire.

> The newly charted territories become 'known' and accessible to future colonizers, while the landmarks of previous societies are erased. At the same time, it is noted that the Line will serve also as the official separating incision between North and South during the Civil War one hundred years after it was marked out. (Garcia-Caro, 104)

Of all Pynchon's novels, *M&D* is probably also the most geographic, itinerant, in other words a novel on traveling as such. While not quixotic in any manner (unlike self-imposed quests in *V.*, *COL49*, or even *GR*), it is in this novel that the two protagonists journey truly to the end of their world. This is not because the world is ended by man (cf.

---

[64] For comparison with the 18[th]century-novelists, see criticism on *M&D*, for instance Schaub (2000), Saltzman (2000).

the Zone in *GR*), or because it is subverted (cf. *V.*, *COL49*, or *VNL*). In *M&D*, the fantastic world of imagination literally starts right at the point where the known world of civilization ends. Both protagonists spend their lifetime "discovering" a new world, or at least a profoundly new way of appropriation of the world, "making sense" of it – it is only to find out that what they do is in stark negation to what they learn about humanity at the same time. While they invest themselves in the space of colonized world as individuals, they actively participate, or act as, agents of the Empire, creating *strata* in the process of appropriation of space. The power of "making sense" should, in both protagonists' opinion, rest in scientific approach that newly dominated thought in the Age of Reason: rationalism is elevated to governing principle that leads to "worship of science and technology […] but put[s] them at the service of power-hungry, conspiratorial oppressors. Aligned with Newton on this dubious side of the Augustan moral geometry are other rationalist figures such as Linnaeus (430), Fermat (336), Herschel (769), Gibbon (349), the Encyclopedists (359), and the Royal Society." (Strandberg, 105)

Dixon, the real surveyor of the pair, has a history of appropriation of space, a true study of how to master space as landscape, how to understand it to one's advantage, to one's elevation of being. His teacher, William Emerson, reportedly taught his students to fly along the Ley-Lines in England, following the ancient Roman conveyors of power, only to teach them about principles of human appropriation of space as a mode of being:

> The Ley seems to generate, along its length, an Influence, […] so beneath them now do the Dark-Age Maps, the long, dogged Roman Palimpsest […] "The moral lesson in this," declares Emerson, "being,— Don't Die." […] "The Romans," he continues in class the next day, "were preoccupied with conveying the Force, be it hydraulic, or military, or architectural,— along straight Lines. The Leys are at least that old, […] Right Lines beyond a certain Magnitude become of less use or instruction to those who must dwell among them, than intelligible, by their immense regularity, to more distant Onlookers, as giving a clear sign of Human Presence upon the Planet. (*M&D*, 218–19)

It has, however, a darker purpose, a more sinister use: the surveyor occupation is, after all, a business of land partition, of delineating real estates, appropriation of space in the literal meaning of the word. It is only in America that Dixon comes to realize what his jobs have done.

> There is a love of complexity, here in America […] pure Space waits the Surveyor,— no previous Lines, no fences, no streets to constrain polygony however extravagant […] He's [Dixon] never regarded his Occupation in quite this way before. His journeyman years coincided with the rage then sweeping Durham for Enclosure,— aye and alas, he had attended at that Altar. He had slic'd into Polygons the Common-Lands of his Forebears. He had drawn Lines of Ink that became Fences of Stone. He had broken up herds of Fell sheep, to be driven ragged and dingy off thro' the Rain, to Gates, and exile. He had turn'd the same covetous Angles […] defining tracts of virgin Land by as many of these exhilarating Instrumental Sweeps, as possible. (*M&D*, 586)

Mason, on the other hand, appears to be a rather self-doubting star-gazer from the very beginning. He advocates scientific understanding of the world, Enlightenment-style, while being "melancholic," (290) or "true Phlegmatick" (735): because he mourns his first wife, Rebekah, so much that he thinks he is haunted by her, his rationality is always in question. Mason struggles perpetually with his occupation (his father, a baker, renounces him for star-gazing), who is always at odds with both himself (unhappy and doubtful, full of feelings of self-deprecation) and with others (scorned for his good-for-nothing job, or suspected of anything between witchcraft and sloth "'Star-Gazing' in those parts was a young man's term for masturbating," 171).

For the Mason and Dixon of Pynchon's novel, it is imperative to examine their mutual relationship, and how it develops over the course of the novel. Pynchon is well-established in his effort to show the struggle of individuals within and against the State war machine, be its shape colonial enterprise (*V.*), warring super-powers (*GR*), or control over its populace (*VNL*). In *M&D*, the Mason and Dixon of his narrative are two protagonists initially suspecting each other of being secret agents of a higher state power, then share their feelings as financially desperate and politically disgruntled star-gazers but gradually become a simple pair of friends. It is this development from the original distrust based on previous negative experience and official career calculations to a simple caring friendship of understanding and mutual respect that reveals the truth: The overpowering State (empire) deprives individuals not only of choice but mainly of ethical and personal dimension of understanding reality.

While suspicious of their role in both the "quest for longitude" (observing the transits of Venus) and the demarcation of the Line, the paranoia Pynchon has used in previous novels as a fuel to propel his characters into the plot is somewhat dimmed in *M&D*. Instead, both the protagonists and the reader are presented with a dawning

realization of the surveyors' task. Coerced by job-necessity (Dixon) and, at the same time, tormented by the visible fallacy of scientific independence and objectivity (Mason), they fear a "a Global Scheme," but they finally ascribe it to no hidden conspirators (despite the equivocal contemplations of Jesuit global conspiracy to "penetrate China," 224) but their own government (or Royal Society, or Pennsylvania's and Maryland's landowners): "'And Men of Science,' cries Dixon, 'may be but the simple Tools of others, with no more idea of what they are about, than a Hammer knows of a House.'" (*M&D*, 669)

Where Mason and Dixon believed they were working to improve human life *in* the world by learning about the physical laws governing it (observing the transit of Venus), they realize they have been acting as agents, tools of institutionalized superhuman system that does exactly the opposite. "Drawing out the Mason-Dixon Line is intended as an extension of the reign of civility, public programming, and good sense; [instead] it serves a policy of aesthetic coercion, of domestication by geometry. Thus map-making is another imperialistic transgression." (Saltzmann, 65) Mason and Dixon realize they have been reducing space into a commodity, objectifying the living and turning it into a raw material for for-profit production (commissioned to decide the disagreement between the colonies in America). The surveyors witness the power that is exercised on themselves and the space. They actively, consciously, *create* the lifeworld by carving out "the Visto," the Line that stratifies America, transforms it from a previously untamed, smooth space where anything could transpire into a social structure imprinted on the landscape. America as an Earthly Paradise is only "safe till the next Territory to the west be seen and recorded, measur'd and tied in, back into the Net-Work of Points already known, that slowly triangulates its Way into the Continent, changing all from subjunctive to declarative, reducing Possibilities to Simplicities that serve the ends of Governments …" (*M&D*, 345).[65] They realize the fact that they are playing an active part in the destructive project of turning the Continent from an open and at most qualifying entity into an enclosed and quantified commodity, thus shutting the promise of the possible into the appropriated, finite, violently appropriated, striated space: a territory. "… there exists no 'Maryland' beyond an Abstraction, a Frame of right lines drawn to enclose a square off the great Bay in its unimagin'd Fecundity, its shoreline tending to Infinite Length, ultimately unmappable,— no more, to be fair, than there exists any 'Pennsylvania' but a chronicle of Frauds committed serially against the Indians dwelling

---

[65] This quotation from *M&D* has been previously used to corroborate this very same argument by David Seed (2000).

there, check'd only by the Ambitions of other Colonies to north and east." (*M&D*, 354) "They are New World Adams who push westward yet who find not an Edenic paradise or a soiled hell but both—a potential garden trampled by the very [begin 76] humans who seek to cultivate it." (Greiner, 75–76)

If Pynchon's humanist motif was but thinly veiled in his previous works ("keep cool, but care" in *V.*, 366), warning against "Business As Usual" (*VNL*, 262), it surfaces with an outspoken concern and radicalized premonition against the encroachment of the inanimate, dehumanizing forces that societal systems employ for the control of their constituent elements projecting violence (death) and totalizing commodification of human beings (slavery):

> "Ev'rywhere they've sent us,— the Cape, St. Helena, America,— what's the Element common   to   all?
> "Long Voyages at Sea," replies Mason, blinking with Exhaustion by now chronick. "Was there anything else?"
> "Slaves. Ev'ry day at the Cape, we lived with Slavery in our faces,— more of it at St. Helena,— and now here we are again, in another Colony, this time having drawn them a Line between their Slave-Keepers, and their Wage-Payers, as if doom'd to re-encounter thro' the World this public Secret, this shameful Core….
> […]
> "Huz. Didn't we take the King's money, as here we're taking it again? whilst Slaves waited upon us, and we neither one objected, as little as we have here, in certain houses south of the Line,— Where does it end? No matter where in it we go, shall we find all the World Tyrants and Slaves? America was the one place we should *not* have found them."
> (*M&D*, 692–93)

Pynchon draws on the historical connection between the Mason-Dixon Line and the division between the "slave" and "free" states a hundred years later. "The 'great Worm of Slavery' ([*M&D*], 147) lays behind the entire economy at Cape Town, and at St. Helena as well, …" (Baker, 172). Thus, the author reveals the direct relation between the spatial investment on individual level and its ramifications for one's ethical values. From his postmodern vantage point removed by two centuries, Pynchon gives the two heroes a chance of redemption. Mason and Dixon plunge themselves into the space of their inglorious work to unveil the truth of inter-relationship, and to learn to cherish what they are given by one another's company. In Cherrycoke's moral parable, they fight the

entropy of humanity as a mere carrier of the systemic mechanistic determination, thinly veiled as the abstraction of a higher idea of an empire.

> Cherrycoke is a self-styled 'untrustworthy Rembembrancer' (8) who selects and narrates facts in a consciously 'moral' way. His access to some information about the lives of the two British scientists immediately poses questions about the accuracy of the stories, the origin of the materials presented, but also about their moral purpose. (García-Caro, 112)

Because Mason and Dixon must stop the Line at the Warrior Path, they liberate themselves and the perhaps even the generations to come: "'They will have to live their lives without any Line amongst 'em, unseparated, daily doing Business together, World's Business and Heart's alike, repriev'd from the Tyranny of residing either North or South of it. Nothing worse than that, whatwhat?'" (*sic*, Pynchon, 709). That is the opportunity Pynchon outlines for his characters, and for the reader. The price Mason and Dixon pay is the failure of their careers and a relatively humble return to Britain. Yet they are rewarded with friendship of each other, and with the ability to deal with the skeletons in their respective closets: Mason can overcome his mourning for Rebekah, and Dixon's acquired trust for Mason cures him from suspicions on personal level, translating them to the realizations applicable onto larger scale of people's interaction in general.

> Pynchon's Mason and Dixon are cast once again as men whose understanding is subject to moral judgment rather than to the colonizing imperatives of the Line: 'Having acknowledg'd at the Warpath the Justice of the Indian's Desires, after the two deaths, Mason and Dixon understand as well that the Line is exactly what Capt. Zhang and a number of others have been styling it all along—a conduit for Evil.' (701). Mason and Dixon's acknowledgement of the 'Justice of the Indian's Desires' in Pynchon's novel credits them with an ability to listen to the Other, and to those other reasons, which is absent from Latrobe's speech. Both Mason and Dixon share their increasingly awed views about the colonial horrors of South African and American slaughter of natives and transported slaves. Their reflection on what they have observed during their journeys leads them to conclusion that white Europeans are the real savages 'out of their own words Dreams.' (Garcia-Caro, 119)

In contrast to his previous novels, Pynchon alleviates the oppressing forces of the inanimate from their overwhelming presence in *M&D*. There are no characters purely embracing the idea of entropic horror. Instead, the Empire is truly dehumanized, with the

King and the Royal Society not having individual representatives.[66] The only mechanic system that appears with a certain prominence as a character in the novel is the duck automaton, and that, in a mock-likeness to the Frankenstein's monster, grows more animate than its designer intended. When "provided his Automaton a Digestionary Process, whose end result could not be distinguish'd from that found in Nature" (*M&D*, 372), the mechanical duck develops desire for companionship: "'Who knows? that final superaddition of erotick Machinery may have somehow nudg'd the Duck across some Threshold of self-Intricacy, setting off this Explosion of Change, from Inertia toward *Independence, and Power*" (*M&D*, 373).

This relative lack of the inanimate attests to Pynchon's creation of a "small world" of 18th-century world, in which the forces of the inanimate had presumably not yet fully developed. The Age of Reason in the novel is but the beginning of the adherence to the principles of mechanistic, man-made world, in which the distantiation of human being from its environment is seemingly not yet complete. Pynchon may be applying systemic nostalgia for the world that could have been (deploying a plethora of narrative techniques full of grammatical subjunctives) but with no pathos. "In a sense, Pynchon and Eco choose to *enact* nostalgia in order to parody its emptiness, or rather, in order to satirize its ineffectuality. Thus, they transcend the merely nostalgic in order to perform precisely the historical—and this, in a form supposedly most resistant to historical awareness: the postmodern narrative" (Lensing, 138).

4.2.6. Characters in Space: *Against the Day*

If Pynchon in *M&D* looks back at *what went wrong* in America within the paradigm of Bad History, in *AtD* he further examines the personal responsibility that individuals carry

---

[66] It is almost curious how much Pynchon focuses on the characters of Mason and Dixon, leaving aside the larger context of the "quest for longitude," that tormented scientific (and power-hungry) minds of the 17th and 18th century. Having Mason and Dixon as protagonists, Pynchon "sides" with the astronomic solution of the problem and turns his attention to the Line in America, mentioning John Harrison and his clock only in passing. The entire topic of international competition for the control of navigation is left aside, together with the abundant charlatanism, magic, power-struggle, and truly nasty interpersonal competition among scientists that took place at the time. It is somewhat logical that Pynchon does not delve, for example, into the almost 40-year conflict between Harrison and Maskelyne, for he has Maskelyne be only a questionable master of Mason's fate as an astronomer (it is Pynchon's Maskelyne that assigns Mason and Dixon their missions – both of Transit of Venus and of surveying the Line) for that would open another realm of scientific endeavor, that of measuring time (which would take the attention off the spatial focus of the novel). See Sobel (1995) for an excellent account of this chapter in history of science.

It is also interesting that Pynchon does not employ an encyclopedic array of medieval methods still competing with the scientific ones that were still and in full sway in continental Europe at the time. For comparison, see Umberto Eco's *The Island of the Day Before* (1995). More on comparison and likeness between the two works of fiction in Lensing (2005).

with them. Within the framework not unlike the maxim of "karmic balance" in *VNL*, characters in *AtD* invest themselves in the space of lifeworld in a lucidly (while producing an immense aesthetic enjoyment) polar realm of ethics. In order to exemplify these, Pynchon reaches for more bizarre personal histories and more extreme modes of being, as if aiming for clarification of his message in his work written until then. What started as an epistemological debate with a dialogical tone in earlier novels intensifies, and grows more literal in later ones. In many aspects, *AtD* reads as if it were a final novel of the author (despite the fact that since 2006, the readership already witnessed a new work, *Inherent Vice* in 2009). It is because many themes, tropes, and personal histories of the characters in the "small world" of the narrative come around the full circle. The concepts of binary oppositions are no longer hinted at, explored in metaphor, or allegorized through images (both the preterite and the elect are personified in individual characters of the Traverses and Scarsdale Vibe, respectively); the tropes of spatiality uncovering questions of ontology and modes of being become the center-piece of the plot (even title of the relevant sections in the novel, "Iceland Spar," and, ultimately, "Bilocations"); and epistemological issues of ethics precipitated by such ontology are brought to the forefront of the narrative, openly negotiated in dialogues or decisions, and in the unfolding of the plot (the Traverse brothers' revenge, Yashmeen Halfcourt's transformation from an aspiring secret agent to a loving companion, Chums of Chance's decision to give up eternal youth in order to save their mode of being).

Arguably, in radicalizing and clarifying the contrast between diachronic being-toward-death and synchronic visceral investment in space, Pynchon gradually overcomes binary oppositions among characters in the novel and paranoia as a method for epistemology. Based on the narrative structure of the subjunctive touched upon in *VNL* and perfected in *M&D*, Pynchon synthesizes the binary opposition in characters (*GR*), their paranoia as epistemology (*V.*, *COL49*, *GR*, *VNL*), and subjunctivity (*M&D*), employing instead bifurcation in both spatial and temporal terms of the "small world" of his narrative. Pynchon terms the resulting twofold world as "quotidian" and "counterfactual." By introducing Iceland Spar (calcite), a mineral capable of double refraction of light, he grounds the bifurcation on the level of the plot, opening an ontological debate on singularity of human individual in the world. As in *COL49* or even more so in *GR*, the fantastic is only mounted on a rigorously researched foundation. Yet what is portrayed as individual delusions of characters in the earlier novels (communication with Maxwell's Demon through a psychic by John Nefastis, who insists

Oedipa tries in *COL49*; Weissmann's, Enzian's, or Tchitcherine's obsession with the Rocket on more than technological level in *GR*), is elevated to both "real" belief that informs characters' actions, and to the narrative structuring of characters' relationships: "Maybe it's not the world, but with a minor adjustment or two it's what the world might be" (*AtD*, the concluding sentence in Pynchon's synopsis of the novel on the jacket-flap of the book).

Following the precedence of a fairly lucid main plot in *M&D* while exploring relationships within a family in an environment that make ethical choices difficult as in *VNL*, *AtD*'s main plot also centers on a family, the Traverses (ancestors of Frenesi Gates in *VNL* – her mother Sasha is Webb's great-granddaughter). Webb Traverse is a dynamite-wielding anarchist who fights mining companies in Colorado only to be murdered by two hired guns, Sloat Fresno and Deuce Kindred. Webb's three sons initially take different routes: Frank and Reef search for their father's killers (Frank eventually shoots Sloat Fresno in Mexico, only to be thwarted by the futility of vengeful act, 395–97, Reef takes after his father in anarchist explosions, and leaves the U.S. to join the anarchists in Europe); Kit Traverse, a natural-born mathematician, accepts a scholarship to study at Yale, then in Göttingen, later to take off to look for more than theoretical spaces. In a tragic, romantic twist, Webb's only daughter Lake falls in love and marries Deuce Kindred, her father's murderer.

On the other side of the social scale stands Scarsdale Vibe, a solitary tycoon whose only companion is Foley Walker. When luring Kit into accepting Vibe's scholarship at Yale, Walker explains how an ontological bifurcation starts:

> "Tuition? Room and board?"
> "All included."
> "Automobile? Champagne deliveries day or night? Sweater with a big *Y* on it?"
> "I can do that," said Foley.
> "Horsefeathers. Only Scarsdale Vibe his mighty self can do that, mister."
> "I am he."
> "You're not 'he.' I read the papers and look at the magazines, you ain't even 'him.'" […]
> During the Rebellion, shortly after Antietam, […] Scarsdale Vibe, having turned the right
> age for it, had received a notice of conscription. Following the standard practice, his
> father had purchased for him a substitute to serve in his place, assuming that upon
> obtaining a properly executed receipt for the three hundred dollars, why that would be
> that. (*AtD*, 100)

Having survived a shot above his left temple in the Civil War, Walker acquires a miraculous business and investment foresight, which he offers to Scarsdale Vibe after he returns. Vibe's incredulity dissipates when Walker advises him to buy into "The Standard Oil," and he quickly hires Walker as an "'investigative consultant,' […] thenceforward Scarsdale grew increasingly reluctant to make any move of a business nature without him […] as to which Foley's advice was seldom in error." (*AtD*, 102). In other words, Foley Walker, according to what "Indians out west believe" (*AtD*, 101) becomes responsible for Scarsdale Vibe's life, and turns into his soul-twin. What Walker elaborates on in the contract for Kit's education and career, it is also part of the "class system […] Eternal youth bought with the sickness and death of others." (*AtD*, 104). At the same time, the deal pushes a wedge between Webb Traverse and Kit, over which they break off never to meet again (Webb gets murdered by Vibe Corp.' henchmen long before Kit realizes why he was bought to leave Colorado). When Kit finally learns the truth (from his brothers in Venice), he knows it is nearly impossible to escape Vibe's influence and thus disappears in Asian desert in search for a mythical city of Shambhala. Pynchon's affinity for tangled relationship that constitutes his characters' modes of being lends itself to his scrutiny of the difficulty with which individual strive for being-with regarding others, and the Other (i.e., "not-I," both in interpersonal interactions and one's relationship—and responsibility—to the lifeworld as such, in all its inanimate forms).

As another juxtaposition to Scarsdale Vibe (besides Webb Traverse, of course), Pynchon introduces his son Fleetwood, who not only meets Kit and helps him, doubting his father's methods, but also serves in the novel to reveal, in an open discussion, the systemic endeavor of State or other super-human institutions for incessant ordering and tension reduction. In a conversation with other rich individuals (while in South Africa, and its ruthless extortion of wealth from the land by the way of colonial expropriation), Fleetwood remembers "a funny sort of confab about civilized evil in far-off lands" in the "Explorers' Club" (*AtD*, 146).

> "Back in '95, Nansen's plan on his final northward journey was eventually, as the total
> load grew lighter, to kill sled dogs one by one and feed them to the rest. […] the other
> dogs refused to eat dog-flesh, but slowly they came to accept it.
> Suppose it were happen to us, in the civilized world. If 'another form of life' decided to
> use humans for similar purposes, and being out on *a mission of comparable desperation*,
> as its own resources dwindled, we human beasts would likewise simply be slaughtered
> one by one, and those still alive obliged to, in some sense, eat their flesh. […] but we do

use one another, often mortally, with the same disablement of feeling, of conscience …
each of us knowing that at some point it will be our own turn. Nowhere to run but into a
hostile and lifeless waste."

"You refer to present world conditions under capitalism and the Trusts."

"There appears to be little difference. How else would we have come to it?"

"Evolution. Ape evolves to man, well, what's the next step—human to [begin 148] what?
Some *compound organism*, the American Corporation, for instance, in which even the
Supreme Court has recognized legal personhood—a new living species, one that can out-
perform most anything an individual can do by himself, no matter how smart or powerful
he is." (*AtD*, 147–148, italics in original)

The bifurcation in characters populating *AtD* thickens and grows essential for the
narrative plot. It becomes more prevalent in the third "book" entitled "Bilocations."
Thanks to the double-refraction of Iceland Spar (and its influence on "Æther," added to
the debate as a medium for transformative reality), it seems to be possible for individuals
to: (1) appear in two places at once (e.g. Rinpungpa, a Tibetan character mentioned in the
"guide to Shambhala," *AtD* 766), (2) to have a veritable *Doppelgänger* (Prof. Renfrew
and Werfner, each other's opposite on the "Tarot card XV," 679), (3) experience a
subjunctive time elevated to the level of reality, and finally (the Chums of Chance at
Candlebrow U., *AtD*, 406), and (4) enter imagined/other-worldly space (on which the next
chapter elaborates). Pynchon continues to uncover the nodal points of history at which
humanity failed to recognize and make a decision to undo past injustices and prevent
commodification of people, territorialization of space all based in the selfish relationship
to the "not-I" fueled by the fear of one's Dasein's entropic decay. At the same time, *AtD*
speaks clearly of "lines of flight" that are open for individuals due to bifurcation.

Thus, Pynchon introduces Lew Basnight, a detective from "White City
Investigations," (the technique of having a "private eye" on the narrative echoes *V.*,
COL49, and *GR*), whose assignments weave through the narrative, intertwining
characters' lives. However, not even Basnight is spared several double-binds. He is
fleeing his unspeakable past in Chicago: "He had just sort of wandered into it [being a
detective], by way of sin he was supposed once to have committed. […] Lew couldn't
remember what he'd done, or hadn't done, or even when" (*AtD*, 37). What starts as a
Kafkaesque guilty ignorance Pynchon swiftly translates into spatial terms of being-in-the-
world:

> The experts he went to for advice had little to tell him. "Past lives," some assured him. "Future lives," said other confident swamis. "Spontaneous Hallucination," diagnosed the more scientific among them. "Perhaps," one beaming Oriental suggested, "*it* was hallucinating *you*." […] Lew looked around. Was it still Chicago? As he began again to walk, the first thing he noticed was how few of the streets here followed the familiar grid pattern of the rest of town—everything was on the skew, narrow lanes radiating starwise from small plazas, tramlines with hairpin turns that carried passengers abruptly back the way they'd been coming, increasing chances for traffic collisions, and not a name he could recognize on any f the street-signs, even those of better-traveled thoroughfares … foreign languages, it seemed. (*AtD*, 37, 38)

Employed later on international scale, Basnight is the ideal "spotter" for the occult, and double-refracted investigation. In London, he is employed by the T.W.I.T. (True Worshippers of the Ineffable Tetractys) Gran Cohen Nicholas Nookshaft to look for twenty-two "Trespassers" (mirroring the "Major Arcana" of Tarot[67]) who commit crimes so that *history happens* as Transgression from order in Britain. The secret society believes that double-refraction provides a break through to other dimensions, with time and parallel worlds included. Basnight quickly learns that the key to unveil the possible perpetrators is to keep an observing eye on a Professor Renfrew in Cambridge and his opposite, Professor Werfner in Göttingen. When meeting Renfrew, Basnight gets hired *by him* to work on investigation of a cricket-playing anarchist, who throws gas-bomb balls (poisoning his targets, in Pynchon's premonition of the Great War abuse of this weapon of mass destruction and paralleling it to the post-1989 international terrorism[68]). Basnight's employment and allegiance grows complicated, as he realizes he became a double-agent, or even a triple-agent (serving T.W.I.T., Renfrew, and later Werfner).

With the structural parallel from Tarot, in which the Major Arcana is complemented by the Minor Arcana, Pynchon points out the relationship of individual to the world, the "I" to the "not-I" in ontological terms, connecting the micro- and macrocosm of being in the world, openly drawing reader's attention to the ethical difficulty mounted onto decision-making in the world understood in the connected terms. The "bilocations," spatially expressed double-binds in human interrelations, effectively

---

[67] Pynchon's use of Tarot, its structure, and its archetypes in order to depict characters was most extravagant in *GR* ("Slothrop's Tarot," 738–41 and "Weissman's Tarot, 761). However, in *AtD*, Tarot becomes part of the structure, the fabric narrative space is made of.

[68] For more on the cricket-playing anarchists, see Peter Vernon's excellent essay, in which Pynchon's possible analogy between cricket and "The Great Game" of international espionage of the 20th century is explored: "It's Just Not Cricket: Cricket as Metaphor in Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day*" (Pynchon Wiki, 2007).

portray individual desire to have another chance, to be someone else, without limitations that one perceives. However, Pynchon's minor characters, familiar with the near-magic required for the extrapolation of "self" from one's bodily limits, warn against such desire: using either magic (Tarot) or science (double-refraction) to disengage oneself from one's limitation brings about a distantiation from one's Dasein, stripping one's ontological being off ethical individuality, and thus obviating the possibility of actualization. If being with-out one's limits seemingly liberates one's actions, it burdens them with a loss of individual responsibility for one's being, one's ontology – one's being is transformed into a mere existence of a thing, an existence of the inanimate matter. In this, Pynchon comes the full circle, asserting the proliferation of the inanimate in the human world since *V.*:

> What he shows—and here the juxtaposition of the historical and the personal dimensions is vital—is a growing tendency, discernible on all levels and in the most out-of-the-way pockets of modern history, for people to regard or use other people as objects, and, perhaps even more worryingly, for people to regard themselves as objects. (Tanner, 54)

The ultimate expression of epistemology that informs being-in-the-world and anchors ethical being of individuals in the lifeworld in *AtD* is a masterfully-crafted entity: the Chums of Chance. They are "a cheerful group of adventurous aeronauts who are featured in a series of young adult books reminiscent of the Hardy Boys. They travel the globe in search of adventure in a dirigible called the *Inconvenience*." (Corrigan, 2007, italics mine) Their mode of being in the "small world" of the novel is unique: while being characters in young adult books often referred to in a narrative voice turning to the reader "my young reader may recall from the boys' earlier adventures (*The Chums of Chance at Krakatoa, The Chums of Chance Search for Atlantis*)" (*AtD*, 6), or "For details of their exploits, see *The Chums of Chance in Old Mexico*." (*AtD*, 7), they at the same time interact with other characters of the novel (Lew Basnight, Kit or Reef Traverse), in the perfect depiction of blending between the "real" world of the narrative, and the "literary" world in the narrative.

> Lew Basnight seemed a sociable enough young man, though it soon became obvious that he had not, until now, so much as heard of the Chums of Chance.
> "But every boy knows the Chums of Chance," declared Lindsay Noseworth [second-in-command] perplexedly. "What could you've been reading, as a youth?"

> Lew obligingly tried to remember. "Wild West, African explorers, the usual adventure
> stuff. But you boys—you're not storybook characters." He had a thought. "Are you?"
> "No more than Wyatt Earp or Nellie Bly," Randolph supposed. "Although the longer a
> fellow's name has been in the magazines, the harder it is to tell fiction from non-fiction."
> (*AtD*, 36–37)

In other words, Chums of Chance inhabit both worlds in a double-bind of ontology taken to a new level of complexity, performing ontological acrobatics that radicalizes Pynchon's argument. The readers cannot ascertain whether the Chums of Chance live in a separate, parallel world and provide a textual allegory, or whether their existence is "real" to other characters of the novel, and therefore valid in interaction. Their mode of being is fantastic, and therefore their penetration to the "real" world of the narrative is through hints, apparitions, or inexplicable events. Thus, when Reef travels with his father's body to deliver it to his mother, dynamiting on the way, he reads "a dime novel, one of the Chums of Chance series, *The Chums of Chance at the Ends of the Earth*" (*AtD*, 214), finally being able to talk to his father. Here the reader finds a great example of how Pynchon blurs any divide between what is "real" and what is a mere "text," allowing for ambiguity to grow: "At odd moments, now, he found himself looking at the sky, as if trying to locate somewhere in it the great airship. As if those boys might be agents of a kind of *extrahuman justice*, who could shepherd Webb through whatever waited for him, even pass on to Reef wise advice, though he might not always be able to make sense of it. And sometimes in the sky, when the light was funny enough, he thought he saw something familiar." (*AtD*, 215, italics in original).

Alas, not even the realm of fantastic is safe from human power-struggle: what Pynchon establishes, in an analogical ridicule to the class war going on "on the ground," is a mock young adult adventure narrative that allegorizes the State war machine at its best war effort against another State – the early 20th-century international "Great Game."[69] The Chums of Chance face a formidable enemy in *Bol'shaya Igra*, "the flagship of Randolph's mysterious Russian counterpart—and, far too often, nemesis— Captain Igor Padzhitnoff, with whom previous 'run-ins' (see particularly *The Chums of Chance and the Ice Pirates*, *The Chums of Chance Nearly Crash into the Kremlin*) evoked in the boys lively though anxious memories." (*AtD*, 123) As it were, the Cold-War-metaphor conjures two parallel agencies, "the Chums of Chance Upper Command"

---

[69] For an exquisite elaboration on the spy genre and binary opposites in the "Great Game" in *AtD*, see Wallhead (2010).

(*AtD*, 398) and the "Tovarishchi Slutchainyi" (*AtD*, 123), who fight each other for spheres of interest: "They [the Russians] will no doubt imagine us to be trespassing upon their 'sky-space' again." (ibid.) In another encounter, the *Inconvenience* clashes with *Bol'shaya Igra*, and because of firing an "aerial torpedo" at their opponents, the Chums might be responsible for the collapse of the Venetian Campanille (which did collapse for no apparent reason July 14, 1902). Pynchon weaves together a historic event with that of his narrative, doubled by the non-literal nature of the characters in question in a Luddite pun, thus posing the question of epistemological veracity, playing with the narrative and the readers' cooperation on the joke.

> Seen from the ground, the rival airships were more conjectural than literal—objects of fear and prophecy, reported to perform at speeds and with a manaeuvrability quite unavailable to any official aircraft of the time—condensed or projected from dreams, estrangements, solitudes. […] their images taken home in silent autumnal diaspora—blurry as bats at twilight, often scarcely visible as more than sepia gestures against the dreaming façade of the Basilica San Marco, or the more secular iterations of the Procuratie—because, it is said, of the long exposures necessary in the humid light of Venice, but in reality because of the aeronauts' dual citizenship in the realms of the quotidian and the ghostly … (*AtD*, 255–256)

As much luddite and free-spirited as the Chums of Chance may appear, though confined in the Cold-War interlock, Pynchon delivers a much more menacing blow to their joyful carelessness. As literary characters of dime novel series, they never age – however, if they are real, time progress is inexorable. If Lew Basnight's investigation revealed a possibility of "Trespassers" who *commit history*, the Chums of Chance face these ominous others in the ultimate struggle for ontological being no "real" character has to deal with. Visiting Candlebrow U. (implying "university" but never truly spelled out in the book), the Chums "find exactly the mixture of nostalgia and amnesia to provide them a reasonable counterfeit of the Timeless." (*AtD*, 406). Having entered its campus "in the distant heart of the Republic" to attend a conference on time-travel, they encounter "visitors" from the future,

> seekers of refuge from our present—your future—a time of worldwide famine, exhausted fuel supplies, terminal poverty—the end of the capitalistic experiment. Once we came to understand the simple thermodynamic truth that Earth's resources were limited, in fact soon to run out, the whole capitalist illusion fell to pieces. Those of us who spoke this

truth aloud were denounced as heretics, as enemies of the prevailing economic faith. Like religious Dissenters of an earlier day, we were forced to migrate, with little choice but to set forth upon that dark fourth-dimensional Atlantic known as Time. (*AtD*, 415)

The "visitors" ("suppose they're not pilgrims but raiders," *AtD*, 416) offer the Chums of Chance *Inconvenience* crewmembers something quite irresistible – not only eternal life but eternal youth. They do, however, require a "*zznrrt* compensation …" (ibid.), which the Chums quickly identify not as "food […], women […], or lower entropy" but their *innocence*: "'But imagine *them*,' Lindsay in stricken tones, as if before some unbearable illumination, 'so fallen, so corrupted, that we—even we—seem to them pure as lambs. And their own time so terrible that it's sent them desperately back—back to us. Back to whatever few pathetic years *we* still have left, before … whatever is to happen …" (*AtD*, 416). The crew of the *Inconvenience* observes how other Units of Chums of Chance succumb to the luring promise of eternal youth, acquiring "metaphorical identities" (*AtD*, 418) and thus forfeiting their existence, even in the "small world" of Pynchon's narrative, forever lost at the Candlebrow U. campus as students, fraternities, police officers, not being themselves but only playing a role in the timeless capsule.

Pynchon triangulates this narrative space-time along the lines of *ethical* choices. The "Trespassers" who fought the time by means that render them inhuman have always flickered through in his novels: the Bad Priest in *V.* (made of mechanical prostheses), Nefastis and even Inverarity in *COL49* (fighting entropy by means of "science" and "business"), Blicero in *GR* (launching a weapon of mass destruction with Imipolex G, connecting the irresistible eroticizing drug with death), subjunctive Mason and Dixon in *M&D* (who never stop the Line westward, slicing the world between the free and the enslaved), and the Thanatoids in *VNL* (hiding in the woods, waiting for karmic balance to stabilize, never-quite-dead). It is in *AtD*, where the novelist brings it to the ontological level. The Chums of Chance maintain their being only insofar as they fulfill their missions: "You are not aware that each of your mission assignments is intended to prevent some attempt of our own [Trespassers] to enter your time-regime?" (*AtD*, 415).

In the Chums' realization that they must proceed with their adventures, regardless of comfort or reward, in order to *be ontologically*, Pynchon presents a clear message for individual freedom of action as a requisite for individual actualization. It is when the Chums disaffiliate from the "National Office" that they overcome their animosity toward

Padzhitnoff's crew, survive the Great War in Switzerland, and enter the realm of "counter-Earth." The novel ends with a vision of a Chums of Chance flying Utopia, in which the *Inconvenience* is transformed into a small city housing adventurers, their female counterparts, packs of learned dogs, and song-singing crewmembers. The liberation from woes of entropy-stricken, power-hungry world of human individuals is accessible only through free choice and self-actualization that maintains ethical values.

> Their motto was "There, but Invisible."
>
> "The Boys call it the supranational idea," explained Penny Black, wide-eyed and dewy as when she was a girl, recently promoted to admiral [...] "literally to transcend the old political space, the map-space of two dimensions, by climbing into the third." (*AtD*, 1083)
>
> [...]
>
> Never sleeping, clamorous as a nonstop feast day, *Inconvenience*, once a vehicle of sky-pilgrimage, has transformed into its own destination, where any wish that can be made is at least addressed, if not always granted. For every wish to come true would mean that in the known Creation, good unsought and uncompensated would have evolved somehow, to become at least more accessible to us. (*AtD*, 1085)

Pynchon's characters engage space because *it* co-creates them, it is the expression of their being-in-the-world, and becoming-through with others. In all the novels, the author demonstrates that control of space in the form of exercise of power, leads only to increased entropy of one's being, turning Dasein into a mere existence, subjecting it, prematurely, to the lonely despair of being-toward-death – lonely, because it is based in competition with others, selfish self-preservation through exploiting the "not-I." Pynchon embraces the dialogical "possible" of epistemology, labeling the potential world "subjunctive," (*M&D*) or "counterfactual" (*AtD*). He then poses it against the "inevitable," which composes the "quotidian" world. The way Pynchon has his characters engage literary space must be further interpreted in his theory of spatial discourse, where the distinction is brought to perfection (and is erased in the process), radicalizing the call for ethical "decency" in otherworldly, imaginary space that becomes, however, adjacent to "reality," contingent merely on one's ethical judgment and subsequent choices in one's "lifeworld" (*Lebenswelt*).

5. PYNCHON'S SPATIALITY

5.1. Spatial discourse(s)

As Edward Soja explains in his insightful yet lucid *Postmodern Geographies* (in comparison with Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*), post-modern discourse sheds the obsession with temporality and embraces spatiality as a paradigm for its epistemology.[70] Post-modernity leaves the focus on the temporal prevalent in modernity and its classical Marxist belief in progress engendered by technological advances and class struggle. Such discourse hypertrophied into rendering all that is not perfectly novel obsolete, regardless of the resulting destruction of values it thus advocates: obsessing over the question of origin (history) and goal- and development-orientation (planning), it gives rise to a sense of entitlement, abuses the concept of *Zeitgeist* to justify anything that transpires, postponing responsibility and ethical judgment into an unreachable, and therefore irrelevant, future. Finally, it informs modern ontology with the right to fight human limitations and the entropy of an individual's life by any means possible, most unjustly at the expense of others.

Spatiality, emphasized in post-modern, discourse provides a synchronic, lateral view of human-construed reality, or "lifeworld" (*Lebenswelt*), constituted both by material culture and social organization:

> In their appropriate interpretive contexts, both the material space of physical nature and the ideational space of human nature have to be seen as being socially produced and reproduced. Each needs to be theorized and understood, therefore, as ontologically and epistemologically part of the spatiality of social life. (Soja, 120)

While dealing with such tropes iterating time as Bad History, or time as decapitated chronology in which future is the other (as an event in a futurity of the not-yet, that is unshareable), and consequently the past as unfolding fabric in whose creases possibilities are gradually excluded or multiply creating subjunctive lines of alternate plots, Pynchon's work is exemplary post-modern, for the literary space in the "small

---

[70] "… a search for an appropriate ontological and epistemological location for spatiality, an active 'place' for space in a Western philosophical tradition that had rigidly separated time from space and intrinsically prioritized temporality to the point of expunging the ontological and epistemological significance of spatiality" (Soja, 119). He then quotes Foucault as an "important contributor to this debate": "'Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic.'" (ibid.)

world" of his narratives is a condition for the plot, or *fabula*. In contrast, time is not only unreliable but also subject to exclusion from its relevance, precisely because of the alternative cognitive approaches (drug-use, dreaming, cause–effect disruption, "unreliable accounts" or narratives within narratives).

To that end, Pynchon opens up individual's being-in-space. His works are dominated by epistemological debate of dialogical relationship between the "I" and "not-I" as a constituent factor for one's actualization in life. He attributes agency to his characters in the process of their actualization by emphasizing the spatial aspect of individual's being-in-space, that is, by their visceral investment. Thus, he elevates the ontology of characters from a given in the "small world" of the narrative to the subject matter of his plots. In addition, he openly meditates on the discourse that construes the lived-in space (*Lebenswelt*, or lifeworld), that determines it, and delineates possible modes of being. This is why Pynchon's novels exemplify and explore a variety of different strategies that participate on spatial discourse, while the "small world" of his narrative operates because such a variety stays open to interpretation and cooperation by the reader.

Pynchon's novels all seem to explore two mutually opposed (not necessarily exclusive, rather juxtaposed) forms of spatiality: (1) striated space (or territorialized space as *real sites or imagined concepts produced by control*) and (2) smooth space (or de-territorialized space as *imagined locales produced by opposition to control*). Striated space is a product of the process of territorialization, appropriation of space, and, as an extension, imperial spatial discourse (informed by exercise of power). Both forms of spatiality can be either a result of dys/utopian vision or dissolution of systems of control previously in place, as will be shown below.[71] Pynchon develops the debate of spatial discourse(s) precisely because he demonstrates that it is based in the modes of being-in-space with the goal of individual actualization, which has in turn ramifications for one's ethical being with or through the other. This other is any epistemologically understood "not-I" (given spatially by one's bodily extension), and therefore is manifested both as material objects or other individuals:

---

[71] To go beneath these labels, it must be stipulated what constitutes and divides vision from delusion, for the distinction necessarily invites evaluation. To dismiss shortcuts based on ideology only, it is instrumental to regard the said division without evaluation, to approach the division between striated and smooth space from the perspective of the State as a type of societal organization. It is almost impossible to do without the context of ideology bias, however an attempt in that direction should be made and the shortcomings voiced.

[the] geographical awareness in Pynchon's work from the outset, one which manifests itself not in 'adestinationality' or directionlessness, but in a continual movement *underground*, towards the critical contours of the postmodern landscape. Pynchon's fictions gravitate towards the contraries and contradictions of uneven development, towards the spaces occupied by the underclass and the disinherited and towards the omnipresence of forms of waste, which, potentially, may become oppositional objects once situated as anti-commodities. (Jarvis, 53, italics in original)

5.1.1. Spatial Discourse(s): *V.*

The spatiality in *V.* is Pynchon's account of the Old World imperialism, with its ramifications drawn onto the New World. If Stencil travels the narrative of the Old World idea of an empire that requires colonies for its expansion as a systemic mechanism of self-organization, Benny Profane lives on a precipice of the empire of greed and consumption, perfected in America.

Stencil follows the supposed conspiratorial moves of V. and in the process encounters the Victorian, modern obsession with an empire in his father's notes. The father is construed as carrying the "white man's burden"-like sense of responsibility for the world. Pynchon's satirical label for this is the hypertrophied early-twentieth century "Situation":

The Situation at the moment was frankly appalling. […] Oh, the Situation. The bloody Situation. In his more philosophical moments, he would wonder about this abstract entity the Situation, its idea, the details of its mechanism. […] He had decided long ago that no Situation had any objective reality: it only existed in the minds of those who happened to be in on it at any specific moment. Since these several minds tended to form a sum total or complex more mongrel than homogenous, the Situation must necessarily appear to a single observer much like a diagram in four dimensions to an eye conditioned to seeing its world in only three. (*V.*, 201–203)

If Sidney Stencil pursued V. as a menace, it was in his service to the State, and the menace V. must have posed was an aggravation of the Situation, defined in terms of constant stand-off of the great powers of the West. This stand-off is reified in the empires' geographic expansion and exercise of power and control in remote places that are included in "spheres of interest," i.e., potential or real colonies.

Colonialism is an ideation of the spatial mechanism that the State as a system deploys in order to organize and perpetuate itself. When self-organization is complete and

tensions among constituent elements are reduced successfully, the State as a system lacks energy to last: therefore, it needs to start drawing energy from with-out, through outward spatial interaction (in the State's case, geographic expansion). Colonialism is not only a set of ideas justifying actions that lead to geographic expansion; it is an ideological structure which the State, appropriating the War Machine as a principle of self-organization and institutionalization of control, employs to "make sense" of the lifeworld it produces for its society. The structure applies to self-organization both inwards and outwards. In other words, endo-colonization accompanies exo-colonization. What serves as a mechanism for self-organization of the State as a system functions similarly, analogically, in the geographic expansion of the State war machine as an empire. This is precisely because the tension-reduction in endo-colonization leads to decreased levels of usable energy for the system, or entropy (loss of usable energy in uniformity or loss of information value in complexity), and thus the search for new sources of energy begins in exo-colonization, or geographic expansion.

The two processes are parallel but often inform each other: what is successful "at home" is imposed in the colonies, and vice-versa, what works in the colonies is often deployed against any disruptive members of society within the State (tension reduction of constituent elements through control of their interaction).

The parallel between Stencil's encounter with modern colonialism, and Profane's exposure to post-modern consumption that Pynchon builds in *V.*, similarly informs processes both "at home" and internationally. Stencil reveals colonial practice in his search for V.: "the Situation" among the world powers is always critical; exploitation of resources and peoples, their submission to the center—periphery power relations is analogous to thermodynamic processes of energy claimed outside of the system and spent inside of the system; the epistemological struggle to grasp exertion of power is subject to ethical justification of exploitation. In a parallel, Profane lives in an endo-colonized realm where his individuality is defensible only insofar as he embraces the societal refuse, the systemic waste, and the physical underground. It is only then that he can survive the uniformity and the ascent of the inanimate control over human individuals through their commodification, or inclusion into the energy exchange that reduces tension within the State.

To appropriate a space that would not subvert the center, an imagined space is conjured, to be territorialized without the energy cost. That is what Pynchon first theorizes in Hugh Godolphin's story of Vheissu, an imagined colony that is idealized by

the colonial power, a utopia of striated space (elaborated on below). Such idealization may be informed by the incessant greed gradually increasing with more territorial additions but an imagined space as an imperial utopia changes the State on its systemic level, and therefore entails more than an ideal colony. A utopia is a concept where institutionalized exercise of power functions without any energy spent on its own perpetuation, thus violating the thermodynamic relation between tension reduction—energy loss. In its instance, however, utopia is also an antithesis of the State, of any actual empire. Authors of utopias resort to the imagined space when they need to escape the socioeconomic reality of production and physical requirements for material and thus choose to conjure a lifeworld that is not actualized and whose probability is structurally deemed impossible. Thus, imagined space stands as a proof to both: (1) institutionalized exercise of power by which means the State controls individuals as constituent elements of itself as a system; and (2) the conjecture (or conjuration) of individuals striving to escape precisely the ordering principles that subject them to uniformity.

Pynchon unfolds the intricacy of this fragile binary in the "small world" of his narrative. He either has his characters express the imagined space as a utopia that is a mere concept in discourse (the feverish dream of Vheissu in *V.*, the destroyed cemetery near East San Narciso in *COL49*, the drug-induced Raketenstadt in *GR*, the Karmically-imbalanced Thanatoid Village in *VNL*, the sunbjunctive Cities of the Line in *M&D*, the mythical Shambhala in *AtD*) or he creates locales that are a non-place, for they are physical for the characters but have an allegoric, rather than descriptive value (Valletta, reduced by bombardment to smooth space in *V.*, Fangoso Lagoons as a built enterprise in *COL49*, the Zone and the Mittelwerke in *GR*, the Vineland County and the College of the Surf in *VNL*, the Visto in *M&D*, and the Chums of Chance's airspace in *AtD*). Pynchon alternately describes imagined space in an account delivered by a character, or through a more direct narrator's voice. It is notable that he prefers the former due to his continuing effort to offer a dialogical discourse, open to interpretation and rife with unreliability.

In *V.*, Pynchon's literary space unfolds into four distinct concepts of, and non-places in, the imagined space that illustrate his debate on the process of territorialization. Here, they are ordered by the amount of the distantiation from the frame of reference established in the "small world" of the narrative, which requires commensurate cooperation from the reader of the texts.

The first are the sewers under the streets of Manhattan, inhabited by a population of alligators that Benny Profane gets an odd job of exterminating as Alligator Patrol

(Chapter 5). The sewers are a physical underworld, in which the entropy of the consumption-driven, ownership-crazed world does not apply. Unveiled before the reader's eye, there lies the world of refuse: a once popular Christmas present gone wrong, the baby pet-alligators refused by their immature owners haunt the sewers, denying their expulsion from the world above, making for an urban mythical (the pun is deliberate here) nightmare underworld. In a Freudian-informed spatial allegory, Pynchon mockingly reminds the world of its trash, building upon the popular urban myth of sewer untamed populations, the world's refuse that comes back with a biting chill of the societal unconscious. The world above then hires human refuse, individuals denying systemic uniformity, "Schlemiels" such as Profane, who alone are crazy enough to face the vengeful critters to maintain the status: the State uses its most inopportune, inadaptable individuals to keep the boundary between the world of the conscious surface and the "other" world of refuse. Pynchon's gate-keeper must be someone like Profane who himself refuses to conform to, and participate in, the processes of self-delusion denying the rise of the inanimate in human structure and interactions. The sewers, quite on the contrary, give rise to a sub-version state of rats, their affinity to humanity achieved through deliverance of faith (Father Linus Fairing's catechism, 120–125). Pynchon may be simply joking here, but it is plausible that the alternative rat state that Father Fairing saw as an ascending after the human society dies serves as a mirror-image and a utopian concept that nevertheless is corroded by ideological struggle at its very onset (Marxist arguments against catechism among the rats) and thus illustrate the entropic tendency in a system and its failure to perpetuate itself without the energy from with-out (Fairing's Parish is only known in the account of Fairing's own diary).

Once again (as was similarly argued above regarding Pynchon's literary characters), it is "Mondaugen's Story" (Chapter 9) that models, on the micro-scale of "Foppl's Siege Party" what Pynchon's narrative offers in terms of colonialism as a spatial discourse. It is an exquisite model for the binary forms of spatiality. The story itself relates what colonial power experiences and at the same time necessarily precipitates in the territorialized, appropriated space. The "tiny European Conclave or League of Nations, assembled here while political chaos howled outside" (254), is a perfectly plausible, tangible representation of a constellation of individuals caught in a nightmare: a handful of white oppressors, with mutual relations corroded by power-balance mistrust, attempts to survive the wrath of the indigenous human mass and the environment itself at the instant their dominance is shaken by open resistance. The chapter unveils the

monological perversity which is necessary to exercise in human discourse and personal interaction when an individual embarks on a colonial enterprise, to survive with a semblance of rationality the exploitation and mutilation of the colonized – peoples, landscapes, values. Pynchon offers a plethora of unbelievable, dark, extreme ways that however construe the entire image of what the colonialism as a spatial discourse includes.

> He [Pynchon] implicates both the Germans and the British (through the bombing of the Bondels by the Union of South Africa) in actions that prefigure the coming Holocaust. Pynchon represents the German imperial project, and to a lesser extent the British as well, as allowing, in fact requiring, the articulation and enactment of the repressed in Western civilization. The colony is a space in which what is normally repressed can be acted on, and it is not a pretty sight. And now that "'the assertion of the inanimate' through rape, mutilation, and random murder" (Weisenburger 150) has been unleashed in the colonial space, what will be the consequences for the imperial center? (Ivision, 137)

When Kurt Mondaugen, a self-proclaimed coward, finds himself in an area of the formerly German "Südwest" Africa where a revolt of the local population against the inhuman treatment by the usurpers turns into open fighting that threatens the lives of the white colonists, he retreats to a farm-fortress of one Foppl, the colony's old-timer who still rules his land by the same mad violence that occurred under the German control (the "Von Trotha days of 1904"). Despite the oft-interpreted (cf., for example, Ivision above) recurring references to Nazi-led expansion during WW2 and the innuendos of racial hatred or pseudo-scientific concepts that made the Holocaust possible, Foppl's farm is a refuge to all Western whites in the area, not just the German Nazis or the British, allowing for a wider interpretation of the State as a system. Pynchon as if zooms out from any particular historical context and extends his accusation at the entire spatial discourse that informs colonialism and the territorialization of space. In so doing, the issues of slavery, gender, social inequality and racial prejudice are all contextualized in the macro-structure of exploitation of, and contempt for, the Other. This elevates the plot from a particular exercise of power to a critique of exertion of power as such.

It is thus not only Foppl, using his *sjambok* liberally on any African he encounters, it is also the British Captain Hugh Godolphin with his delusions of Vheissu, an idealized colony, yearning for the return of the Victorian colonial triumph (always looking for lessening the trauma of the loss of American colonies) and young Weissmann (Blicero in *GR*) with his vision of the Third Reich, who all embody the Western self-righteousness

and ruthless territorialization. Finally, not even Mondaugen is exempt. His scientific pursuit fits the colonial spatial discourse of gazing and evaluation. It entitles him to travel across the world to research the "spherics": for the reach and validity of Western scientific method is global, disregarding locality and displaying scornful disdain at any suggestion his mysterious subject of research may be interpreted in a different epistemological structure (the local suspicion that he might be evoking and disturbing the dead in the landscape).

Taken allegorically, the farm-fortress is thus an islet of power, knowledge, and truthful discourse in the vast expanse of the dark African wilderness filled with violence and madness (for the whites dissociate the violence's origin from their own presence and exploitative approach to the land – the discursive "darkness" of Africa only comes about when the invasive presence of the whites demands it in the contrastive identification of the "self" against "not-I"). To continue the allegory further, though, Mondaugen's exploration of the estate reveals a dark, labyrinthine interior with an insane arrangement of rooms of Gothic proportions leading nowhere, echoing with secret conversations, reflecting fleeting images of others only in mirrors, mysterious music and chants with no source. In other words, what keeps the appearance of "civilized" place is in fact plagued by its ghosts and horrors, where no relationship may be innocent or honest. Mondaugen's relationship to others in the manor is based on fear or suspicion (conspiratorial with Vera Meroving). The deterioration of the imperial center is a systemic complexity that undercuts the outward uniformity and exertion of power. The periphery, the colony, subverts—by its foreign influence or its resistance—the center's self-organization and results in increasing entropy. The German Südwest colony is as unreal as it is viscerally present. The imposition of the Western/European paradigm onto the native landscape results in an incongruous layering, a surface obfuscating any chance for amalgamation or humane co-existence. The colonial practices as described in von Trotha's genocidal campaign speak not of settling but of conquest only. Arguably, Foppl's Siege Party is effectuated by von Trotha's genocide. While the farm-fortress serves overtly as an islet of Western "civilized" societal organization, its inside and underground is a death trap for individual ethics, and reveals a culture that romanticizes death (for it is aware of the ever-increasing entropy and deterioration of human interactions), distantiating itself from physical reality in an imagined space of "civilized" safety.

If the space in *V.* is often understood in terms of the trope of "Baedeker Country," it is an exercise of power, a result of appropriation of distant space through power (not

excluding violent conquest). In tourism, physical relocation of self from place to place is an expression of one's power over space by bridging the distance between a "home" ("I," "us") and a "destination" ("not-I," "them").

> He [Godolphin] watched the tourists gaping at the Campanile; he watched dispassionately without effort, curiously without commitment. He wondered at this phenomenon of tourism: what was it drove them to Thomas Cook & Son in ever-increasing flocks every year to let themselves in for the Campagna's fevers, the Levant's squalor, the septic foods of Greece? […] Did he owe it to them, the lovers of skins, not to tell about Vheissu, not even to let them suspect the suicidal fact that below the glittering integument of every foreign land there is a hard dead-point of truth and that in all cases—even England's—it is the same kind of truth, can be phrased in identical words? (*V.*, 197–198)

Tourist visit only works if the visited locale and its people cannot re-pay the visit, cannot come to "see" one's home as a destination. Seeing becomes gazing, an observation with the purpose of evaluation and contrast of the "civilized" against the "native." Thus, writing a "guide" to a place is an imposition of meaning on something that the writer cannot know and yet "makes sense" of it. For if the writer were to know it as well as the local, it would result, in the logic of distantiation, in a failure to keep a critical eye: the writer would "go native." It is a literal expression of an exercise of power. In the "Baedeker-land," inhabitants are reduced to props:

> The barmen and other functionaries are 'near-inanimate' because they are defined by performing functions, supposedly easing the movements of tourists from place to place. […] [Pynchon's] focalization of chapter 3 of *V.* through a train conductor, waiter, and similar figures reverses the conventional perspective of tourism by foregrounding the viewpoints of those either marginalized or blanked out completely by Baedeker. (Seed, 85)

"Vheissu" is the first example of the utopian concept in Pynchon's work. As one novel follows another, the need for juxtaposing a utopian concept with the non-place demonstrates Pynchon's reliance on literary space as an active element of his narratives, with a spatial, synchronic framework of his narrative text, rather than a temporal, diachronic one. As was noted before, Vheissu is merely a concept of imagined space, and is therefore present in the narrative only as a part of a character's account – that of Cpt. Hugh Godolphin. Even this account is, however, distantiated from a plane of reference

that the reader may want to identify. It is Godolphin's encounter with Mondaugen during Foppl's Siege Party that Herbert Stencil relates to Eigenvalue, the soul-dentist (and with him, the reader), as a lead in Stencil's search for one possible incarnation of V. (Vera Meroving). In a play of proliferation of clues and increasing unreliability thereof (that is, increasing entropy of information, or decreasing truth value in the discourse), Pynchon has the Godolphin of the Stencil's narration of Mondaugen's story to be himself half-crazed with fever and obsessed with a mad search: Vheissu obviously represents yet another iteration of the mysterious "V.," this time a non-place. Its ontological importance is not derived from its physical reality but from the interest great powers have in it, pursuing its mystery, and ruthlessly using or threatening individuals with any notion of it, as is attested to by another temporal excursion into the past, to Sidney Stencil's work at the British consulate in Italy, confirming international tension over the issue:

> "They asked me about Vheissu," the Gaucho mused. "What could I say? This time I really knew nothing. The English consider it important."
> "But they don't tell you why. All they give you are mysterious hints. The Germans are apparently in on it. The Antarctic is concerned in some way. Perhaps in a matter of weeks, they say, the whole world will be plunged into apocalypse. And they think I am in on it. And you. […]"
> "… So Vheissu becomes a bedtime story or fairy tale after all, and the boy [Evan Godolphin, Cpt. Godolphin's son] a superior version of his merely human father.
> "I thought Captain Hugh was mad; I would have signed the commitment papers myself. But at Piazza della Signoria 5 I was nearly killed in something that could not have been an accident, a caprice of the inanimate world; and from then till now I have seen two governments hagridden to alienation over this fairy tale or obsession I thought was my father's own. As if this condition of being just human, which had made Vheissu and my boy's love for him a lie, were now vindicating them both for me, showing them to have been truth all along and after all. […]" (*V.*, 206–207)

Claiming he had once been to the land of Vheissu, old Hugh Godolphin contextualizes his account of his South Pole expedition with a horror of role-reversal between the State-empire and a colony. Since then, Godolphin's career and adventure is plagued with transgressions from Vheissu and its malevolent inhabitants, agents outside Vheissu, pursuing Godolphin for having visited the mysterious place, making sure he is never taken seriously, shattering his reliance on his own memory and rationality. Most importantly, however, "they" shatter his understanding of the world, the colonial

discourse of power in which the Western white man thrusts through the unknown, and in a discovery of a place appropriates more space turning it into a territory:

> "Everyone assumed I had tried for the Pole and failed. But I was on my way back. […] They thought I was insane. Possibly I was, by that time. But I had to reach it. I had begun to think that there, at one of the only two motionless places on this gyrating world, I might have peace to solve Vheissu's riddle. […] And sure enough: waiting for me was my answer. […] There could have been no more entirely lifeless and empty place anywhere on earth. […] Staring up at me through the ice, perfectly preserved, its fur still rainbow-colored, was the corpse of one of their spider monkeys. It was quite real; not like the vague hints they had given me before. I say 'they had given.' I think they left it there for me. Why? Perhaps for some alien, not-quite-human reason that I can never comprehend. Perhaps only to see what I would do. A mockery, you see: a mockery of life, planted where everything but Hugh Godolphin was inanimate. […] If Eden was the creation of God, God only knows what evil created Vheissu. The skin which had wrinkled through my nightmares was all there had ever been. Vheissu itself, a gaudy dream. Of what the Antarctic in this world is closest to: a dream of annihilation." (*V.*, 220–221)

The logic of colonial spatial discourse is reversed: the agents of Vheissu clearly know where Godolphin goes and precede him there, tauntingly reminding him of his limitations. The Captain is mortified, for not only his thrust at primacy is thwarted but also his personal exclusivity—of which an imperial servant is self-assured, backed by the power exertion of the State—dissipates in face of the brutality and effectiveness with which "they" choose to deliver the blow to any vestige of his understanding of the world. Pynchon shows how devastating such a blow can be to the sanity of an individual entrenched in the one-directional discourse driven by power relations between the colonizer and the colonized. It is not so much that the inhabitants of Vheissu beat Godolphin to the South Pole – it is the horrifying choice of a dead beauty, chosen as a means of communication that undoes Godolphin's epistemology. The reversal breeds doubt and brings about collapse of the monological discourse. The power and control that the State needs to exude in order to expand, appropriate, and territorialize space is opposed not on the level of another visible force that would result in a clash of equals. It is attacked rather on the level of the State's structure, subverting it as a system and threatening it with dissolution of the mechanisms hitherto working to its self-ordering. The spatial discourse dictating that territorialization, or turning a smooth space into a striated one, is no longer, or has never been, sustainable for the State as a system, and that

successful self-ordering necessitates its increased entropy and brings it toward dissolution.

Finally, in the episode revealing the last place Sidney Stencil possibly faced V. (Chapter 11), Pynchon explores a smooth space in a locale where the feud of State war machines brings about a dissolution of systems of control previously present but no longer—or, at least, for a moment—valid. Pynchon takes the reader to Valletta, Malta's capital, during the WW2 siege, depicting what happens to spatial organization of society in the utter physical destruction of perfectly dehumanized, machine-ruled, war: the aerial barrage. It is in Valletta (obviously another "V.") that societal order is dismantled, the fabric of institutionalized relations shredded to pieces, and a fantastic, primordial, survival-driven structure briefly arises. Children's innocence is lost in the lack of comparison with adults, they form packs with no rules but unrefined human actualization. The city space, consisting of walls and streets, is deconstructed and its physical strata erased in the rubble. A smooth space, in which social relations and human interaction are without institutionalized definition, seeps back to the surface of the landscape. It reminds one of what is possible at all times, just under a thin layer of the imposed order of produced, appropriated space that reiterates power relations.

It is at that moment that the Bad Priest—possibly lady V., with all her prosthetic, inanimate body parts—can be caught up with and disassembled. It is then that Sidney Stencil reaches personal salvation and can leave. As if a premonition to Stencil's demise, Valletta is pounded incessantly and it is ironically only the aerial bombardment, a distantiated delivery of death that is fully explored in *GR*, against which the mysterious Bad Priest, a concealed woman of many artificial body parts that hide her age as well as decay, does not stand a chance: the anonymous death-from-above is Bad Priest's destruction and children reveal her hidden inanimate nature.

In the final exploration of Herbert Stencil's mysterious demise, Pynchon has Sidney sail onto the perfectly smooth space of the Mediterranean – it is at the sea, where imposition of strata on space most commonly fails (cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomadology*, 53) and smooth space resists its stratification, its limitation. Here, an unidentified, unknown "water-spout" destroys the ship he is on, and he perishes without witnesses. Pynchon leaves the full explanation aside (a submarine attack, volcanic activity, or any such agent) to emphasize the randomness with which one's being ends, in death that cannot be shared and is always distant to every surviving other. Stencil will never learn how his father actually died, and in his mad search for V.—or a search for

who he is—he must never find out about either his father's or V.'s end, for that would mean the end of his epistemological grasp of the world. The smooth space expresses the lowest possible order before any "making sense" of the world is imposed structurally upon it, and thus both epistemological freedom as well as confession that, ultimately, there is no understanding the world, only subjective fabrication.

> Draw a line from Malta to Lampedusa. Call it a radius. Somewhere in that circle, one the evening of the tenth, a water-spout appeared and lasted for fifteen minutes. Long enough to lift the xebec fifty feet, whirling and creaking, Astarte's throat naked to the cloudless weather, and slam it down again into a piece of the Mediterranean whose subsequent surface phenomena—whitecaps, kelp islands, any of a million flatnesses which should catch thereafter part of the brute sun's spectrum—showed nothing at all of what came to lie beneath, that quiet June day. (*V.*, 547)

All four "locations" in *V.* portray and employ spatial discourse that lies at the basis of the State: a discourse that dictates territorialization, that is, appropriation of space as a systemic, inherent organizing principle to the State. Without geographic expansion, the State as Pynchon depicts it cannot last. Whether it is through horizontal extension of its realm (building an Empire) or vertical ordering (organizing and controlling the society), the appropriation depends on commodification of the other, of the "non-I." Such appropriation objectifies the other in order to turning it into a thing which can be used for self-perpetuation in its strife against entropy.

5.1.2. Spatial Discourse(s): *Crying of Lot 49*

In *COL49*, Pynchon seems to build upon this distinction: focusing on California, the apparent global context is subdued (with the exception of references to Renaissance and WW2 Italy, and only in accounts given by characters). Appropriation in this novel elaborates on the commodification of the "non-I," and it is quite striking in the spatial terms once again. The spatial discourse leaves the State level and an Empire-building systemic growth thereof, focusing on the vertical ordering through capitalist enterprise. The State is thus understood as a system of societal organization rather than any particularized actor.

Pierce Inverarity, as the "real-estate tycoon," embodies the concept of vertical commodification through accumulation of wealth. His acquisitions and enterprises are all naturally spatial and Pynchon discusses what impact the real-estate mogul has on the

lifeworld. While his enterprise is multi-layered and complex, the maniacally active Inverarity, with seemingly super-human potential, accomplishes everything in his developer's enterprise: as an example, he lures big aerospace business Yoyodyne (building, essentially, rockets) into San Narciso where he then provides the plant with the infrastructure that sustains the system with human energy, connecting it with L.A.

In spatial terms, Pynchon once again elaborates on imagined space: both Kinneret-Among-Pines in northern California that Oedipa leaves to embark on her journey of revelations and San Narciso near L.A. are fictitious, providing the reader with a generalized idea of the West Coast state and allowing for abstracting from its particulars. The locales serve a structural as well as narrative purpose in the novel. Kinneret offers Oedipa the relative "Tupperware party" safety of ignorance but consumes both Wendell "Mucho" Maas and Dr. Hilarius into their respective dissolution of sense, counter-balancing Oedipa's own descent into a paranoid construction of meanings in San Narciso. San Narciso, while a seemingly ordered space of Inverarity's real-estate genius, does not allow Oedipa to reveal any certainty therein; quite to the contrary, it precipitates the dismantling of her own epistemological, and ethical, understanding of the world:

> San Narciso lay further south, near L.A. Like many named places in California it was less an identifiable city than a grouping of concepts—census tracts, special purpose bond-issue districts, shopping nuclei, all overlaid with access roads to its own freeway. But it had been Pierce's domicile, and headquarters: the place he'd begun his land speculating in ten years ago, and so put down the plinth course of capital on which everything afterward had been built, however rickety or grotesque, toward the sky; and that, she supposed, would set the spot apart, give it an aura. (*COL49*, 13)

The inanimate mechanisms beyond human scale causing such dissolution in the individual abound, and Pynchon expresses them spatially, synchronically. The road is a line that defines the lifeworld, "a highway she thought went toward Los Angeles, into a neighborhood that was little more than the road's skinny right-of-way, lined by auto lots, escrow services, drive-ins, small office buildings and factories whose address numbers were in the 70 and then 80,000's. […] What the road really was, she fancied, was this hypodermic needle, inserted somewhere ahead into the vein of a freeway, a vein nourishing the mainlined L.A., keeping it happy, coherent, protected from pain, or whatever passes, with a city, for pain." (*COL49*, 15) It cuts through the space of the lifeworld, delineating life and death in it (the cemetery ripped out for East San Narciso

Freeway), and feeds the super-human system. In probably the most famous metaphor in the novel, Oedipa Maas views San Narciso city as "printed circuit. The ordered swirl of houses and streets, from this high angle, sprang at her now with the same unexpected, astonishing clarity as the circuit card had. Though she knew even less about radios than about South Californians, there were to both outward patterns a hieroglyphic sense of concealed meaning, of an intent to communicate." (*COL49*, 14)

In a space with an order that delineates social interaction in such a way, communication becomes, quite difficult: it confirms the dual use of entropy as a tendency to sameness in organization leading to order in physics and the seemingly counter-current proliferation of meaning leading to chaos in information theory. In other words, the tendency to uniformity and stratification of (social and physical) space is undercut by the tendency of information transfer to multiply meanings. This, in turn, makes interaction between individuals extremely difficult, and locks them into epistemological isolation that cannot be shared by communication. This tendency, in logical extension, is to be found in Pynchon's extreme expression thereof in Fangoso Lagoons, a housing development of Inverarity's. It is the tycoon's iteration of producing a new living environment, imposed on the natural world. In its literary space, Pynchon displays how the attempted construction of a physically new lifeworld, man-made "second nature," layers over the natural world. This is *COL49*'s non-place as it was categorized above.

In so doing, Inverarity yearns for its authenticity, and embarks on fanciful landscaping project, the pinnacle of which is undoubtedly the Lake Inverarity. In a thrust against the limitation of his own life, and the inauthenticity plaguing his produced space, Inverarity uses some of his bone-supply (for bone charcoal cigarette filters, in his other business venture) to actually decorate the bottom of his namesake lake, perversely "populating" it for scuba enthusiasts.

> No bribes, no freeways," Di Presso shaking his head. "These bones came from Italy. A straight sale. Some of them," waving out at the lake, "are down there, to decorate the bottom for the Scuba nuts. That's what I've been doing today, examining the goods in dispute. Till Tony started chasing, anyway. The rest of the bones were used in the R&D phase of the filter program, back around the early '50's, way before cancer. Tony Jaguar says he harvested them all from the bottom of Lago di Pietà." (*COL49*, 46)

With a mocking twist on human life's limitation, underlined by a increasing information unreliability, Pynchon makes the massacre of a company of G.I.s in WW2

echo the slaughter of Thurn-Taxis messengers by Trystero agents in *The Courier's Tragedy* (a fictional Jacobean revenge play) as well as a fight between post riders of Wells, Fargo and black-clad attackers, commemorated by a bronze historical marker on the lake's bank (*COL49*, 71). Pynchon thus weaves a vague, tenuous link between Inverarity's space appropriation and a subversive mail delivery system that may seem to corrode the institutionalized societal mechanism of communication. This at least for Oedipa, a collector of unclear clues and follower of innuendos. The double-bind of entropy theory in organization of a system and in communicated information is reiterated again in spatial terms, doing away with a diachronic development and instead presenting the reader with a synchronic spatial constellation. Pynchon refutes the temporal link based on recorded information and ridicules any attempt to validate it with references to an "origin."

In Fangoso Lagoons, the reader witnesses the effort to construct a non-place, with its idealized landscape to create a sense of authenticity otherwise lacking in the spatial appropriation that marks the enterprise. Pynchon shows how such an imagined space is a product that remains a commodity and perpetuates the objectification of the other, erasing the possibility for ethical judgment by its horrifying attempt at diachronic clinging to an arbitrary originality.

In a forking of two alternative modes of being in space that unfold before Oedipa as the novel progresses (i.e., diachronic being-in-space against the other and synchronic becoming-through-other in one's visceral investment), Pynchon reveals meaning of things as the product of epistemological "making sense" of the world. The mutually exclusive modes result in two alternative societal realities of the human lifeworld. Oedipa transcends from the former to the latter, or at least finds out about the alternatives. The "Tupperware party" world of being-in-space that allows one to suppress the notion of one's limits at the price of forgoing one's authenticity of actualized becoming is one mode of being. The other mode of being introduces a seemingly "paranoid" world of becoming-through-other that strips the individual of the epistemological security because it forces one to actualize oneself in space continuously by conscious effort to make sense of the world over and over again. Such conscious effort, however, brings no certainty whether that which one "makes sense" of is a valid reading of reality. Oedipa's revelation is that her decision-making, expressing the ultimate liberty of her being in the world, opens both modes to her (and to the reader), however uncertain her footing in the lifeworld becomes.

Thus, when Oedipa descends to the socially outcast under-level of Los Angeles looking for signs of Trystero and finding them everywhere and in everything (containers with W.A.S.T.E. lettering, muted-horn symbols, couriers and deliverers of the Trystero mail), she realizes that what seems to be a product of her paranoia is in fact her epistemological maturity: as was argued above, it no longer matters whether or not the world she seems to have found is *real*, whether "making sense" of the lifeworld yields a transformation from being-toward-death to becoming-through-others: "[E]ither an accommodation reached, in some kind of dignity, with the Angel of Death, or only death and the daily, tedious preparations for it. Another mode of meaning behind the obvious, or none" (*COL49*, 150). The world's validity is revealed to her in the ethical realization that she can either (1) block personal responsibility for the societal *status quo*, that is, mutely acquiesce with the power relations and the institutionalized violence that reduces tension among individuals with the aim of ordering and control; or (2) accept her ethical responsibility for the world she co-creates as its constituent part, actively change the societal system from within, making personal choices that may prove undesirable by the society's governing principles but ensuring her ethical standing. This is the promise of the open ending that Pynchon grants both to her and the reader: Oedipa's "vague idea about causing a scene violent enough to bring the cops into it and find out that way who the man really was" (*COL49*, 151) actually crowns the author's debate of the protagonist's epistemological authenticity in the world. The fact that such an idea of hers might result in a failure and the final blow to her credibility or even sanity only confirms her awareness of the choice she makes in the lifeworld, effecting a change in it. The world she has thus left is revealed as produced by a spatial discourse that subscribes to the struggle against its own entropy only by geographic expansion and societal control at the other's expense.

What in *V.* was an alternative between Benny Profane and Herbert Stencil is united in Oedipa and her opportunity to recognize both alternatives at once. Pynchon thus empowers the individual to make the decision that brings about vastly different modes of being in space, informed by ethical stance. While Profane and Stencil act more as archetypal figures in the overall debate of "making sense" of the world, Oedipa's world is open to change depending on her conscious, and ethical, decision. Pynchon makes it clear that the world his characters live in may stand or fall with the decision to recognize space as an element to be objectified and commodified in the act of appropriation, or a part of one's actualization. The "other" in the expression "becoming-through-other" includes any

thing that is "not-I," that is, other individuals as well as space through which one becomes in the world.

5.1.3. Spatial Discourse(s): *Gravity's Rainbow*

The rather general epistemological emphasis in *V.* shifts to critique of the ways in which individual can construe a lifeworld from the natural world in *COL49*. Paranoia is promoted from the engine of delusion to a valid cognitive approach: it is because Pynchon looks into paranoia as a constructive "double-think," seemingly necessary for one's ethical survival in a societal organization in which the systemic tendency to tension reduction translates into an imposition of uniformity on individuals and their objectification in the process of the expansion of institutionalized, super-human, or inanimate principles of control. Paranoia is elevated to the only epistemological approach left to individuals opposing their systemic objectification in *GR*.

   GR as if widens the focus from an individual exercised in *COL49*. Pynchon returns to the larger scale on which his narrative operated in *V.* It is in *GR*, however, that the author abandons the last vestiges of modern novel and develops fully the postmodern concept of literary space. No character in *GR* "populates" the "small world" of the narrative – instead, all the characters *are* the narrative, which is attested to by their sheer numbers and by the intricate web of plots and subplots that inundate the reader with an ever-changing discourse and unannounced switches in narrative techniques. This is not to say that characters in *GR* are purely static, for they do develop within the narrative as well as with the growing volume of information that outlines the narrative. In other words, characters are no longer posited against some backdrop of literary space (as may be argued with the "Baedeker country" approach in the short story "Under the Rose" [1959] that Pynchon criticizes in his introduction *to Slow Learner* [1985]), they act as an integral part thereof – even more precisely, the multitude of characters and their mini-histories in various accounts are the only structure provided for the "small world" of the narrative.

   The very beginning of the novel is an excellent example, providing the reader with minimum descriptive information of London under attack by the V-2 rocket. Instead, the reader witnesses it "only" through the senses and opinions of Pirate Prentice, and the character count grows steadily with each page. Despite the fact that the literary space is at times anchored in existing geographic locations, they are as unbelievable as the characters through which one reads about them (in a masterful combination of well-researched and

fantastically warped). This is reiterated throughout the novel, with the probable climax being Slothrop's wanderings through the Zone and Weissmann/Blicero's island-hopping with his mobile V-2 launching pad. However, the crowds of minor characters constitute more solid evidence of Pynchon's shift to building literary space merely by presenting countless characters and their mini-plots than the central protagonists. This in turn fuels the central characters' paranoia as epistemological approach, for they too rely on the myriads of stories, clues, accounts, and guesswork. Pynchon's narrative thus emphasizes the diminished role of individuals in a clash with the inanimate forces beyond individual reach: hence his promotion of paranoia as a valid mechanism for an epistemological approach to the world.

If read with the focus on literary space, *GR* debates territorialized space at the moment of the State's War Machine at its best, that is, during a confrontation with another State, in a war. The World War 2 conflict provides the debate with ideal maxims: it is a conflict of industrialized economies whose war effort totalizes its systemic energy expenditures. New technology transgresses any and all "fronts," obviating the military-civilian distinction in societal organization (in other words, civilians are as much target as the armies of the opposing State). This climaxes with the true nascent of aerial warfare that cancels geographic distances and landscapes hitherto limiting the physical reach of the War Machine. Its extension, then, is the Aggregate 4 (or V-2) rocket ultimately rendering the attacking side safe and the attacked defenseless. The War Machine appropriated by the State to finalize space stratification overcomes its spatial purpose and instead de-territorializes space by introducing the paradox of its impact before the defenseless attacked can even apply their human senses to it. To be concrete, Pynchon's fascination with the Rocket derives from its supersonic speed which corrodes causality embedded in epistemology and ontology built on sensory input: "A screaming comes across the sky." (*GR*, 3) The impact of the Rocket comes *before* the sound of its arrival announces it: "When it comes, will it come in darkness, or will it bring its own light? Will the light come before or after?" (*GR*, 5) The Rocket is a reification of the State war machine but is, after the *Brennschluss*, unpredictable, equalizing in its deadliness, hitting without class or warring side distinction. It smoothes space again, both allegorically—bringing death to all—and literally –leveling structures in London. (cf. Nagano, 85) The

State war machine, in its ultimate territorialization, extends itself everywhere, turning all humanity into either its part or its victims.[72]

GR unveils the State war machine as a societal organization that appropriates institutionalized violence into its structure. This is the reason Pynchon can make little use of describing or even referring to actual combat, the Holocaust, or interpretive (and therefore evaluative) depiction of the goals of Allies or Axis. Instead, he effectively shows how the State war machine makes use of every individual and reduces them to its component and source of energy to be spent on further outward expansion in space or the inward self-organizing tension reduction.

> … *Gravity's Rainbow*, whose 760 pages span the last year of the Second World War and the first few months of postwar uncertainty, dispersal and drift, remains only nominally about that war itself. Throughout, Pynchon insists that war, as an outbreak of violence on a mass scale, and even history itself—the story we tell ourselves to make such conflagrations rationally (causally) explicable—are in a sense merely distractions from the deeper patterns which make them possible. (Tumir, 135)

The clash of opposing State war machines in their struggle for their respective expansion is spatial in the sense of territorialization (once again, both outward "Colonies are the outhouses of the European soul" [*GR*, 322] and inward "No, this is not a disentanglement from, but a progressive *knotting into*" [*GR*, 4, italics in original]) not unlike in Pynchon's previous novels (the "Situation" in *V.*, and the city in *COL49*). However, due to the total reach and utter destructiveness of the Rocket as a military technology, such territoritorialization is complete and the space thus produced is paradoxically not perfectly stratified but rather de-territorialized. This again reminds one of the ordering principle in the system that must not be complete, for when sameness is achieved in all of the system, there is no structural distinction between constituent components – in which chaos equals homogeneity before any ordering starts (Arnheim, 51–55). Spatially speaking, when the State war machine reaches utter destruction, it erases structure – this is what "the Zone" in *GR* represents. The Zone is a smooth space produced by destruction brought about by the war (similarly to Valletta in *V.*): "[…] a

---

[72] Pynchon publishes *GR* in 1973, at which time his debate is truly global. The Rocket's grip of the world is firm by then, and has become an everyday reminder of the limitation of human being as well as the finitude of the lifeworld humanity has created: the omni-present looming threat of nuclear apocalypse of the Cold War, wherein missile (rocket) delivery systems of weapons of mass destruction lock the planet into the perpetual hysteria of Mutually Assured Destruction (M.A.D.), reifying a *memento mori* that cannot be undone.

passage marking Slothrop's movement in the Zone, the place of temporary freedoms and new visions of *continuity*. Traveling from Switzerland to Germany, Slothrop finds an absence of the boundaries he has been expecting […] The War is a force that shapes the landscape and the consciousness of the individuals roaming it." (Tölölyan, 64) Such smooth space resembles the space *before* the State, the war destruction reveals the smooth space long considered gone under the imposed structure of societal organization. In other words, when the State war machine finishes its destruction through war, the definitive locality of space evaporates and, for a moment, a power vacuum strikes individuals who find themselves as a wondrous juxtaposition to the orderliness that was.

The Zone is, without a doubt, filled with the military and its future is delineated by power struggle. For the moment that Pynchon's "small world" of the *GR* narrative focuses on, however, it is free of structure. Its past is shattered by the utter destruction, its future is open to possibilities and forking paths of human decision, denying diachrony and temporality (chronology) and presenting itself in a kind of ambiguous "thisness" (*haecceitas* without its particularity), its interpretation demanding synchrony (event) and spatiality. The future possibilities do not present themselves on a plane of options the systemic approach of space appropriation by the State war machine operates on. Instead, they arise only as long as the systemic approach is not valid, when the pressure tension reduction (societal principles of control) is removed by the very power vacuum. The power vacuum is obviously short-lived, lasting only as long as the State war machine of opposing states negate one another (that is, after the Nazi Third Reich is destroyed, there is but a short opening before the U.S. and Soviet forces express their "interest" spatially and initiate a new power struggle): "While the zone seems to represent a vacuum created through the collapse and therefore a space of possibility, such optimism is quickly diffused by the recognition of the impending, if not already existing, rise of a new order." (Ivision, 134)

This is Pynchon's smooth literary space co-created by characters (in fact, narrated through the multitude of characters, as was argued above). It is a crucial time, a nodal point at which the lifeworld appears to have exposed the systemic mechanisms of tension reduction to individuals, unveiling their role as constituent components of the societal organization. The Zone is thus not only an instance of smooth space that would somehow *cause* characters to move in a certain way: it is rather its nodality vis-à-vis societal organization that allows Pynchon's characters (and the reader, cooperating on the interpretation of the "small world" of the narrative) to entertain ideas that are non-

systemic. That is, ideas that are not informed by the system's energy accumulation and expenditure do not only figure in the two flows' ratio of the system. They allow for possibilities to be produced, and ideas conceived of, as truly "outside" the system, novel to it.

> With the law and the letter one and the same thing, the search for clues is by necessity always already subject:ed to a logic of deferral. This is why the Zone holds (on the one hand) such an immense promise. Anarchic Squalidozzi, for instance, feels that "'[in] the openness of the [deterritorialized] German Zone, our hope is limitless'" (265). With every inscription in ruins and every cultural sentence unwritten and in fragments, one might hope to break though once more to the raw life rather than stumble around forever in its various cooked, culturized versions. (Berressem, 1998: 264)

What is the relationship between the newly possible and the spatiality? It is through the debate of two forms of spatiality in which the Zone as a smooth space exposes the alternative to the striated space of the State. In the Zone,

> The Nationalities are on the move. It is a great frontierless streaming out here. Volksdeutsch from across the Oder, moved out by the Poles and headed for the camp at Rostock, Poles fleeing the Lublin regime, others going back home, the eyes of both parties, when they do meet, hooded behind cheekbones, eyes much older than what's forced them into moving, Estonians, Letts, and Lithuanians trekking north again, […] Sudetens and East Prussians shuttling between Berlin and the DP camps in Mecklenburg, Czech and Slovaks, Croats and Serbs, Tosks and Ghegs, Macedonians, Magyars, Vlachs, Circassians, Spaniols, Bulgars stirred and streaming over the surface of the Imperial cauldron, colliding, shearing alongside for miles, sliding away, numb, indifferent to all momenta but the deepest instability too far below their itchy feet to give a shape to, […] squeezing aside for army convoys when they come through, White Russians sour with pain on the way west, Kazakh ex-P/Ws marching east, Wehrmacht veterans from other parts of old Germany, foreigners to Prussia as any Gypsies, […] so the populations move, across the meadow, limping, marching, shuffling, carried, hauling along the detritus of an order, a European and bourgeois order they don't yet know is destroyed forever. (*GR*, 558–560)

The smooth space does not only force, but also allows people to abandon the societal organization imposed onto them previously, while being abandoned by it. It is a subversion of the vertical, hierarchical societal organization, disruption of the

institutionalized violence as power relations in the State. This is the de-territorialization brought about not by individual living within the State structure but by the physical destruction of war. In the last assertions of its power, the State war machine (of the Nazi Third Reich) reaches to anyone regardless of rank (the SS harvesting potatoes for alcohol), in an allegory of resorting to any means to *fuel* its best reification, the Rocket.

The possible arises from the smooth space, directly caused by the power vacuum that defines the smooth space. The new possibilities are available as alternatives to individuals and groups in the Zone because the horizontal and vertical strata determining appropriation and production of space are temporarily suspended. The smooth space abolishes production in a systemic sense – there is no structure necessary for directing energy flows into expenditure that would perpetuate the system, and thus their commodification of both materials and individuals is disrupted.

Pynchon's work has been interpreted along the lines of waste before[73]:

> Pynchon frequently plays with the idea that a system's waste can either become a system in its own right or feed back into the system in ironic and surprising ways. In *The Crying of Lot 49*, Oedipa's interest is drawn to the W.A.S.T.E. system, a mail delivery system operating on the margins of society, comprising the dregs of society, and carrying out its operations using letter boxes disguised as waste receptacles. In *V.*, Benny Profane finds true life under the street, in the sewer system. And in *Gravity's Rainbow* and *Vineland*, the outcasts from the various systems of the novels are redeemed through the ironic role they play in justifying the existence of the systems that expel them. (Jenkins, 94)

It is only when objects lose their quality as commodity that Pynchon's characters struggling for individual actualization with-out the systemic order can engage them (free of the principle of appropriation). While the interpretation of *V.* as a proliferation of the

---

[73] Among others, a text particularly close to the present interpretation of Pynchon's literary space as a metaphor to various systems and their epistemological basis lying in the physicality of human body is Jenkins's article "Systemic

Waste and the Body Boundary in Pynchon's Fiction" (1991):

> We operate in the faith that a collection of elements that interact in an observed fashion can be cleanly separated from everything else, and so we call everything "inside" this division "the system," and everything "outside" the system "the environment." Among other things, the political ideas of nationhood, states, and parties; the economic categories of "fiscal" and "monetary"; and the sociological concepts of societies, tribes and families are all based on the concept of boundaries. Further, the broad divisions we call political, economic, and societal are themselves equally boundary-based. However, these boundaries are clearly arbitrary. Is war a political or an economic phenomenon? Is war "inside" or "outside" the sociological model? (Jenkins, 92)

inanimate *through* waste[74] (and thus an increase of entropy whose symptom is the waste as the energy no longer useful for a system) is valid, and in *COL49*, waste is a loud metaphor for alternative systems subversive to the reigning societal organization (the letter boxes as waste receptacles), in *GR* Pynchon seems to embrace the waste as the de-commodified material world. This is a physical sign of an avenue for redemption to his preterite characters. "Like Oedipa, Slothrop stumbles across *objets trouves* [*sic*] and takes these signs for wonders. Because they are untouched by the logic of commodification and technical rationality they reveal the possibility for other ways of being in the world" (Jarvis, 67) Commodification is further turned upside down precisely when the use of waste in defiance to its previous usefulness (for example, army boots once denoting a fearful military uniform become a valuable in the Zone where everyone wanders uprooted).[75] This is obviously possible only at the moment just after the destruction that was brought about by the enormous violence of the World War.

> [...] Pynchon's novels place value on people and objects out of order–on "waste" in the largest sense–and on moments of malfunction and anarchic openness when a system breaks down and a new order has not yet taken shape (as in the Zone of *Gravity's Rainbow* or The Visto of *Mason & Dixon*); or they invest hope in those (most of all children) who embody a continuous promise of the possible [as in *V.*]. (Hashhozheva, 236, comment on *V.* in brackets mine)

As was said above, the smooth space of the Zone is but a moment, a nodal point of intensity at which new possibilities alternative to the hitherto systemic principles dawn on humanity: Pynchon focuses on this interim yet demonstrates how quickly the moment is squandered in the power struggle between the victorious States. The actual time for

---

[74] "The book is full of dead landscapes of every kind—from the garbage heaps of the modern world to the lunar barrenness of the actual desert. On every side there is evidence of the 'assertion of the Inanimate'." (Tanner, 53)

[75] When Pynchon lists alternative communities springing in the Zone, his argument on how the exploited natural world turns in the moment of power vacuum against the institutions that bound it probably reaches its highest hilarity (and admonishment) when introducing the "Hundt-Stad," where army dogs took over a village and, trained to kill, do not let anyone near. They cannot but defend their community against the pressure from the outside, the human world: "If there are lines of power among themselves, loves, loyalties, jealousies, no one knows. Someday G-5 might send in troops. But the dogs may not know of this, may have no German anxieties about encirclement—may be living entirely in the light of the one man-installed reflex: Kill The Stranger." (*GR*, 625) While introducing this backlash against human exploitation, Pynchon immediately plants seeds of dissolution even into this natural community, since in fact, there is little natural about it: "But in private they point to the remembered image of one human, who has visited only at intervals, but in whose presence they were tranquil and affectionate [...] Where is he now? [...] Given the right combinations and an acceptable trainer-loss figure, it might be cheaper to let the dogs finish themselves off than to send in combat troops" (*GR*, 625)

victory is short-lived precisely because the State war machine strives to reinvent itself as quickly as possible so that the State as a societal organization can perpetuate itself as a system that self-organizes. Thus Pynchon identifies that the *modus operandi* of the War Machine requires individuals to be largely ignorant of their sole purpose as constituent components, following the rules institutionalized in the State, aimed at the control of their interaction and tension reduction between them. The grand conspiracy surrounding Slothrop's infancy, his studies, his objectification and commodification as a study in conditioning illustrate how the War Machine is systemic even with-out the respective States that appropriated it. According to Pynchon's conspiracy, the War Machine in fact disregards any particular state allegiance and works on its self-perpetuation. Thus, IG Farben is connected to Shell, to General Electric, and Siemens, by personnel, by raw materials provided by one to another, in order to build

> *A Rocket-cartel.* A structure cutting across every agency human and paper that ever touched it. Even to Russia … Russia bought from Krupp, didn't she, from Siemens, the IG. …
>
> Are there arrangements Stalin won't admit … doesn't even *know about*? Oh, a State begins to take form in the stateless German night, a State that spans oceans and surface politics, sovereign as the International or the Church of Rome, and the Rocket is its soul. IG Raketen. […] He will never get further than the edge of this meta-cartel which has made itself known tonight, this Rocketstate whose borders he cannot cross. … (*GR*, 576, italics and non-bracketed ellipses in original)

The commodification of the Slothrop as an individual results in development of the polymer Imipolex G (itself featuring the IG initials), tested on the binaries of infant Slothrop's erection, conditioning him to it and thus proving that an artifice can be created that governs not only life and death of an individual but also their desire in an attempt to control their being and their individual actualization. Pynchon thus argues that by the control a societal organization has over one's desire, it can master individuals' ontology and govern their lives and deaths. That is what leads to the distribution of the V-2 hits in London, seemingly following Slothrop's sexual encounters, suggesting that the Rocket is, in reverse of cause—effect relationship, drawn to sites where Slothrop experiences arousal. This is a projection of the hits onto a map of London, itself an image of reality, a construct that seeks to impose epistemological order and to understand the madness of the random death that defies reason. The disruption of causality is further undermined, when

Slothrop's erotic achievements are later questioned, rendering Slothrop even less relevant and disclosing that his involvement may well have been random.

In other words, the moment at which systemic control subsides and human individuals are liberated from the State institutions as societal organization principles of control coincides with space shaking off the stratification imposed onto it by the War Machine. The Zone is both a smooth space and a nodal point of intensity in which production (and thus power relationship) is suspended and objects as waste become usable by individuals despite having been cast out of the cycle of commodification and consumption, territorialization on the horizontal axis of the geographic space, and stratification on the vertical axis of social space. "Characters like Slothrop are thrown into that new land still underlain by a matrix of German mythology and stereotypes at the "crucial moment" (Tanner 75) when a new political order is rising from the ruins of the older, fatal one." (Schieweg, 111)

Outside of the momentous power vacuum in the Zone, the State war machine control goes unperturbed, yet Pynchon looks into the striated space again (following his debate of spatial discourse from *V.* and *COL49*) and uses imagined space that can near the ideation from with-out the current system. Pynchon employs the utopian concepts of space as in *V.* but binds them onto existing physical localities, thus creating a non-place: a locale in which the utopian concept and the physical place are mixed in an ingenious manner – descriptions and details are accurate but unreliable amongst proliferation of varied accounts.

Following the logic of waste as a no-longer useful energy to a system, the most striking example of a non-place in *GR* is a space produced by the State war machine (the Nazi Third Reich), yet presented only after it lost its value, and is turned into a relic, a site-as-waste in itself.[76] In his search for the Rocket technology and its possible connection to Imipolex G (and therefore his past), Slothrop enters the "Mittelwerke" in Nordhausen, together with the "Special Mission V-2" military deployment (U.S. 3rd Armored Div. and 104th Infantry Div.). The U.S. troops hurry to collect as much material

---

[76] Pynchon's attention to waste, both material and human regarded from the perspective of a system (objects that leave the cycle of production—consumption and preterite individuals), is attested to by the episode on board of the *Anubis*, a yacht full of Polish fleeing the Lubin regime, itself a mere probability "[…] is the pip you see there even a ship? […] How probable is the *Anubis* in this estuary tonight?" (*GR*, 497). *Anubis*, the white death ship, sails on northward, expelling those it cannot control by erotic deceit or mockery of the war machine order (Thanatz, with a message for Slothrop, is discarded): "there is a key, among the wastes of the World … and it won't be found on board the white *Anubis* because they throw everything of value over the side." (*GR*, 681, cf. Jenkins, 103). At the same time, Pynchon does not leave out the humor of waste (cf. his "toilet ship" in *GR*).

and documentation as possible before they must turn the place over to their Soviet "allies." The rivalry and increasing distrust between the two great powers is of great interest to Pynchon and the characters in *GR* represent it well as it builds up to the cataclysmic firing of the 00000 and 00001 rockets (see above). The rush is symptomatic of the power vacuum immediately after the defeat of the Nazi Third Reich: "'Trying to get it all out before the Russians come to take over.'" (*GR*, 300) Pynchon's narrative structure is anchored in the systemic continuity of the war effort, ascertaining the brevity of the time at which the State war machine's balanced mode of production—consumption (or energy accumulation—expenditure) is disrupted and individuals may have a chance to peek at it exposed. At this very intense nodal point, however, the Mittelwerke is witness to the past of the Rocket, and as a relic, the place is turned into a non-place:

> Civilians and bureaucrats show up every day, high-level tourists, to stare and go wow. […] Nick De Profundis, the company lounge lizard, has surprised everybody by changing, inside the phone booth of factory spaces here, to an energetic businessman, selling A4 souvenirs: small items that can be worked into keychains, money clips or a scatter-pin for that special gal back home, burner cups of brass off the combustion chambers, ball bearings from the servos, and this week the hep item seems to be SA 100 acorn diodes, cute little mixing valves looted out of the Telefunken units, and the even rarer SA102s, which of course fetch a higher price. (*GR*, 300)

With its original deadly purpose obviated, it is no longer truly real, its physicality is subject to interpretation based on clues and guesswork. Pynchon's masterful elaboration on unreliable information produced by a crowd of ephemeral characters turns it into an imagined space, a locale connecting utopian concept and a real place. Pynchon employs irony, turning the Mittelwerke into a Disneyland, complete with a ride-like chase (when Slothrop runs from Major Marvy) – a play-pretend space where what transpires is contingent mostly on the "guides" who fabricate the epistemology of the place, making it a museum, amusement park, a tourist destination: "'Finding it a little dull?' Oily Micro moves in on his mark. 'Ever wonder to yourself: 'What *really* went on in here?'?'" (*GR*, 300) The Mittelwerke is a nodal point also in the structure of the entire novel (occupying roughly the mid-length of the text), with an aim to fascinate the characters, entertain the reader, and ridicule the twist on the place, bringing in all the components of the main themes in *GR* (the war as a system; the War Machine's reification in one deadly, inanimate machine of a weapon of mass destruction; abuse of power to subdue an

individual by systemic pressure for uniformity and control). Everyone is involved ontologically and there is no place that is not produced by the characters – one is either a "guide" or a "tourist," analogically to being "inside" or "outside" of the making sense in *COL49*. The Mittelwerke is the microcosm of the "small world" of the narrative in *GR*, it is a synecdoche of the Zone, and an allegorical node of Pynchon's admonishment against a world order bound on creating something that brings death surpassing humanity, rendering an individual obsolete.

Knowing that they are presented with an interpretation as opposed to truthful description of the past events, the visitors are prone to be open to accept even the most far-fetched narratives, the "well-informed" elucidations of what "*really* went on here." This is the twist Pynchon exploits to its full extent. Presented in the ultimate tour by "Micro" Graham, a typical "alternative routes tour" provider, in the fantastic yet seemingly veracious account on what may have been going on in the place, the Mittelwerke epistemologically transfers the reader from any vestige of a physical locale to the utopian concept of place.

> Step by step, the underground site transforms into the notorious "Rocket-City," at least for those visitors who get separated from "the ribbon clerks back on the Tour, in the numbered Stollen." Before they do, however, they pass "[t]he compartment the Schwarzkommando were quartered in," where the record of the Schwarzkommando's journey north to Germany "is no longer an amusing travelogue of native savages taking on ways of the 21st century" (Arich-Herz and Herman, 123–124; *GR* quotations 301–302)

The sense of unreality—smuggled in by the already heightened improbability of the interpretations given—creeps in again, as the non-place unfolds, heightened by the apparel ("Raumwaffe spacesuit," "silks for the amusing little Space-Jockeys") and headgear distorting perception. "Once inside *these* yellow caverns, looking out now through neutral-density orbits, the sound of your breath hissing up and around the bone spaces, what you thought was a balanced mind is little help." (*GR*, 301)

In the account, however, Pynchon already inserts Slothrop's thought reaction to what is being related, and a *deux ex machina* voice trying to center on and identify one of the visitors, is given some room immediately – perhaps to suggest the heightened susceptibility to believe any alternative offered. And this is even *before* Slothrop actually enters the Stollen of the Mittelwerke. The beauty of this description of Mittelwerke lies in

the fact that it is only an account related to Slothrop on the way towards the underground assembly plant.

The Mittelwerke chapter outlines the process of territorialization, de-territorialization on both individual level and through destruction, and re-territorialization by the State war machine assuming control back. The non-place is a nodal point for the "small world" of the narrative that is required to dialectically complete Pynchon's debate of striated and smooth space in *GR*:

> Triggered by some perceptual anomaly, the non-site emerges as a sudden and almost epiphanic bang in the midst of either the site or the para-site [that is, physical site or imagined locale]. It is a pure becoming that takes place without itself being a proper place. In short, the non-site is space-as-event [that cancels diachrony and focuses on synchrony]. It is that dimension of space which has almost zero spatial substance and even less physical solidity. (Hashhozheva, 149)

Through the phantasmagoria of insane Nazi architecture of Etzel Ölsch, Albert Speer's disciple, Pynchon unveils the debate of what produced the physical place that lends itself to such an easy transcendence into the imagined space. Ölsch strives to reify the Nazi ideology in the underground project, linking mythology (the "yew tree, or Death"), the State institutionalized violence, and double integral in mathematics. To achieve this, he brings architectural aesthetic to its extreme, in an analogy to the ideological maxims of Nazism: "Last three designs he proposed to the Führer all were visually in the groove, beautifully New German, except that none of the buildings will stay up. They look normal enough, but they are designed to fall down… shortly after the last rivet is driven, the last forms removed from the newly set allegorical statue." (*GR*, 304). Similarly, he uses the parabola as the symbol of the Rocket flight line.

Exposing Ölsch's madness—he insists on being called by the title of "Master," and protocol of behavior of his assistants, while smoking a blow-up cigar—Pynchon touches, once again, on the Western "deathwish" problem. Pynchon suggests that the struggle for perfection based on a breathtaking image leads to the entropic stillness in the system. The more perfect the image the harder it is to get to, the principle through which the growing nearness of perfection is negatively proportional to the possibility of realization.

> The double integral stood in Etzel Olsch's subconscious for the method of finding hidden
> centers, inertias unknown, as if monoliths had been left for him in the twilight, left behind
> by some corrupted idea of "Civilization," in which eagles cast in concrete stand ten
> meters high at the corners of the stadiums where the people, a corrupted idea of "the
> People" are gathering […] in which imaginary centers far down inside the solid fatality of
> stone are […] a point in space, a point hung precise as the point where burning must end,
> never launched, never to fall. And what is the specific shape whose center of gravity is
> the Brennschluss Point? […] There's only one. It is most likely an interface between one
> order of things and another. (*GR*, 306–307)

Thus, in an analogy, the transgression from the ordinary "ribbon-clerked tour of the numbered Stollen" in the physical place to the fantastic tour of the imagined space is anchored in a split of one's momentous inattention that allows the almost-impossible to overrun the sensoric and experienced. The de-territorialization commences at the point of intensity of the experience, opening one's being to actualization in an alternative of the world, offering a chance to partake in the creation of a different lifeworld. Once unleashed, the fantastic spins out of individual's control—both characters' and readers'—and the imagined space blossoms in its fullest as an alternative "world" within the "small world" of the narrative. Requiring more cooperation from the reader but rewarding it with an unfolding of the literary space in both scope and depth, the Mittelwerke as a non-place burst into the Rocket-City, acquiring a utopian, and with it global, validity. Pynchon allows the imagined space to unfurl and become a global alternative to the system of control attested to by senses. However, in its exponential growth, its totalizing quality quickly surfaces, and as such it epitomizes re-territorialization in its full horrifying impact: whatever grandeur the space flight, or any paradigm for that matter, offers, it hypertrophies into a monstrous pressure for uniformity once it envelopes the lifeworld of all. While engendered by curiosity (and perhaps even playfulness), rocketry outgrows its creators in a Faustian manner and binds all humanity into the global nightmare of inter-connected systems beyond human scope.[77] As the anarchist Squalidozzi, basking in the

---

[77] Another aspect of the free-reign of imagined space as a mere utopian concept is in the danger of stripping off one's responsibility for what one knows. In other words, the utopian escape threatens one with selective denial of knowledge, burying with it the ethical responsibility for one's mode of being. This is apparent in the self-imposed delusion the suffering Pökler subscribes to in order to be able to work on the Rocket, ignoring the fate of his daughter in the Dora Prisoner Camp: "[…] spinning out a fantasy of "a gentle Zwölfkinder that was also Nordhausen, a city of elves producing toy moon-rockets" (431). Just as he [Pökler] had "[h]at the data, yes, but did not know, with senses or heart" (432) the truth of Leni's Berlin streets, just as he had turned them into a theatre stage where danger was only fictional and action neatly ordered by the directing hands of authority, so now again, putting his "engineering skills, the gift of

momentous reign of smooth space concludes: "We are obsessed with building labyrinths, where before there was open plain and sky. To draw ever more complex patterns on the blank sheet. We cannot abide that *openness*: it is terror to us […]" (*GR*, 264)

5.1.4. Spatial Discourse(s): *Vineland*

The nightmare of an order in the State war machine that no longer requires war as its purpose is eminent in *VNL*. In his treatise of the US of the '60s and '80s, Pynchon ponders on how the State war machine perfects its mechanisms of tension reduction between its constituent components by institutionalizing ordering principles of uniformity: in other words, how the State systematically arrives at the most efficient methods of control of individuals, ensuring their cooption and neutralization, turning effort for self-actualization into participation on the super-human structure (this may allude to the "industrial-military" complex, but the text does not support such straightforward interpretation).

The "small world" of this narrative seemingly focuses on California again (as in *COL49*) but it is apparent that the literary space anchored in Vineland County and other fictitious locales is more relevant to Pynchon's debate and the novel's plot than any of the real places in the state.

> When Pynchon uses actual places in *Vineland*, he tends to leave them vague, usually mere
> names, as in the cases of San Francisco, Oklahoma City and Columbus, Ohio; but when
> he creates completely imaginary locales, he includes symbolic descriptions that give them
> thematic, satiric or political depth. (Hawthorne, 77)

While the setting is reinforced by references to the contemporary popular culture, the debate on systemic descent of societal organization to the State war machine during peace seems to require an imagined space to exemplify the extremes that Pynchon's argument identifies. Therefore, such real places as San Francisco, Tokyo, Columbus (OH), or L.A. figure merely as names without much depth and relevance. In contrast, Vineland County and Vineland City assume an allegoric force corroborated by a possible "interpretive wandering" (as postulated above using Umberto Eco's term):

Daedalus," at the service of Weissmann's secret project, Franz turns the reality of systematized annihilation of life into a dream of childhood innocence and play. In the end, inevitably, he comes to realize that all of his rationalizations, his professional ability to construct comprehensive structures of explication, were no more than an infernal labyrinth of evasion which had kept him, in Pynchon's first allusion to Pound, from "the inconveniences of caring" (428). (Tumir, 143)

> John Leonard, among other reviewers, noted that Vinland is the name the Norse gave the North American coast around 1000. As a distant, romanticized land, Vinland connoted refuge, a haven after the harrowing crossing of the Atlantic. Pynchon's Vineland is also a refuge where fantasy, or at least the ignoring of reality, can shape a girl's education, keeping her from knowing the secrets of her mother, but it is a refuge surrounded and finally invaded by reality. Vinland became identified with Thule, the White Island or Blessed Islands of Western mythology; likewise, Vineland is associated with Tsorrek because it stands at the mouth of the river that, according to Yurok geography, flows from the land of the living to the land of the dead. (Hawthorne, 77)

Vineland, the Thanatoid Village, the Retreat of the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives, Brock Vond's Political Re-Education Program camp (PREP), and the College of the Surf (subsequently PR[3]) delineate a scale on which the struggle of individuals to actualize themselves with-out the State's systemic is categorized. Unlike the New York sewers and bombed Valletta in *V.*, or the Zone and the Mittelwerke in *GR*, Pynchon takes the imagined locales in *VNL* one step further, divorcing them even more from physical places to intensify his debate of spatial discourse, to clarify his argumentation of the "people vs. the state" or "revolution vs. the aggregates of control" (Berressem, 1994: 38).

Similarly to Valletta in *V.* and Mittelwerke in *GR*, where the place as waste (having lost its original purpose through destruction or dismantling of the warring state, respectively) lends itself to creation of an imagined space, it is just within a moment of the reader's inattention that one transcends from the realm of realistic into the fantastic, reiterating the allegory of epistemological breakthroughs (both epiphany and paranoia) that keep Zoyd Wheeler on his state financial support (and exposed to the surveying eye of the villainous Brock Vond) – his annual *transfenestration*, or demonstrations of insanity.[78] At its surface, Vineland city is a town of house-fronts, its inhabitants television-addicts, gobbling up the visual control through cartelized entertainment. However, in the very town pockets of space abound where there is just the right amount of wrong to alert one that gateways to the alternative lifeworld are readily available: Bodhi Dharma pizzeria, Zoyd's shabby abode, or the bridge to Thanatoid Village all exemplify physical expressions of what any random State agent might observe as

---

[78] […] "it's become your MO, diving through windows, you start in with other stuff at this late date, forcing the state to replace what's in your computer file with something else, this is not gunno endear you to them, 'Aha, rebellious, ain't he?' they'll say, and soon you'll find those checks are gettin' slower, even lost, in the mail […] (*VNL*, 8)

apparent failures to fulfill their intended function. Quite on the contrary, they are hints at the subversive undercurrents to the State control, providing niches for individuals' self-actualization, that is, resistance to the mechanisms of institutionalized violence.

> "*Vinland* the Good" clearly signals within the text the initial utopian promise represented by the New World, the kind of home America might have been. *Vineland* is torn between a dystopian dread of the inexorable spread of totalitarian control and the possibilities for spaces of accommodation, for the plight of those dispossessed like Zoyd Wheeler, […] The official mapped zones are shown to contain some prospects for transgression. Zoyd refuses to live in a "developer condo" and gradually adds, in a familiar gesture for the Pynchon schlemiel, to a small used trailer, from the waste he encounters. (Jarvis, 73)

Once the Vineland County is viewed in such perspective, it is obvious why the area was recommended as safe haven for Zoyd and his infant daughter Prairie fleeing the power-obsessed Brock Vond. Sasha, Prairie's grandmother, remembers Prairie's mother Frenesi and her exploration of the natural world surrounding Vineland City:

> As a satirist of California—and by extension American culture—Pynchon makes Vineland a city of little depth, less intellect, a model of vacuity. He clearly delineates parts of his fictional city but shows that they have the substance of flats on a production set. This shallow surface can either stunt growth or lead to maturity. When Sasha recommends Vineland as a retreat, she tells Zoyd "how they all used to visit in the summers when Frenesi was little and how she'd love to explore, must have followed every creek on that whole piece of coast" (*VNL*, 305). Frenesi, a cousin of Sasha's remembers, would come back from those expeditions with reports "about rivers that weren't supposed to be where she found them, and of the lights on the far banks, and the many voices, hundreds it seemed, not exactly partying, nor exactly belligerent either" (*VNL*, 302). But the vacuity that protects Zoyd and Prairie doomed Frenesi. Comfortable in a city of surfaces, she fell into illusions about film-making and completely absorbed the motion picture fantasies of her mother. (Hawthorne, 78)

The imagined space of Vineland County appears to be open only to some, and dangerous to others (Brock Vond's demise at the end of the novel takes him to Tsorrek, the Yurok tribe's world of the dead). The county exhibits the quality of a plane of transcendence into the mythical (Thanatoid Village, informing the landscape with ghost-like features), the fantastic (children's innocence providing escape), the socially

alternative (Traverse's annual family get-together in their celebration of surviving the oppressive appropriation).

This is why the redwoods forming the landscape of Vineland are the obvious realm of the Thanatoids. Their ontology is ambiguous. They are both the dead who failed to leave the world of the living or the living who live as if dead – the state which Pynchon attributes to voracious consumers of televised hyperreality (the Thanatoids love the Tube). The only principle that brings the living and the dead together in such a locale is individual ethics: a Thanatoid is either a victim of great injustice or a perpetrator whose actions are too horrific to be simply forgotten by humanity. The "Tube-addicts" are in between, existing in a stupor that negates their potential to actualize themselves as human beings.

> They were victims, he explained, of karmic imbalances—unanswered blows, unredeemed suffering, escapes by the guilty—anything that frustrated their daily expeditions on into the interior of Death, with Shade Creek a psychic jumping-off town—behind it, unrolling, regions unmapped, dwelt in by these transient souls in constant turnover, not living but persisting, on the skimpiest of hopes. (*VNL*, 173)

The Thanatoid Village is a prime example of smooth space in the novel that resides on the cusp between a physical place and an imagined locale, a non-place. The inhabitants of Vineland, or the Kunoichi Sisters know about the Village but it is difficult to reach, "meaning the usual difficult passage over the ruins of the old WPA bridge, where somehow, mysteriously, at least one lane was always open. Sometimes entire segments vanished overnight, as if floated away downriver on pontoons—detours were always necessary, often with the directions crudely spray-painted onto pieces of wall or old plywood shuttering, in the same bristling typeface as gang graffiti. There were always crews at work, around the clock. […] They did not interact with the public, not even as flagmen. […] The work had been going on since the '64 storm, when the Seventh, cresting, had taken part of the bridge. Broken silhouettes had stood against the sky for all the years since." (*VNL*, 187) No institution, no power of exploitation and no obsession to overcome one's entropy at the expense of others can prevail. It is a non-place where the living are mere visitors, a refuge as well as a ghetto – this is why Weed Atman, slain in the betrayal construed by Brock Vond and delivered by Frenesi finds his realm here, from where he opposes his enforced disappearance from the world of the living. At the same

time, this is also why the Thanatoids take Brock Vond and trick him into crossing the river and entering the Tsorrek, never to come back.

The elusive and unreliable permeates the descriptions of the Thanatoid Village and access to it, offering equivocal clues that constitute the fabric of this non-place in the "small world" of the narrative. The hard-nosed Brock Vond cannot win over the dream landscape, it protects those he wants to get to while ensnaring him into his own demise. Once again, Pynchon's technique obviates any unifying, monological interpretation, inviting instead an interpretation based on epistemological uncertainty and awareness of the unreliability of the text that is open to dialogue and construction of meaning, or "making sense" of the world.

The Retreat of the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives is a physical place that, not unlike the Fangoso Lagoons housing development in *COL49* or the *Anubis* in *GR*, is accessible to the characters in the "small world" of the narrative but is given such attributes and features that render it quite allegorical. The Retreat is both a sardonic commentary on the commodification that such a place undergoes, even though it resists, in order not to cease to exist in the State exercising control through the principles of possession and affluence. It cannot remain in California without joining, at least as a front, the world of business: from a monastery and secret training facility of ninjettes, it transforms itself into a yoga retreat to survive. However, under this mask, it can proceed with its existence as a non-place within the stratified space, as a pocket of de-territorialized space where the *feminine* principles (anima guarding the inner mystery of human self-creation in the mental world) stays with-out the reach of the *masculine* principles of exercising power (animus expressing outwardly the human potential for construction and destruction in the physical world).

In here, the "karmic imbalance" can be restored, and sins or mistakes can be undone. It is in the Retreat, where DL Chastain, herself a ninjette-assassin, brings (is followed by) Takeshi after giving him the deadly blow of Vibrating Palm. And it is here where they are given a second chance by helping the Thanatoids to assuage their karmic pains:

> But they were learning, together, slowly, how to take evasive action [from love], and at
> the moment it was down through an austere maze of Shade Creek alleyways and vacant
> lots for an extended breakfast and another day's business. […]

"Sounds like—my ex-wife!" […] "What did I do, get married again and forget about it already?"

"You—" she could not believe this, "loudmouth and fool. Sister Rochelle plus a trained Oriental Medicine Team brought you back from the fuckin' *dead*, you twit, you think they go around doin' that for free? I'm your doctor bill, bright boy, you pay by havin' me in your life day in and day out, the person who once murdered you, OK, attached to you now by bonds of obligation far beyond what you, a disgrace to the folks who invented *giri*, can grasp, it seems." (*VNL*, 174, 176)

The duo's experience in deadly mistake and guilt, together with the Sisterhood's "machine" for balancing out karma become an instant hit among the Thanatoids, and establishes both DL and Takeshi, as well as the Sisterhood, as an inexplicable yet publicly acceptable institution and business in the ethically starving California. Brock Vond's Political Re-Education Program (PREP) camp stands on the other pole of Pynchon's debate of spatially-expressed argumentation for freedom of individuals from the State's systemic control of their actualization. It implicates and counters the State's effort to further the territorialization of social and natural space as its product:

> More symbols of political views than places, the Retreat and the camp represent the feminist and fascist extremes of the novel. At the Retreat, women live free from male dominance. In contrast, at the "reeducation camp" (70), the embodiment of Brock's neo-Nazism, hippies—"men who had grown feminine" and "women who had become small children" (269)—undergo rehabilitation to turn them into productive citizens, and the male completely dominates the female, turning women into mindless playthings. (Hawthorne, 83)

Pynchon's Brock Vond as the arch-villain of the novel believes in control and obsesses about exertion of his power – this translates into his clandestine project of PREP, a spatial expression of the State war machine's institutionalization of violence in peacetime. In a pre-emptive action against social upheaval, Brock selects some individuals as "possible snitches," isolating them in a neo-Nazi camp (sardonically conceived as a shelter from a possible nuclear fallout should L.A. be bombed), where their re-education leads not to the claimed, projected cooption as much as to outright dehumanization. Men and women held in the camp are reduced to tools or playthings. This is a non-place, which intensifies Pynchon's admonishment from the Raketen-Stadt in *GR*, where Faustian curiosity leads to a machinist nightmare. PREP camp is the ultimate

State re-territorialization project, where human interaction and interpersonal relations as the basis for societal organization are superseded by State programming, anchored in fear and erotic desire:

> He reached with one finger to lift her chin, force her to look at him. They faced each other in light from which all red was missing. She looked in his eyes, then at his penis—yep erect all right, creating pleats in the front of the pale federal trousers. […]
>
> "How do you like our campus?" He waved around going mine-all-mine. […]
>
> The politically correct answer would have been "When your mother stops giving head to stray dogs." Later she would think of others she might have used. But just then, when it could have still made a difference, she said nothing at all, only stood, head up, watching the old heartbreaker's ass till he'd taken it back inside the Germanic sedan. […]
>
> "Don't blow my effect here," Brock Vond leaning forward from the back, more than a little annoyed, "OK? All I need now is one of your old-time comedy routines, to undo all the work I just did out there. Trying to destabilize the subject, not serenade her." (*VNL*, 273–274)

Pynchon envisions a dystopian perfection of the process that starts by seducing individuals to fulfilling their desires without ethical considerations of consequences (which is what Frenesi is guilty of, betraying everything and everyone she loved, and having brought down PR[3]) but ends by stripping them not only of possible self-actualization but also of their autopoiesis as self-organizing units with a will to perpetuate themselves. Their being is deprived of its Dasein, they cease to care for their being, and thus cannot be ethically. It is because, as Vond believes, these men and women do not want to be responsible for their being and unconsciously yearn for an outside agency.

> Brock Vond's genius was to have seen in the activities of the sixties left not threats to order but unacknowledged desires for it. While the Tube was proclaiming youth revolution against parents of all kinds and most viewers were accepting this story, Brock saw the deep—if he'd allowed himself to feel it, the sometimes touching—need only to stay children forever, safe inside some extended national Family. […] They'd only listened to the wrong music, breathing the wrong smoke, admiring the wrong personalities. They needed some reconditioning. (*VNL*, 269)

Another example of the effort for perfection in the State war machine's territorialization of the socius during peacetime is the College of the Surf. In another counterpoint to the Vineland as a mysterious possibility for actualization of one's being, the College is

supposed to breed the solid citizens of the State. Yet the College is itself a mockery of such an attempt, for it is, in fact, a developers' scheme to move real estate prices in the imaginary Trasero County:

> While Vineland borders on the spiritual world, the College of the Surf borders immediately on the political. While Vineland is near Thanatoid Village, the college was "ostensibly" founded to train conservative and "docile" students to work for the wealthy masters of dehumanized "official reality" (204–205), but turns out to have been "an elaborate land developers' deal … disguised as a gift to the people" (209). (Hawthorne, 86–87)

The scheme undercuts any idea of true institution of higher learning that would churn out docile solid citizens – instead, thanks to the freshly-acquired education, the restless young turn liberal and start questioning the society (which they are temporarily sheltered by and protected from at the same time, through the unique students' status of socially accepted transition between a child and an adult).

Once again, the moment of transformation from a neatly striated space, in which control is unopposed, to a raging People's Republic of Rock'n'Roll (PR^3), a smooth space where power of control is suspended and the tension among constituent components—as well as against the institutionalized violence of the State spikes, fueled by each individual—is almost impossible to trace. Its reasons unclear, goals unknown, it suggests that, at least Pynchon's "small world" of the narrative, the fabric of socially produced reality can tear and a lifeworld alternative to the systemic is right beneath. The technique emphasizing the synchronic, a-temporal nature of reality and evading search for originarity has become clearer with each novel and becomes lucidly striking in the following texts (cf. "subjunctive" space in *M&D* and the blur between reality and fiction in *AtD*, below).

The collapse of PR^3 is brought about by personal betrayal, the incursion of the systemic coercion to uniformity and order executed on an individual level. Frenesi Gates, who suspends her ethical judgment in order to fulfill her desire and thus is appropriated by Brock Vond, instigates a disruption of the interpersonal relations among the leaders of the student-run PR^3, which leads to the tragic, unjust shooting of Weed Atman. It has also been argued (cf. Hawthorne, 78) that Frenesi is a victim to dissolution of her epistemology. Her "making sense" of the world distorted by the camera eye (Frenesi is a member of "24fps," a group of amateur film-making journalists who document the

student riot at the College) erases the ethical depth of the lifeworld and registers only a flat image of spatiality akin to the televised reality.

In the cooption of individuals in the State war machine institutionalizing the violence in peacetime, the only direction that it can continue its territorialization is vertical, social, endo-colonizing its socius by stratification and production of social space as a structure underlying the exercise of power. This requires commodification of individuals beyond the level of their individual will, stripping them of ontological being (opposed by Profane in *V.*, Inverarity's possible reason for setting Oedipa up for Tristero in *COL49*, Slothrop's objectification in *GR*, and PREP victims in *VNL*), in an effort to perfect the tension reduction principle. A perfect uniformity, however, is doomed to fail, for sameness saps all energy produced by the very tension among a system's constituent components, and so the system disintegrates. Brock Vond's power stands and falls with the continuous de-territorialization within the system, iterated by individuals who seek self-actualization with-out the systems principles of control. This is why even Pynchon, well aware of the limits that entropy theory of dynamics in systems poses, offers but a glimpse at the possible nightmare of ultimate re-territorialized space (PREP) and juxtaposes it with examples of smooth space (Vineland).

In other words, once there are no revolutionaries Vond's usefulness as a tension reduction mechanism for the State war machine evaporates. This moment comes precisely when his attempt to take Prairie, Frenesi's daughter (descending upon her from the FBI helicopter in the redwoods of Vineland), is thwarted and his fall excommunicates him from the world of the living. What appears as a happy ending for the novels protagonists, however, carries darker undertones. Does Pynchon insinuate that while his preterite characters (Zoyd, Prairie, Vato and Blood, Weed Atman, all the Traverses and Wheelers) have a new hope now that Vond is banished, their world is defined by a diminished potential for opposition to the State war machine? Does Vond's fall mark an end to the struggle for a better individual being? After all, PREP gets closed down not because its excessive breach of human rights but because there is no need for it, kids coming out of school volunteer to work for the government.

> But did you know he [Reagan] took it away from Brock too? Imagine how pissed off he
> must feel! Yeah, PREP, the camp, everythín, they did a study, found out since about '81
> kids were comín all on their own askín about careers, no need for no separate facility
> anymore, so Brock's budget lines all went to the big Intimus shredder in the sky, those ol'

barracks are fillín up now with Vietnamese, Salvadorans, all kinds of refugees, hard to say how they even found the place …” (*VNL*, 347)

This is why it was argued above that *VNL* expresses a systemic nostalgia, for the nodal points of intensity in smooth space passes and humanity then fails to live up to the promise of a better societal organization. In his next novel, Pynchon focuses on the "road not taken," the missed opportunity, while further radicalizing his call for a more ethical coexistence in the socius. *M&D*, his most geographic novel, in a sense, unfolds to tell the tale of the rise of the empire, and the failure of a new beginning in the New World, in a chronologically opposing pole to *VNL*, that is at the beginning of the Western State self-assertion, the Age of Reason.

5.1.5. Spatial Discourse(s): *Mason & Dixon*

It is in *M&D* that Pynchon's enthused deployment of imagined space in the "small world" of the narrative is given full reign. What was a sub-plot in *V.* (Godolphin's obsession with Vheissu), a construct of epistemological uncertainty in *COL49* (Oedipa's discovery of the socially "underground" locales), a historic space wherein human destructiveness erased spatial structure in *GR* (the Zone), and a last refuge from State's totalizing control in *VNL* (Vineland County), becomes in his most "geographic" novel a space that the two protagonists engage with and create, the Visto demarcating the Line.

Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon are true creators of new space, a physical expression of colonial power. They are human, physical tools of territorialization: their mission is to divide space between two interested, mutually adverse parties (the British colonies) that reach for aid from scientific, discursively determined as correct, and therefore superior, power center back in the Old World. Representing the voice of reason of the British empire, the two surveyors come to America to continue the imperial appropriation of space by creating an enclosure, an official border where there was a continuum, a natural space. By cutting the Visto into the forests of Delaware and Maryland, and Pennsylvania and West Virginia, respectively, they turn what is a continent, and natural environment, into two plots of real estate: they provide a division of space into segmented territories bared to control by military, and political, power.

The concept of stratified space is alien to the landscape and the imperial imposition on the landscape is ridiculed in its solitary Line in the vastness of the continent: "a great invisible Thing that comes crawling Straight on over their Lands,

devouring all in its Path" (*M&D*, 678). Lefebvre puts into words what such a division of space does to a space that has been until then inhabited as environment: "Visible boundaries, such as walls or enclosures in general, give rise for their part to an appearance of separation between spaces where in fact what exists is an ambiguous continuity." (87).

Pynchon elaborates on the State war machine that ceases to posses physical quality but instead only expresses itself physically in space (as the Rocket in *GR*), a war machine that only needs the Line as a pure power conduit, re-presenting power in the landscape. The invisible Line is realized in physical space and bears its fundamental importance in confirming the meaning of the white man's appropriation of the land. It exemplifies and demonstrates the imperialist conquest, its imposition of organized boundary line (its *stratum*) onto the unclaimed, or sovereign (i.e. not-owned) landscape (*smooth* space).

> Does Britannia, when she sleeps, dream? Is America her dream?— in which all that cannot pass in the metropolitan Wakefulness is allow'd Expression away in the restless Slumber of these Provinces, and on West-ward, wherever 'tis not yet mapp'd, nor written down, nor ever, by the majority of Mankind, seen, […] winning away from the realm of the Sacred, its Borderlands one by one, and assuming them unto the bare mortal World that is our home, and our Despair. (*M&D*, 345)

Thus, it is both symptomatic and allegorical, that the Line is executed in physical space, as a materially construed boundary: the Visto clearing. Cutting the Visto through the forest between the two colonies is a brutally physical expression of construction-through-destruction:

> A tree-slaughtering Animal, with no purpose but to continue creating forever a perfect Corridor over the Land […] Haven't we been saying […] This is how far into your land we may strike, this is what we claim to westward. As you see what we may do to Trees, and how little we care,— imagine how little we care for Indians, and what we are prepar'd to do to you. […] We might make thro' your Nations an Avenue of Ruin, terrible as Path of a Whirl-Wind". (*M&D*, 678–679)

The duo's task is a literal translation of the Old World power expression in space (land ownership that immediately divides people into a few owners and a mass of dispossessed).

> The border the two surveyors identify, measure, and build at the cost of four years of their lives turns out to be the line that history names in their honor, thereby unexpectedly linking them forever to the tension between North-South, urban-agrarian, and freedom-slavery that explodes a century later in the Civil War. (Greiner, 78)

Lefebvre corroborates that after those who labor to produce space with their bodies are dissociated from it by the elites, natural space is carved out and emptied for the elites to fill it with power. "The dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power, endeavours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there." (49). Pynchon intensifies the spatial trope of dispossession of individuals by systemic institutionalized control expressed physically in the Visto. In comparison to his previous novels, this is a step in radicalization of message of concern for human interaction and the relationship between the dispossessed and disinherited facing the State as a societal organization.

If space was an active element informing Pynchon's characters in his previous novels (colonial discourse determining characters' epistemology in *V.*, real estate development expressing spatiality of expansive response to entropy in *COL49*, political or architectural intensity of the Zone and the Mittelwerke in *GR*, societal possibilities of Vineland or PREP camp in *VNL*), creating space is the subject-plot of the narrative in *M&D*. If the colonies, the Zone, or California's reality and its alternatives corroborate Pynchon's call for attention to the de-humanizing mechanisms of societal organization that systemically asserts its control over individuals, the Visto is the novel's *raison d'etre*, the gravitation center of the "small world" of the narrative, and its product.[79] In Pynchon's previous novels, characters live and die by, or engage space in, their epistemological uncertainty; in *M&D*, his protagonists create a new spatiality that they impose on the space, reifying their ontology in the "New" world. With such a production of space at hand, the Mason and Dixon of Pynchon's narrative *must* come to realize that they are in fact tools of the empire, physically introducing the lifeworld spatial form the State war machine has taken upon itself into the new environment. The concern for

---

[79] Schaub argues that the plot in *M&D* does not invite the reader to cooperation as strongly as in other novels, for it is known: "In *Mason & Dixon*, reader involvement with plot is largely absent because readers know the line was cut and drawn." (197) In that respect, the Line is truly the narrative's center and product at the same time, a "strange attractor," rather than "subject."

humanity is thus contextually radicalized as well: if the empire is the ultimate expression of power exertion over space, slavery is the most brutal version of institutionalized violence in the State war machine during peacetime. Pynchon's advocacy of the preterite, the disinherited, and the dispossessed intensifies with his outcry against (all forms of) slavery.

> The surveyors decide to discontinue the Line, to somehow prevent its movement westward, and Dixon, in a heroic though historically accurate act, threatens to thrash a slave conductor who is being violent towards the slaves. As their actions become oppositional to the world they have helped advance, and they reassert their "thoughts," they also conclude that America *could* have been different, exceptional, but it was not […] At this point, instead of the utopian space that was being imagined by the eager founders of the nation, America has become for Pynchon's Dixon a thing of the past, subjunctive. (García-Caro 2005, 121: emphasis original)

The concern for ontological spatiality (and epistemological spatial discourse) is voiced by various characters, contextualized in the idea of the New World offering an alternative to the mentality of imposition in the Age of Reason that ruthlessly dismantles all that does not align with the structure of power exertion through imperial expansion. The forceful imposition of the said mentality on space through physical expansion is unveiled to the naked eye, as the Visto cuts through the American Indian forest, disregarding landscape, and obliterating its features that cannot be subjected to the new structure. "The compulsion to map and measure, order and own, generates not reason but the forfeiture of dreams. The lie of Manifest Destiny is the result. What, Pynchon asks, is left for humanity in this Age of Enlightenment when all the vistas of possibility have been surveyed?" (Greiner, 79) On the other hand, Pynchon immediately mocks the gravity of the imposed division, finding at least one example where the Line cuts through a human bond with liberating power:

> Takes them less than a week to run the Line thro' somebody's House. […] "At 3 Miles 49 Chains, went through Mr. Price's House." […] "…Which sides to be Pennsylvania, by the way?" A mischievous glint in her eyes that Barnes, Farlo, Moses McClean and others will later all recall. […] "Husband, what Province were we married in? Ha! see him gape, for he cannot remember. 'Twas in Pennsylvania, my Tortoise. But never in Maryland. Hey? So from now on, when I am upon this side of the House, I am in Maryland, legally not your wife, and no longer subject to your Authority, […] (*M&D*, 446–447)

Its expansion is halted only when the Visto reaches the "Warrior-path," an ancient ley line that defines the smooth space in the landscape and represents a vestige of its natural force, a kernel of de-territorialization. This stops the State spatial discourse but the readers know it is only because the power structure of the Old World is but in its fledgling stage here. Stopping the progress of the Line westward acquires paramount importance: crossing the Warrior-path would not only create intersection (and thus a founding stone for a colonial city) but would also thrust a power-conduit into the western wilderness, unstoppable. The Line's ontology may threaten the ontology of the continent as a whole.

Where the Visto is already cut out from the forest, the *stratum* in the space perseveres. Theorizing the natural world in the allegory of the "Dragon," it is Cpt. Zhang who openly castigates the surveyor's endeavor as a violation of human interaction with space.

> "No one intends to live directly upon the Visto," Mason speaking as to a Child. "The object being, that the people shall set their homes to one side or another. That it be a Boundary, nothing more."
>
> "Boundary!" The Chinaman begins to pull upon his hair and paw the earth with brocade-slipper'd feet. "Ev'rywhere else on earth, Boundaries follow Nature,— coast-lines, ridge-tops, river-banks,—so honoring the Dragon or *Shan* within, from which the Land-Scape ever takes its form. To mark a right Line upon the Earth is to inflict upon the Dragon's very Flesh, a sword-slash, a long, perfect scar, impossible for any who live out here the year'round to see as other than hateful Assault. How can it pass unanswer'd?"
>
> This is the third continent he has been doing *Feng-Shui* jobs on, and he thought he'd seen crazy people in Europe, but these are beyond folly. (*M&D*, 542)

Such a mutilation of the landscape is a space produced by power (literally "carved out"), which makes for a lifeworld that intrinsically prevents human individuals to actualize themselves, setting them up for a failure to live-with the space they happen to physically occupy. It is because such a power-produced lifeworld is based solely on distantiation from the natural environment, it is structurally produced by mechanisms that create distance rather than bridge it. Visceral engagement by individuals with the goal of the actualization of their being in such a space is impossible – the only interaction with the "not-I" of the lifeworld is through power relations, with drastic ramifications to

structure of relationship to others (i.e., if the only available interaction to one's "not-I" is through power, becoming-through-others is obviated). In an admonishment against a dystopian future of the world following wholly the logic of enclosure, Pynchon lets his "Wolf of Jesus" character lecture that

> "The Model," the Wolf of Jesus addressing a roomful of students, "is Imprisonment. Walls are to be the Future. Unlike those of the Antichrist Chinese, these will follow right Lines. The World grows restless,— Faith is no longer willingly bestow'd upon Authority, either religious or secular. What Pity. If we may not have Love, we will accept Consent,— if we may not obtain Consent, we will build Walls. As a Wall, projected upon the Earth's Surface, becomes a right Line, so shall we find that we may shape, with arrangements of such Lines, all we may need, be it in a Crofter's hut or a great Mother-City,— Rules of Precedence, Routes of Approach, Lines of Sight, Flows of Power,— " (*M&D*, 522)

Strengthening his systemic nostalgia that started in *GR*'s Zone and was developed in the Vineland County in *VNL*, Pynchon notes on the present that was engendered in such past ideas as the one above. Pynchon has Wolf's opponent, Cpt. Zhang, explain the concept and give it a name:

> "To rule forever," continues the Chinaman, later, "it is necessary only to create, among the people one would rule, what we call…Bad History. Nothing will produce Bad History more directly nor brutally, than drawing a Line, in particular a Right Line, the very Shape of Contempt, through the midst of a People,— to create thus a Distinction betwixt 'em,— 'tis the first stroke.— All else will follow as if predestn'd, unto War and Devastation. (*M&D*, 615)

To counter the Bad History, Pynchon employs *the subjunctive*, an alternative in the "small world" of the narrative in *M&D*. Throughout the novel, the subjunctive world, the world of "if" within the narrative, comes as a recurring realm of alternative to the perceived reality, sometimes harboring mere personal wishful thinking, but more often caused by resistance to systemic control. A wonderful example of spatializing resistance to imposed chronology is Mason's experience of the subjunctive world in which "the fateful September of the Eleven Missing Days of the Calendar Reform of '52"[80] (*M&D*,

---

[80] The British Parliament's decision to align the calendar with astronomic data, accounting for growing error in dates, crafted in the novel as a source of anti-British, anti-government resentment: "'Those of us

554) is never forgotten and "later characteriz'd as 'brute Absence,' or 'a Tear thro' the fabric of Life'" (*M&D*, 555). The locale that proceeds to be the town of Stroud in Gloucestershire out of the "Loop of Eleven Days" is haunted by creatures that deny the Age of Reason, sinister inhabitants of the time's fantasies and fear "'Twas as if this Metropolis of British Reason had been abandon'd the Occupancy of all that Reason would deny. Malevolent shapes flowing in the Streets. Lanthorns spontaneously going out. Men roaring, as if chang'd to Beasts in the Dark. A Carnival of Fear." (*M&D*, 555). Yet it is here that Mason thrives and comes to realization the impossible is within reach. It is his belief in organized religion that brings him back to the government-imposed calendar time, filling him with grief for a lost "Chance that might have chang'd my Life," finding out that the specters he witnessed in the subjunctive world were in fact regular people who had moved ahead with the institutionalized calendar.

When faced with the possibility to cross the Warrior-path, the surveyors embrace the realization that their Visto as an expression of power crushes people's lives by either cutting through them (the Indians), or dividing them along the power-conduit of commodification (the colonists on either side of the Line). They invest themselves in the space viscerally, aiding the creation of the lifeworld where space-appropriation rules human interaction, but even more so when they decide *not* to continue to do so. The surveyors engage the space in their discourse initially subscribing to the imperial mentality of reason but depart from it and build on the possibility of the alternative in a dys/utopian concept, an alternative to the imperial conquest they discover they have been a part of all along. The narrator (no longer identified as Rev[d] Cherrycoke) entertains the subjunctive to the "real" "small world" of the narrative that Mason and Dixon then construe an image of a lifeworld, in which the Line would continue endlessly westwards (706–710). The possibility is hinted at earlier, for the westward thrust of the Line is read by the colonists as the infinite source of kabbalic knowledge, the mystery of the continent that whispers clues to the white man's self-exploration at a moment of appropriation of new space, "inasmuch as it may be read, East to West, much as a Line of Text upon a Page of the sacred Torah, […] 'Twill terminate somewhere to the West, no one, not even you [Dixon] and your Partner, knows where. An utterance. A Message of uncertain length …" (*M&D*, 487). However, following their own logic, the narrator suggests that the

---

born before that fateful September,' observes the Rev[d], 'make up a generation in all British History uniquely insulted, each Life carrying a chronologick Wound, from the same Parliamentary Stroke. […] We think of 'our' Time, being held, in whatever Time's equivalent to 'a Place' is, like Eurydice, somehow to be redeem'd.'" (*M&D*, 555)

surveyors conceive of the endless Line extending also back east, across the Atlantic and into the Old World. The endless Line concept is neither quite a non-place (for there is no physical antecedent to it, as is the case of the Mittelwerke in *GR*), nor a mere dys/utopian concept (since the western part of such a Line does exist, however finite):

> "Devise a way, […] to inscribe a Visto upon the Atlantick Sea." […] "A thoughtful Arrangement of Anchors and Buoys, Lenses and Lanthorns, forming a perfect Line across the Ocean, all the way from the Delaware Bay to the Spanish Extremadura,"— with a Solution to the Question of the Longitude thrown in as a sort of Bonus,— as, exactly at ev'ry Degree, might the Sea-Line […] be prominently mark'd, by a taller Beacon, or a differently color'd Lamp. In time, most Ships preferring to sail within sight of these Beacons, the Line shall have widen'd to a Sea-Road of a thousand Leagues, as up and down its Longitude blossom Wharves, Chandleries, Inns, Tobacco-shops, Greengrocers' Stalls, Printers of News, Dens of Vice, Chapels for Repentance, Shops full of Souvenirs and Sweets […] indeed, many such will decide to settle here, "Along the Beacons," for good, as a way of coming to rest whilst remaining out at Sea. (*M&D*, 712)

In their concept, an imagined space is conjured, delineating a lifeworld in which people can live *in* the division, occupying neither side of the Line but living in the Visto. At the same time, the Sea-Line concurrently defies the east—west division, making for a new de-territorialized locale in which the differences and disputes between the Old and the New World cease to apply. This is where Mason and Dixon dream they could retire, "neither feels British enough anymore, nor quite American […] They are content to reside like Ferrymen or Bridge-keepers, ever in a Ubiquity of Flow, before a ceaseless Spectacle of Transition" (*M&D*, 713). Thus they would reify the Line by their lives, spatially and with-out time[81]. The chronology, spatially expressed by westward motion, the search for originality in being, vested in one's struggle against one's limitation, is overcome.

> When the reductionist principle of origin-and-telos give way to an enchantment with the middle, the quest narrative turns into a peripatetic text-milieu (mi-lieu = middle-place). The literature of the middle replaces the methodology of beginning and ending with a tactics of proceeding. "American literature, and already English literature, manifest this [medial] direction to an ever greater extent; they know how to move between things,

---

[81] This is in direct opposition that Rev[d] Cherrycoke envisions should the Visto and the Warrior Path intersect: "Were the Visto to've crossed the Warrior Path and simply proceeded West, then upon that Cross cut and beaten into the Wilderness, would have sprung into being not only the metaphysickal Encounter of Ancient Savagery with Modern Science, but withal a civic Entity, four Corners, each with its own distinguishable Aims." (*M&D*, 650)

establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginning" (D&G, *TP* 25). (Hashhozheva, 138)

This dys/utopian concept opens, at least in the surveyors' minds, staggering possibilities for alternative principles of human interaction and societal organization, not based on commodification and exchange, and thus independent from the institutionalized violence that constitutes the State.[82]

On the other hand, the fact that the Visto must stop with respect to the Warrior-path, explores another subjunctive world, offers another alternative. It is a world without demarcation, division, and territorialization. Pynchon, favoring the subversive and preterite even under a systemized societal control, emphasizes the epistemological implications of that which resists ordering:

> If the line denotes a scientifically rationalized appropriation of the terrain that had already become actuality in the layout of Philadelphia, that which cannot be coerced into the rectangular grid takes on a sinister dimension. Surveying self-evidently privileges sight and conversely that which cannot be surveyed becomes the unseen. The Delaware Wedge, a small anomalous area left out of a survey, becomes another of Pynchon's symbolic areas of anarchy, a place hospitable to the unofficial transactions that the culture attempts to suppress. (Seed, 94)

In such a world, the divide between the "free" and the "slave" would not exist, allowing for individuals' responsibility for human interaction to not be derived from a spatial discourse of stratification (basis for societal organization as a system) but from that of individual ethical conduct. In so doing, Pynchon leaves the realm of mock eighteenth-century novel to make a point of pressing the reader as an individual to realize the mode of social interaction must derive from one's ethical judgment and conduct.

The imagined space is the basis for the subjunctive, for it provides a realm in which the lifeworld can withstand the pressure of the reality that has passed (as said above, the reader knows "the line was cut and drawn"), with its perceived chronological and causal inexorability, and entertain the liberty of the possible alternative(s). This is the core on which the dialogical discourse of post-modern narrative relies for its production

---

[82] Lefebvre corroborates: "Abstract space [what is termed "imagined space" in the present treatise of spatiality in a work of literary fiction], the space of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, bound up as it is with exchange […] depends on consensus more than any space before it. It hardly seems necessary to add that within this space violence does not always remain latent or hidden. One of its contradictions is that between the appearance of security and the constant threat, and indeed the occasional eruption, of violence." (57).

of aesthetic pleasure. The unreliability of any interpretation is anchored in the doubt that the reality in the "small world" of the narrative is imaged following principles of *mimēsis* that would make it an image of the readers' "real" world.[83] This, in turn, casts doubt onto the epistemology that informs actualization in the readers' "real" world or reality. This fuels the production of aesthetic pleasure.

5.1.6. Spatial Discourse(s): *Against the Day*

The shift from the subjunctive (or "counterfactual," as it is named in the novel, *AtD*, 9) materializes in Pynchon's—for the time being last—voluminous novel,[84] *AtD*. Pynchon departs from the systemic nostalgia, that is, from the usage of characters who construe dys/utopian alternatives to the "small world" of the narrative as mere concepts. Instead, the author entertains a full-fledged possibility of an alternative reality adjacent to the lifeworld that constitutes the narrative. In other words—while in his previous novels conspiracies, clues, wishes, and possibilities were hinted at, part of a characters' thought or utterance, and in that manner merely ephemeral—*AtD* unfolds an entire alternative ontology "parallel" to the world. This concerns all characters and space(s) in the book, starting with the socially alternative modes of being (anarchist existence of the Traverses, spiritual and scientific existence of the Golden Dawn, the subterfuge of Yashmeen) and ending, in its most extreme iteration, with the confounding yet splendid existence of the Chums of Chance. To be sure, the alternative ontology proves most explicit and yet most complicating: the Chums of Chance are literary characters others read *about*, yet they gradually interact with all major characters in the narrative, often representing a major force in the action that unfolds.

If in *COL49*, Jesús Arabal defines miracle as a rapture between the reality one lives with "the other world," the Chums of Chance have no such momentary limitation. Their being is cognitively blocked for others only insofar as these others allow the structure of their knowledge to dominate their sensoric input. "Seeing" the Chums of

---

[83] On the disprove of *mimēsis* as the method for how the "small world" of the narrative and works, see, for example, Doležel (2008), Cohn (1999), or Pavel (2000).

[84] It has been noticed that Pynchon possibly works on two novels at once, with the slimmer preceding the bulkier of the two. This seems plausible, with the exception of the last pair, in which the order of publication has been reversed. Thus after *V.* as the author's first, there would be these "pairs": *COL49* and *GR*, *VNL* and *M&D*, *AtD* and *Inherent Vice*. It could be corroborated by a body of arguably solid evidence – however, it would be just as interpretive as other approaches. This could prove fruitful in the analysis of Pynchon's works, for there are obvious inter-connections and in themes and tropes he uses. However, the current study attempts to point out an overall development in Pynchon's treatise on space and spatial discourse in his work as a whole.

Chance is a matter of belief, a state of innocence, or even better, a matter of widening one's epistemological horizon. If one transcends one's frame of reference based on experience, Chums of Chance and similar phenomena can enter one's understanding of the lifeworld.

This is supported by the elaboration Pynchon offers on double-refraction of light and theoretical mathematics providing possible multiple worlds[85]: "'Precisely!' cried the Professor. 'The Ripper's 'Whitechapel' was a sort of momentary antechamber in space-time … one might imagine a giant *railway-depot*, with thousands of gates disposed radially in all dimensions, leading to tracks of departure to all manner of alternate Histories. …" (*AtD*, 682). If it is possible, Pynchon suggests as a true luddite, to double a beam of light entering the "Iceland Spar" crystal, why, it is perfectly acceptable to conceive of another world, not necessarily merely alternative or adjacent to the one his characters live, but equal, parallel one (*AtD*, 355). That is why the T.W.I.T. organization (based on occult knowledge informed by tarot macro- and micro-cosmic epistemology) is just as relevant as the mathematicians in Göttingen, whose theories of multiple planes allow them to step in and out of unpredictable space (quaternion space vs. quotidian space, 592). Thus, time and space are mere axes for Dasein's being, and as with the space of "Eleven Days Calendar Reform of '52" in *M&D* (see above), and in the ensuing parallel structure, Pynchon unveils human being-in-the-world as the temporality of being-toward-death pitted against the spatial *haecceitas* of becoming-through-others:

> In *Against the Day*, a novel about anarchists—anarchy being a state without habits—and routinized state operators, as well as an extended meditation on the nature of waves|vibes, whether electrical, optical or historical, Pynchon brings the discussion of eigenvalues back to the moment of their conception, in a scene that has the fictional character Yashmeen Halfcourt discussing "'[t]he nontrivial zeroes of the ζ-function'" with Hilbert von Göttingen. … In the ensuing exchange, Yashmeen provides a term that relates mathematical eigenvalues both to the physical invariants that make up processual people (people with a "fluid Identity" [*M&D* 469]) and to the psychic invariants that make up what these people construct as their reality. [*AtD*, 604] (Berressem, 21)

---

[85] Why does Pynchon make such a big deal of quaternions and vectors in *Against the Day*? Possibly because they are so tied up with the changing notions of light, space, and time around the end of the 19th Century. An important theme in the history of science is that how we perceive our world is limited by how we can measure it, and what we can say about it (especially in terms of mathematics). The quaternionists' views of space and time were limited by the mathematical formalisms they were working with. Some of them speculated that the scalar (or w) term of a quaternion could be used somehow to represent time, while the three vector components covered 3-dimensional space, but this view treats time differently from how it would eventually be dealt with in the four-dimensional space-time of special relativity. (White, 2007)

It is only one's choice and acceptance that limits one's epistemology, and as a result, one's ability to perceive it. The spatial application of such a suggestion implies that dialogical discourse is no longer merely an option to conceptualize alternatives to the reality one lives – it is a necessity, responsibility, without which one's grasp of the lifeworld is ruefully incomplete, as if lacking one of the senses. This is the level to which "Bilocations" radicalize epistemological uncertainty Pynchon's characters were exposed to in his previous novels.

> Iceland spar is said to be nothing less than "'the sub-structure of reality,'" and remarkably its "curious advent into the world occurred within only a few years of the discovery of Imaginary Numbers, which also provided a doubling of the mathematical Creation" (AtD 133). The connection is strengthened even more in the description of the capabilities of Iceland spar: it "'is what hides the Hidden People, makes it possible for them to move through the world that thinks of itself as 'real,' provides that allimportant ninety-degree twist to their light, so they can exist alongside our own world but not be seen'" (AtD 134). Ninety degrees is also the angle by which the horizontal axis of real numbers in a geometrical coordinate system is turned as a result of multiplication with it, thereby creating the complex plane in which complex numbers can be visualized. Both Iceland spar and imaginary numbers make possible a "doubling of the Creation" (AtD 133) in separate yet closely related ways, and both demand an imagination of worlds from the reader of Against the Day while offering metaphors for this creative multiplication; the text itself becomes a complex plane. (Pöhlmann, 27)

Doubt and paranoia (in *V.*, *COL49*, or *GR*) as cognitive methods are not enough anymore: Pynchon presses the characters—and the reader—to cooperate and to exercise a dialectic of opposites and of alternatives at all times. However, it is not a mere juxtaposition, or balance of, opposites. Instead, Pynchon invokes the curvilinear space, which demands understanding of *continuity* rather than mere *opposition* (wave-particle argument). This corroborates the dominance of spatiality in the narrative (opposed to chronology), and the argumentation of spatial discourse as the mechanism of constructing lifeworld, and the processes of territorialization and de-territorialization of space:

> In *Against the Day*, the conversion of the smooth in the striated is also conceivable in the transformation of the manifold heterogeneity of "multiply-connected spaces" (AtD 136), i.e. Riemann manifolds, into the Euclidean metrics of suburban space as "a simply-

connected space with an unbroken line around it" (*AtD* 165). The closure of the frontier that marks the completion of the first gridding process also brings about the loss of interconnectedness, as the complex web of potentialities is reduced to distinctly isolated units: "The frontier ends and disconnection begins" (*MD* 53–54). (Haferkampf, 314)[86]

But this is a mere mechanism, not an agent in itself – the agency still lies with individual. In fact, the individuals are pushed, exposed, and forced to face the dialectic on their own, rarely with help or support from anyone or anything who is a "not-I" (i.e., another individual whose account offers reliance, or a systemic approach that offers ideological explanations).[87]

The reason for this twofold pressure (that of necessity for dialectical cognition and the agency forced upon the individual only) is fueled by Pynchon's outcry for accepting one's responsibility: responsibility not only for actions but also for their ramifications, ethically a much more complex and difficult endeavor, echoing his previous debate on karmic balance (spelled out in *GR*, *VNL* but alluded to in all his work) or ethical aspect of Dasein's care for its being. Even if time is theorized as a dimension (spatially), the synchronic nature of such concept does not erase ethical judgment. Quite on the contrary,

---

[86] Haferkampf's uses Deleuze and Guattari's concept of smooth and striated space that is used in the present work, but it, however, omits the ethical concern for being-with (or becoming-through) ramifications for the Dasein that Pynchon expresses in all his work. Thus she builds on Deleuze and Guattari's claim of continuity and co-agency of territorialization and de-territorialization only systemically, without the implications for individual being in a society.

> When Deleuze and Guattari reference Riemann space, they treat it as a mathematical model that corresponds to their idea of the smooth and the striated. From their philosophical perspective, the German mathematician Bernhard Riemann is ascribed a crucial role, for his focus on multiplicity "mark[s] the end of dialectics and the beginning [begin 314] of a typology and topology of multiplicities" (483). In this context, striated space is based on multiplicities of magnitude "that distribute constants and variables" and, therefore, is metric, whereas smooth space that depends upon multiplicities of distance "inseparable from a process of continuous variation" (Deleuze and Guattari 483) is nonmetric. Riemann space as smooth space is the accumulation of "patches of space," it consists of a heterogeneous multiplicity of "shred[s] of Euclidean space" and is best defined as "an amorphous collection of pieces that are juxtaposed but not attached to each other" (Deleuze and Guattari 485), thus allowing for ambiguity in the spaces between. (Haferkampf, 313–314)

[87] Pynchon invokes theoretical mathematics locked in the wave-particle argument. The nontrivial zeroes are part of the debate between Hilbert and Riemann. However, with the double-refraction and the emphasis on ethical judgment informing one's epistemological limitations, opposites are balanced and it is choices that individuals make to create their lifeworld:

> Although all materials have eigenfrequencies, only living systems are what is called, in cybernetics and systems theory, eigenorganizations. Eigenorganizations, which show both physical eigencharacteristics (*Eigenschaften*) and psychic eigenbehaviors (*Eigenverhalten*) within their specific eigenspaces, are the result of computational habits, recursive functional|formal operations|iterations that reproduce the same value on every reentry into the system's underlying formalism(s). Cybernetically, they are strange attractors; biologically, they are what Maturana and Varela call "autopoietic systems," living units that are, according to the fundamental split the theory of autopoiesis introduces into the system of life, informationally|operationally closed off from the world, but simultaneously, energetically open to that world, if it is understood not as the one they construct but as the one in which and with which they are constructed and in which their living unfolds and is realized. (Berressem, 17)

Pynchon employs such convergence to emphasize the importance (and radicalize his call for) ethical accountability, responsibility to Dasein: "'Political space has its neutral ground. But does Time? is there such a thing as the *neutral hour*? one that goes neither forward nor back? is that too much to hope?" (*AtD*, 577) Pynchon promotes Dasein's becoming-through-others in an argument against being-towards-death that justifies exploitation of the "not-I" in order to perpetuate oneself, even if for one's survival. That is what Pynchon might be alluding to in the very title of the novel.[88]

> "Think about it," when the remarks had faded some, "like Original Sin, only with exceptions. Being born into this don't automatically make you innocent. But when you reach a point in your life where you understand who is fucking who—beg pardon, Lord—who's taking it and who's not, that's when you're obliged to choose how much you'll go along with. If you are not devoting every breath of every day waking and sleeping to destroying those who slaughter the innocent as easy as signing a check, then how innocent are you willing to call yourself? It must be *negotiated with the day*, from those absolute terms." (*AtD*, 87, italics mine)

There is an arbitrariness embedded in the dialectic ontology of the Chums of Chance in relation to the "real" characters in the "small world" of the narrative in *AtD*. Since the Chums are—to other characters in the novel—literary characters of youth's adventure comic books but at the same time interact with the "real" characters, and some of them even partake on their journeys, the boundary between the reality of the "small world" of the narrative and the literary "fiction" thereof is blurred to say the least. It invites doubt, and permeation to the intriguing level that brings forth the dialectic and requires readers' cooperation, much like the Chums' existence requires epistemological shift from the characters.

> This ontological complexity is also reinforced by the narrator, who reminds readers of the fictional status of the Chums by quoting the title of an earlier novel he wrote about them (AtD 1019), as if it were necessary at this point to make sure the Chums are not mistaken for an entirely "real" set of characters within Against the Day itself. Their ontological status remains suspended; on the one hand, they really are characters of a series of books of young adult fiction, on the other hand, it is possible for them to confront other characters in the world of Against the Day like Lew [Basnight, or Reef Traverse reading

---

[88] At the same time, obviously, a plethora of interpretations is available for the title. Those include biblical references, tribute to T.S. Eliot, and of course Thelonious Monk's quote that starts the novel: "It's always night, or we wouldn't need light."

one of their books while traveling with his father's body], and to question them about their reading habits (Pöhlmann, 31)

Pynchon thus abandons the description of how epistemological uncertainty *affects* his characters (Stencil in *V.*, Oedipa in *COL49*, Slothrop in *GR*, Frenesi in *VNL*) and instead demonstrates how it *constitutes* them.

The said radicalization of his call for ethical responsibility corresponds with the intensification with which characters invest themselves in the space of their lifeworld and with which they delve into the lifeworld's underbelly. *V.* features Benny Profane descending to the sewers under the streets of New York City; in *COL49*, Oedipa discovers a social underground in L.A.; *GR* shows Slothrop wandering the undefined space of the Zone and visiting the Stollen in the Mittelwerke; in *VNL* the social outcasts reach under the facades of the '80s U.S. to find a promise under its surface in mythological Vineland; Mason and Dixon feel the smooth space of the continent under the Line – but in *AtD*, most characters start off as social outcasts and they continuously live "underground" hiding from agents of capitalist law enforcement (without being "schlemiels," rather workers with families and lives), they blast tunnels under mountain masses, or even leave the "skyspace" to travel underground in search for locales promising redemption.

Webb Traverse's union card spells out his avenue to anarchism, which is at the core of the novel's argument of the transformation of the U.S. Civil War into the war of the dispossessed against the oppressive plutocracy. "'Labor produces all wealth. Wealth belongs to the producer thereof.' Straight talk. No double-talking you like the plutes do, 'cause with them what you always have to be listening for is the opposite of what they say. […] Frank had always taken Webb for what he appeared to be—an honest, dedicated miner, exploited to the last, who never got but a fraction of what his labor was worth." (*AtD*, 93) His view is quickly elevated to a systemic commentary that translates into the striated space as power-relations divide the socius:

> […] what he could begin to see was that both sides in this were organized, it wasn't just
> unconnected skirmishing, a dynamite blast here and there, a few shots from ambush—it
> was a war between two full-scale armies, each with its chain of command and long-term
> strategic aims—civil war again, with the difference now being the railroads, which ran
> out over all the old boundaries, redefining the nation into exactly the shape and size of the
> rail network, wherever it might run to. […] American geography had gone all peculiar,

> and what was he supposed to be doing stuck out here in Colorado, between the invisible
>
> forces, half the time not knowing who hired him or who might be fixing to do him up …
>
> (*AtD*, 177)

The new striated space of capitalist production is bereft of the potential humanity that was once promised by industrialization and urbanization.

> So the city became the material expression of a particular loss of innocence—not sexual
>
> or political innocence but somehow a shared dream of what a city might at its best prove
>
> to be—its inhabitants became, and have remained, an embittered and amnesiac race,
>
> wounded but unable to connect through memory to the moment of the injury, unable to
>
> summon the face of their violator. (*AtD*, 153)

Pynchon's emphasis on material, systemic, and societal "waste" becomes a center of the "small world" of the narrative in *AtD*, thus clarifying his message on preterition. In other words, while his previous novels exposed his characters to the underground, in *AtD* he makes that a point of departure, a central milieu from which his narrative only branches out. This is true of almost all characters, plots and sub-plots in the book. The scientific progress is viewed from the perspective of competition and underhand practices (Heino Vanderjuice commissioned to invent a counter-transformer, to undo Dr. Tesla's plan to supply free power to all the world), the political development is marked with subterfuge activity of agents, assassins, and spies, socio-economic relations attain grimness for they are seen by the disinherited and oppressed (miners and unionists fighting their employers, even tycoon's success is revealed to be derived from a mysterious cunning of Foley Walker's head injury, itself a proof of dispossession of life and death from an individual).

Thus it comes as no surprise that the spatiality unfolding in the course of the narrative reaches to more extreme measures that are both mockingly overdone (through the allusion to the adventure-book genre) and alerting the reader to the exorbitant amount of cooperation, should one try to "order" the distances between the "real" lifeworld of the novel's characters and the fictional accounts of its alternatives.[89] This also suggests how the development of characters in space (in city and war-mongering in Europe as striated space, and in desert, prairie, taiga as smooth space) determines how the distance grows in

---

[89] To that end, Pynchon once again employs a variety of tropes and sometimes even narrative techniques identified as adventure, spy, or scientific romance, novels, paying homage to such giants of the time as Jules Verne, H.G. Wells, and others.

individual's life. On one hand, commodification distantiates the individual in the boundless capitalist exploitation of resources (both human and material) from one's care for one's being (Dasein). On the other, avenues for visceral investment in smooth space offer possibilities for actualization in ethical being. The former drives dissenters underground, the latter open lines of flight from systems of control and dispossession of individuals. This is iterated in the anarchists' flight from the U.S. (during which Reef Traverse flees to Europe to blast Alpine tunnels).

> … as if there had once been a joyous mythical time of American Anarchism, now facing its last days […] everywhere it was run, Anarchist, run, the nation allowing itself to lapse into another cycle of Red Scare delusion as it had done back in the '70s in reaction to the Paris Commune. But as if, too, there might exist a place of refuge, up in the fresh air, out over the sea, someplace all the Anarchists could escape to, now with the danger so overwhelming, a place readily found even on cheap maps of the World, some group of green volcanic islands, each with its own dialect, too far from the sea-lanes to be of use as a coaling station, lacking nitrate sources, fuel deposits, desirable ores either precious or practical, and so left forever immune to the bad luck and worse judgment infesting the politics of the Continents—a place promised to them, not by God, which'd be asking too much of the average Anarchist, but by certain hidden geometries of History, which must include, somewhere, at least at a single point, a safe conjugate to all the spill of accursed meridians, passing daily, desolate, one upon the next. (*AtD*, 372–373)

The prime example of this process is Kit Traverse's education and flight from the socially inexorable reality, assuming spatialized mathematical and mythical contours: first studying electricity under Nicola Tesla in Colorado, then at Yale, or vectors at Göttingen, he realizes his journey through institutionalized education is but a doomed attempt at an escape from guilty knowledge:

> Kit had sold himself a bill of goods, come to believe that Göttingen would be another step onward in some journey into a purer condition, conveniently forgetting that it was still all on the Vibe ticket, paid for out of the very account whose ledger he most wished to close and void, the spineless ledger of a life once unmarked but over such a short time broken, so broken up into debits and credits and too many details left unwritten. And Göttingen, open to trespass by all manner of enemies, was no longer a refuge, nor would Vectors ever have been Kit's salvation. (*AtD*, 675)

Kit's journey east to Inner Asia ceases to be in the dimensions of physical, quotidian, reality – rather, it transforms itself into a search for ethical ground that would allow him to cope with the quilt generated by the remorse for abandoning his father's principles (and his father) to satisfy his hunger for knowledge. The radicalization of his character, or rather crystallization of Pynchon's point in Kit's case of guilt is in this discernable shift: while Slothrop in *GR* could have been paranoid because he had been abused and commodified for research, while Frenesi could have blamed the camera lens and sexual desire for losing sight of her ethical judgment, or while Mason and Dixon came to realize that they were serving the inanimate imperial expression of power, Kit—despite his young age—must face his decisions, and the ethical ramifications they bring, from the very outset. He may be in denial of who Scarsdale Vibe is and how his support translates into the overall machinations of people but because of his intelligence, Kit is never spared the suspicion and the realization comes swiftly and mercilessly. The character is turned into a fugitive from his self-accusation. Pynchon leaves no room for selective ignorance indulging in a fake innocence: Kit's mind may be intoxicated with the staggering possibilities of vectors and technological advances but is not allowed to be clouded against ethical judgment. This is why his journey east in search for Shambhala is not so much a quest for discovery, but it is rather his flight from guilt and search for redemption (this is where his path crosses with Fleetwood Vibe's, son of the evil tycoon, seeking self-destruction in an attempt to pay for his father's sins).

Similarly, Pynchon's radicalization (or maturity of ideas) of spatiality in the "small world" of the narrative in *AtD* brings forth the ethical growth of Yashmeen Halfcourt. In her character, Pynchon as if returns to "lady V" after the travails of his female characters. In *COL49*, Oedipa attains understanding only after she sheds certainty of knowledge, in *GR*, Katje Borgesius achieves a ghost of redemption only after she loses her individuality in the S&M role-play of Hansel and Gretel orchestrated by Weissmann/Blicero and her humanity in White Visitation embodying the Queen of Night/War in Pointsman sick control, and in *VNL*, Frenesi fails to return to her ethical identity altogether, with the only glimpse of hope resting on her daughter Prairie. In Yashmeen's incessant move, Pynchon lets the character go from a medium in T.W.I.T.'s occult practices to mathematic genius spy in Göttingen (searching for the quaternion weapon, 591–592) to a companion of the Traverses (as Reef's lover), providing them with human support, feminine wisdom, and emotional replenishment (especially to Cyprian, her homosexual platonic lover, who can, through the love to her, and her

requited understanding of his biological "bilocation," leave the world of espionage and imperial play with pawns). It is in this transformation in *AtD* that the reader can see Pynchon's coming to terms with the ethical maxims, expressed on the spatial togetherness of the socius, that he laid out on the outset of his work. The female protagonist is no longer an enigmatic power bent on bringing apocalypse through individual men (by sexual desire) or entire empires (by the craft of misinformation). In *AtD*, Yashmeen discovers her ethical self, and gets a family as a reward—reunited with her father, Auberon Halfcourt, mothered a baby daughter to Reef Traverse (*AtD*, 974–975).

Pynchon suggests that becoming-through-others allows for self-actualization in space more reliably than being-in-the-world at the others' expense. It is because the world one actualizes oneself in is the world one lives (i.e., lifeworld), not an empty space to be filled with one's being. The ethically balanced Dasein is necessarily spatial and synchronic, deriving from the event of the nodal point of intensity, the *haecceitas* of a lifeworld.

Pynchon corroborates this with the alternative, mentioned above (see Weissmann/Blicero or Scarsdale Vibe). In the being-in-the-world, which is diachronic and requires using others as means of postponing one's entropic end (i.e., being-toward-death), the Dasein no longer cares for being as such, for the other. Such being still cares for itself (it *is* ontologically) but the result is hollow, painful realization of solitude that cannot be breached: one's suffering and death are events that are with-out time, and unshareable. This is what consumes Scarsdale Vibe when he realizes that his merciless self-perpetuation (autopoietic as it is) has destroyed the one possibility for actualization, his relationship to the "not-I," his surrogate dead Foley Walker. Because this bond is broken (Walker shrinks from Vibe, realizing that his affinity to the tycoon is based on the dispossession of his life, when he had been sent to die instead of Vibe in the Civil War), Scarsdale Vibe now sees his life as being-toward-death only (much like Pierce Inverarity, or Weissmann/Blicero), with entropy increasing and his autopoiesis failing. It is, therefore, inevitable that Foley Walker is the one who kills Scarsdale Vibe in the end. The same hollowness is shown in the Frank's execution of revenge for his father's death. When he kills Sloat Fresno, he immediately realizes how little it means for him, once it is done.

> *Fín*. A prolonged and shallow-breathing stillness of burnt powder, smoke rising, ears
> humming, black Mexican eyeballs seemingly bent upon the newly inducted member of

> the dead, though everybody would recognize Frank if they saw him again, in case
> anybody came around to ask in the proper way. […]
> Ah, shit.
> This had been so quick, even, you could say, easy. You could. He would soon begin to
> understand how it all might turn, was already, well before he had the godforsaken little
> town at his back, turning, to regret. (*AtD*, 395–396)

Parallel to Yashmeen's, Foley Walker's, and Kit's (or even his brothers) transformation from the commodified mode of being (Yashmeen as a medium and a spy, Walker as a surrogate conscript, Kit as a Faustian sell-out genius and Reef and Frank as deliverers of a failed vendetta), the Chums of Chance unfold in the course of the novel from youthful adventurers happily ignorant of the real nature of the "Command," and of their missions, into a community that take their destiny into their own hands. This is represented by their gradual ability to navigate higher, faster, or deeper into the different dimensions outside of any worldly control's jurisdiction.

The seductive realm of Candlebrow U., offering perpetual youth and travel in time (the Chums go to the campus to attend a conference on the very topic, initially), is gradually revealed as a snare of the Trespassers from the future who yearn for the innocence—or, rather, ethical mode of being—of the Chums (see above). It is only the Chums' responsibility to one another as a socius and acceptance of the care for their being (ontological being of Dasein) with its limitation (its finitude of death) that saves them from this spiritual commodification.

In a way, the Chums get to follow Webb Traverse's maxim against exploitation of labor (see above), and with every adventure or explored realm, the technicity of their "counterfactual" voyage—defined by their ability to reach farther beyond the framework of the quotidian reality—advances. If their initial cheerful adventures make them heroes in the eyes of dime novel readers, their ability to save themselves from such imagined locales as the Candlebrow U. thanks to the integrity of their companionship and responsibility toward their mode of being elevate them to the status of heroes who truly stand against the day.

If imagined space was both explored as dys/utopian concepts (Vheissu in *V.*, Raketenstadt in *GR*, Thanatoid Village in *VNL*, or the subjunctive endless Visto in *M&D*) or as non-places anchored in real sites but offering possibilities for stratification (Foppl's farm-fortress in the African Südwest in *V.*, Fangoso Lagoons development in *COL49*, the Zone and the Stollen in the Mittelwerke in *GR*, Vineland County in *VNL*, or St. Helene

and Cape Colony in *M&D*) in Pynchon's previous novels, the technicity of bilocation that arises from the double-refraction and the complex ontology of the Chums of Chance unite the planes of "reality" of the lifeworld in *AtD*. In other words, while in his earlier novels Pynchon employs characters' unreliable accounts (dreams, delusions, drug-induced cognitive enhancement), in *AtD* the "imagined" converges with the "reality" of the "small world" of the narrative.

Thus, while historic sites, especially cities such as Chicago, Venice, or Göttingen, figure in the novel, they represent nodal points of intensity, in which individuals can, informed by their ethical judgment, glimpse at avenues of de-territorialization. It is looking at Chicago that the Chums can see (and visualize for the reader) the ultimate expression of the striated space—the grid of the city streets in the U.S.:

> Beneath the rubbernecking Chums of Chance wheeled the streets and alleyways in a Cartesian grid, sketched in sepia, mile on mile. "The Great Bovine City of the World," breathed Lindsay in wonder. Indeed, the backs of cattle far outnumbered the tops of human hats. From this height it was as if the Chums, who, out on adventures past, had often witnessed the vast herds of cattle adrift in ever-changing cloudlike patterns across the Western plains, here saw that unshaped freedom being rationalized into movement only in straight lines and at right angles and a progressive reduction of choices, until the final turn through the final gate that led to the killing-floor. (*AtD*, 10)

The smooth space, on the other hand, is unencumbered by the limits of the quotidian space, its accessibility is no longer subjunctive (or counterfactual). The imagined locales coalesce with real sites, rendering the whole "small world" of the narrative a non-place. This transpires in plain view, where an ultimate "rupture" between the imagined space and the lifeworld happens: the Tunguska Event. It is now that the Chums see, and are visible by, anyone ready to accept their ontology in their epistemology. And if one can accept the Chums of Chance, why, Pynchon shows, redemption is right at hand, and Shambhala is no longer a myth of spiritual redemption but a part of the reality of one's lifeworld.

> In the pale blue aftermath [of the Tunguska Event], the first thing they noticed was that the city below was not the same as the one they had arrived at the night before. The streets were all visible now. […]
> "Shambhala," cried Miles, and there was no need to ask how he knew—they all knew. For centuries the sacred City had lain invisible, cloaked in everyday light, sun-, star-, and

moonlight, the campfires and electric torches of desert explorers, until the Event over the Stony Tunguska, as if those precise light-frequencies which would allow human eyes to see the City had finally been released. What it would take the boys longer to understand was that the great burst of light had also torn the veil separating their own space from that of the everyday world, their protection lost, and no longer able to count on invisibility before the earthbound day. (*AtD*, 793)

Alas, it is the same moment at which humanity turned away from the possibility and instead delved into the "disaster somewhere ahead" of the Great War (ibid.). Pynchon's systemic nostalgia catches up with his radicalized call for ethical judgment that would allow for the Dasein to become-through-others of Jean-Luc Nancy and avoid Heidegger's being-toward-death. The spatial discourse that demands synchronic ontology and dialogical epistemology alerts the reader to the always-present (in terms of event) alternative.

While control is being physically imposed by stratification (grids of streets in the U.S., railroad networks all over the world) and territorialization executed by the State war machine reaches out from its center to the peripheries, the smooth space is no longer enclosed as the dys/utopian (in *V.*, *COL49*, or *GR*), the mythical (in *VNL*), or the subjunctive (in *M&D*). Instead, smooth space and potential of de-territorialization dawns at the characters (and the reader) as an alternative to reality of their lifeworld contingent only on their own, self-imposed epistemological limitation. The agency that triggers one's delimitation is informed by ethical judgment, once it is recognized as the mechanism for one's actualization in the world: "Maybe it's not the world, but with a minor adjustment or two it's what the world might be." (*AtD*, front flap of the dust jacket)

6. CONCLUSION

Pynchon's work constitutes a monument in American post-modern fiction writing of the twentieth- and of the twenty-first centuries. If his earlier novels mark a resolute divorce from modern fiction, it is because Pynchon defined, in his novels, many features that make a work post-modern. With *GR* as one of the most prominent expressions of, and, at the same time, a cornerstone of the literary era, Pynchon's work does away with modernist concepts of characters, plots, and narratives ordered according to a discernible, cohesive structure. With his novels, fiction writing as well as literary criticism had to re-establish themselves in respect to what is possible.

The easily recognizable features that qualify his earlier novels as post-modern are: (1) destroying literary characters as centers of the unfolding of the narrative; (2) doing away with vestiges of the unities of time, space, plot and chronological order of the narrative, surviving from modernist writing revolution; (3) dismantling monological approach to meaning; and (4) shattering unity of any one narrative technique. Pynchon replaces these with: (1) myriads of ephemeral characters whose unreliability infests not only the characters' relevance to the narrative but also their very ontology; (2) constructions of unity erected by the characters but simultaneously jeopardized in the narrator's voice, fragmentation of any temporality that would anchor rational possibilities of causality, employing instead contingency, accidents, and paranoid connectivity; (3) epistemological uncertainty that demands his characters to doubt the world around them and the very potential of their knowledge thereof, which in turn results in demanding the narrative voice to retreat from a knowledgeable position in the "small world" of the narrative and the reader to question the applicability of tests of validity thereof; and (4) outbursts of manifold genres intersected and used parallel to each other – resulting in a technique that switches linguistic, as well as structural, mechanics of narration.

The present work employs a methodology that relies on inter-textual comparison of the individual novels, which results, in effect, in an intra-textual comparison, for all Pynchon's works are taken and understood as a part of a single *oeuvre*, a unity that can be treated as a coherent, self-structuring, and self-implicating, whole. This reliance is, methodologically speaking, in opposition to attempts to contextualize Pynchon's works with other authors. It adheres to the humility that a post-modern text provokes – the humility that, if not exercised, renders critical reading self-deluded as it instead often

chooses to impose an ordering and construction of meaning external to, and ultimately not supported by, the text. The manifold nature of techniques, themes, and plots then produces a delusion that the text can mean, indeed, anything.

However, the rather strict adherence to intra-textual comparison (that is, based on the point of departure that the novels together constitute a coherent oeuvre that can be treated as a self-referential whole) allows for the concept of internal development in the author's individual narratives, which proves that there is a discernible continuity in his oeuvre – an identifiable message that reverberates in recurring motifs, themes, technique, and structure. Pynchon's effort to distinguish his work from that of modernist writing is not a self-serving exercise to prove his mastery and transcendence of modernist fiction writing by dismantling it. If his work seems to resist reductionist explanations and frustrate categorizing typologies and technical analyses, it does let the reader identify a humanistic concern for individuals and interpersonal relationships in a society in which systemic control and means of physical obliteration of the living by the mechanisms that are beyond any individual's reach have been perfected.

It is this concern for humanity that strives to bring forth humanist concern about coexistence of individuals in a society that has witnessed—and arguably allowed—killings by weapons of mass destruction, enslavement of entire generations for ideological reasons, and organized dispossession of whole populations.

While Pynchon's effort to obfuscate attempts that would lock his work into a designated literary category is successful, it failed in a way, for it created a category on its own. Pynchon criticism attests to this fact: while until the 1970s (with *GR* published in 1973, and *VNL* following only in 1984) his work was hailed as the epitome of post-modern fiction, defining the era in its transcendence of modernist writing (cf., for example, Mendelson, Tanner, or Levine), his later works were already received with an unmesmerized mixture of approval and disdain, showing the critics' growing experience with Pynchon's work as well as the works of his contemporaries and successors (Vonnegut, De Lillo, Edgers, or Wallace, to name a few).

It is remarkable, however, that only in the most recent readings (namely after the publication of *AtD* in 2006 by such critics as Berressem, Dalsgaard) can one find an intra-textual comparison of multiple works as a methodological approach. Until this very recent critical development, Pynchon's oeuvre was dealt with either completely separately (hence the abovementioned success at defying categorization) or within the

context of other authors' production (Toni Morrison, William Gaddis).[90] This is why the present work attempts to address critically Pynchon's oeuvre precisely by relying solely on his works, avoiding arguably fruitful, yet somewhat methodologically less purist, comparison with other texts.[91] The comparisons may yield interesting insights that would seem to shed light (and order) on often tangled, fragmented narratives with plots multiplied to a fault. However, that would ignore precisely the modernism-defying stance Pynchon has been identified with: to frustrate attempts at categorization and to defy ordering, limiting, monological interpretation of the text.[92] In other words, the kind of text which frustrates the readers' effort to impose an order, the text in which structure is denied by the situation (or, rather, constellation), wherein the diachronic and monological are subverted by the synchronic and dialogical – the "lazy machine" of a text that was identified in all Pynchon's works. It is, therefore, only through a humble tone that the present work suggests approaching Pynchon's oeuvre *as a whole* that has its own thematic, situational coherence. Thus, the interpretation that rests on a discernible, gradual development that opens itself to the reader. The methodology then rests in identifying the use of recurring tropes and iterations of themes and motifs, and readings thereof within the scope of the author's entire oeuvre as a "single text."

Only insofar as one adheres to the intra-textual comparison is it possible to recognize development marked by intensification in tropes (imagined and physical space, characters embodying juxtaposed modes of being-in-the-world), motifs (such as dispossession, loss of innocence, increase of ordering, growth of epistemological uncertainty), and metaphors or allegories (of the profane and sacred; of individual disentanglement from societal mechanisms of control; of the imposition of meaning onto reality, that is, the lifeworld). This development may seem multifarious, yet the present work strives to demonstrate that it is driven, or rather, it actively encompasses, an effort to draw attention to the ethical aspect of individual being-in-the-world.

[90] As Erik Roraback in his review of Pynchon's *oeuvre* notes: "A scholar's imaginative energy must go into Pynchon's work to an unusual extent and the same goes for the general reader; curiously, Pynchon is perhaps even more popular outside of the academy than within it (a distinction that he shares with Toni Morrison 1931-present)." (Roraback, 2011)
[91] If the presented central focus of Pynchon's oeuvre lies in synchronic spatiality accentuating ethical aspect of individual's being-in-the-world, the most provocative comparison would perhaps come from Kipling, Conrad, Melville, Henry James, and Faulkner.
[92] If Pynchon's "admitted" inspirations are T.S. Eliot, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Jack Kerouac, and indebtedness to Vladimir Nabokov, it is fair to ask whether such a "confession" in his singular (that is, almost the only one available) self-critiquing piece of writing, i.e., the "Introduction" to *Slow Learner* (1985), is not yet another ruse employed to serve the overarching method – to frustrate attempts at delineating categorization of his writing. In other words, it may prove specious to rely on a single, self-deriding critique with a clearly tongue-in-cheek tone.

This work argues that such an ethical aspect is the focal point of Pynchon's text, wherein individuals facing systemic (or inanimate) pressure of societal organization beyond individual reach must make choices that are not only informed by, but that also shape, the world. Thus, Pynchon arguably emphasizes the ethical responsibility for the world co-created by the individuals' actualization in it.

Along with the intensification of tropes comes a radicalization of the tone, a clarification of message, and an extremization of ontological aspects that Pynchon's narrative grows from. If a polarity of ontological modes of being is discernible in his earlier works (schlemiel versus spy in *V.*, development of the protagonist in *COL49*), it crystallizes into a set of binary oppositions later on (juxtaposing, among others, Slothrop against Weissmann/Enzian/Tchitcherine in *GR*, hippies against fascist police officers in *VNL*, explorers against conquerors in *M&D*) and assumes allegorical force in the latest big novel (sculpting unparalleled capitalist growth against the dispossession of workers, but also cynicism against ethical integrity in *AtD*). In parallel, his earlier novels problematize epistemology, (or interpretation of reality as a text), while his later novels pose a sharply polarized dialogue of the nature of the lifeworld. Following the final trajectory of development of his works, it can be argued that, if imagined spaces and utopias blur the ontology of locales and characters living in them in the earlier triangulations of his narrative space (colonies in *V.*, social space in *COL49*, the Zone and Mittelwerke in *GR*, or the Vineland County in *VNL*), they coalesce into a vertiginous manifold reality in his later ones (the subjunctive space of the Visto in *M&D*, and the bilocations in *AtD*).

It could be noted that the present work does exactly what Pynchon arguably set out to defy in his writing: imposing a meaning and an order on the text based on a single unifying, simplifying principle that encompasses, anchors, and explicates all. However, the methodology employed in the present work, with the rather strict adherence to intra-textual comparison (as long as Pynchon's oeuvre is considered a whole, a single text) identifies patterns only when they occur repeatedly in varied iterations lies in the suggestion of development allowing for interpretation, not an over-arching imposition of a singular explanatory model resulting in a sterile typology. The edifice of meaning in the text is thus not founded on a single work that may offer—but would not, ultimately, sufficiently support—one particular interpretive reading. Instead, interpretation relies on the structural tension that a possible meaning within the entire *oeuvre* exhibits precisely by following the differences among the iterations, discernible *between* the individual

works. To be sure, it results still in an interpretation, a particular reading, far removed from a troubled and troublesome quest for some authorial intention. Despite frequent formulations in this work attributing agency to "Pynchon," it is ultimately the narrative that the present work alludes to and draws from: the "lazy machine" requiring a reader's cooperation to create meaning, rather than providing one.

This work attempts to offer an interpretation of Pynchon's work that is based on a reading of his individual novels as an oeuvre, with the reader's respect to its complexity, but arguing against the uninformed bafflement that the dazzling richness, which these narratives abound with, may affect the readers' response (i.e., cooperation on constructing meaning). It strives to show that within all the well-orchestrated, yet seemingly cacophonous text, that has been often read as quite full of noise just for volume's sake, there is a set of themes (as well as tropes, metaphors, and motifs) that are discernible, and communicate to the reader a profoundly intensive humanistic plea for ethical responsibility anchored by an individual's care for one's being-in-the-world. The present work is an attempt to bring to the table of interpretation the idea that the reader's cooperation with Pynchon's text is well worth the effort, for it yields not only aesthetic pleasure but also ethical call-to-arms. This, in turn, may result in an awareness of how crucial it is, in the post-modern world of control perfected to stay beyond human reach, to "be cool but care." (*V.*, 406)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources:

Pynchon, T. *Against the Day*. The Penguin Press. New York. 2006

Pynchon, T. *Gravity's Rainbow*. Penguin Books. New York. 2000

Pynchon, T. *Slow Learner. Early Stories*. Back Bay Books/Little, Brown and Company. New York. 1985

Pynchon, T. *Mason & Dixon*. Henry Hold and Company. New York. 1997

Pynchon, T. *The Crying of Lot 49*. Perennial Classics. New York. 1999

Pynchon, T. *V.*. First Harper Perennial Modern Classics. New York. 2005

Secondary sources:

Ajvaz, Michal. "Maurice Merleau-Ponty: An Attempt at Synthesis of Phenomenology and Structuralism" (pp. 61–83) In: Fehr, Johannes and Kouba, Petr (eds.). *Dynamic Structure: Laguage as an Open System*. Litteraria Pragensia. Praha. 2007

Arich-Gerz, Bruno and Luc Herman "Encountering the Other at Home: Representations of Dora in Pynchon and Mirbach" (pp.122–135) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 54–55*. Spring/Fall 2008

Armand, Louis. *Literate Technologies: Language, Cognition, Technicity*. Litteraria Pragensia. Praha. 2006

—. *Event States: Discourse, Time, Mediality*. Litteraria Pragensia. Praha. 2007.

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Beacon Press. Boston. 1994

Baker, Jeff. "Plucking the American Albatross: Pynchon's Irrealism in *Mason & Dixon*." (167–88) In: Horvath, Malin (eds.) *Pynchon and Mason & Dixon*. Newark: University of Delaware Press. 2000

Berressem, Hanjo "Tristes Traumatiques: Trauma in the Zone:s" (pp.244–274) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 42–43*. 1998

—. "Strangely Attractive: The Topology of Psychic and Social Space in *Vineland*" (pp.38–55) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 34–35*. 1994

—. "Site-Specific: Pynchon|Germany – A Multiplicity of Critical Eigenvalues" In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 54–55*. 2008

Black, Max. *Models and metaphors: Studies in language and philosophy*. Cornell University Press. Ithaca. 1962

Borecký, Vladimír. *Porozumění symbolu*. Triton. Praha. 2003

Canetti, Elias. *Crowds and Power*. The Viking Press. New York. 1962

Celmer, Paul W., Jr. "Pynchon's *V.* and the Rhetoric of the Cold War" (5–32) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 32–33*. 1993

Cohn, Dorrit. *The Distinction of Fiction*. The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2000

Coroneos, C. *Space, Conrad, and Modernity*. Oxford University Press. New York. 2002

Corrigan, Michael. "Time Machine: Thomas Pynchon's Latest Novel, *Against the Day*." In: *Boise Weekly*. (July 4, 2007). Available at URL: http://www.boiseweekly.com/ boise/time-machine/Content?oid=932876 (Retrieved: November 2011)

Dalsgaard, Inger H. "The Linking Feature: Degenerative Systems in Pynchon and Spengler" (pp.97–116) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 44–45*. 1999.

Dalsgaard, Inger H., Herman, Luc, McHale, Brian (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Pynchon*. Cambridge Companions to Literature. CUP. 2012

Decker, Mark T. "A Proliferation of Bad Shit: Informational Entropy, Politics and *The Crying of Lot 49*" (pp. 142–156) In: *Pynchon Notes*. 46–49. 2000-2001

De Costa, René. *Humor in Borges*. Wayne State University Press. Detroit. 2000

De Costa, René. *El Humor en Borges*. Ediciones Cátedra. Madrid. 1999

Deleuze, Gilles, Guattari, Félix. Massumi, Brian (trans.). *Nomadology: The War Machine*. Semiotext(e). 1986

Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death*. (Wills, David, trans.). University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 1995

Dewey, John. "The Antecedents and Stimuli of Thinking". In: *Essays in Experimental Logic*. Hester, D. Micah, Talisse, Robert B. (eds.). Southern Illinois University Press. Carbondale. 2007

Doležel, Lubomír. *Fikce a historie v období postmoderny*. Academia. 2008

—. *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds*. The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2000

—. *Heterocosmica: Fikce a možné světy*. Karolinum. Praha. 2003

Eco, Umberto. *Meze interpretace*. Karolinum. Praha. 2004

—. *The Limits of Interpretation.* Indiana University Press. Bloomington. 1990

—. *Lector in Fabula: Role čtenáře aneb Interpretační kooperace v narativních textech*. Academia. Praha. 2010.

García-Caro, Pedro. "'America was the only place …': American Exceptionalism and Geographic Politics" (pp. 101–124) In: Hinds, E. J. W. (ed.) *The Multiple Worlds of Pynchon's* Mason & Dixon: *Eighteenth-Century Contexts, Postmodern Observations*. Camden House. New York. 2005

Grandy, David A. *The Speed of Light: Constancy + Cosmos*. Indiana University Press. Bloomington. 2009

Greiner, David, J. "Thomas Pynchon and the Fault Lines of America." (73–83) In: Horvath, Malin (eds.) *Pynchon and* Mason & Dixon. Newark: University of Delaware Press. 2000

Gochenour, Phillip "Anarchist Miracles: Distributed Communities, Nodal Subjects and *The Crying of Lot 49*" (pp. 40–52) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 52–53*. 2003.

Hashhozheva, Galena "The Mittelwerke: Site–Para-Site–Non-Site" (pp. 137–153) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 54–55*. 2008.

Hawthorne, Mark D. "Imaginary Locales in Pynchon's *Vineland*" (pp.77–90) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 30–31*. 1992

Heidegger, Martin. Chvatík, I., Kouba, P., Petříček, M. jr., Němec, J. (trans.) *Bytí a čas*. Oikoymenh. Praha. 2002

—. Macquarrie, John and Robinson, Edward (trans.) *Being and Time*. Harper Perennial. 2008

Hofstede, Geert, Hofstede, Gert Jan. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. McGraw-Hill. 2005.

Horvath, Brooke, Malin, Irving (eds.). *Pynchon and Mason & Dixon*. University of Delaware Press. Newark. 2000.

Ickstadt, Heinz "Setting Sail Against the Day: The Narrative World of Thomas Pynchon" (35–49) In: Pöhlmann, S. (ed.) *Against the Grain: Reading Pynchon's Counternarratives*. NLD: Editions Rodopi. Amsterdam, New York. 2010

Ivision, Douglas "Outhouses of the European Soul: Imperialism in Thomas Pynchon" (pp.134–143) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 40–41*. 1997

Jarvis, Brian. *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture*. Pluto Press. London. 1998

Jenkins, Ron "Systemic Waste and the Body Boundary in Pynchon's Fiction" (pp.91–110) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 28–29*. 1991

Karpinski, Eva C. "From *V.* to *Vineland*: Pynchon's Utopian Moments" (pp.33–43) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 32–33*. 1993

Kearney, Richard. *The Wake of Imagination: Toward a Postmodern Culture*. Routledge. London. 1998

Lakoff, Georg. "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor" (202–251) In: Ortony, Andrew (ed.) *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge University Press. 1993

Lefebvre, Henri. Nicholson-Smith, Donald (trans.). *The Production of Space.* Blackwell Publishing. 2007

Lensing, Dennis M. "Postmodernism at Sea: The Quest for Longitude in Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* and Umberto Eco's *The Island of the Day Before*" (pp. 125–143) In: Hinds, E. J. W. (ed.) *The Multiple Worlds of Pynchon's* Mason & Dixon: *Eighteenth-Century Contexts, Postmodern Observations*. Camden House. New York. 2005

Levinas, Emmanuel. "Time and the Other" In: *The Levinas Reader*. Wiley-Blackwell. Oxford. 1989

Levine, G. "Risking the Moment: Anarchy and Possibility in Pynchon's Fiction" (pp. 113–136) In: Levine, G. & Leverenz, D. (eds.) *Mindful Pleasures. Essays on Thomas Pynchon*. Little, Brown and Company. Boston, Toronto. 1976

Ljunberg, Ch. "Cartographic Strategies in Contemporary Fiction" (pp. 155–171) In: Cluever, Plesch, Hoek (eds.) *Orientations. Space/Time/Image/World. Word & Image Interactions 5*. Rodopi. Amsterdam. 2005

Logan, William. ""Back to the Future: On Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day*." (226–247) In: *The Virginia Quarterly Review*. Summer 2007

Madsen, Deborah L. *The Postmodernist Allegories of Thomas Pynchon*. St. Martin's. New York. 1991

Maturana, Humberto R. and Varela, Francisco J. *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*. D. Reidel Publishing Company. Dordrecht, Boston, London. 1980

McHale, Brian. "Mason & Dixon in the Zone, or, A Brief Poetics of Pynchon-Space" (43–62) In: Horvath, Malin (eds.) *Pynchon and* Mason & Dixon. University of Delaware Press. Newark. 2000

McHoul, Alec and David Willis. *Writing Pynchon: Strategies in Fictional Analysis*. U of Illinois Press. Urbana-Champaign. 1990

Mendelson, Edward (ed.). *Pynchon: A Collecton of Critical Essays*. Twentieth Century Views. Prentice-Hall, Inc., University of Michigan. Englewood Cliffs. 1978

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. McCleary, Richard C. (trans.) *Signs*. Northwestern University Press. 1964

Nagano, Yoshihiro. "The Formation of the Rocket-Nation: Abstract Systems in *Gravity's Rainbow*" (pp. 81–99) In: *Pynchon Notes 52–53*. 2003

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Being Singular Plural.* Stanford University Press. Stanford. 2000

Newman, Robert D. *Understanding Thomas Pynchon*. Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1986

Ortony, Andrew (ed.). *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge University Press. London. New York. Melbourne. 1979

—. (2nd edition). *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge University Press. London. New York. Melbourne. 1993

Patell, Cyrus R. K. *Negative Liberties. Morrison, Pynchon, and the Problem of Liberal Ideology*. Duke University Press. Durham, London. 2001

Pavel, Thomas. *Román: Morálka a svoboda*. Theoretica & Historica. Ústav pro českou literaturu AV ČR. Praha. 2009.

Pearce, Richard (ed.) *Critical Essays on Thomas Pynchon*. G.K. Hall. Boston. 1981

Pöhlmann, Sascha. "Introduction: The Complex Text" In: Pöhlmann, S. (ed.) *Against the Grain: Reading Pynchon's Counternarratives*. NLD: Editions Rodopi. Amsterdam, New York. 2010

Roraback, Erik S. "Among the Holy of Holies of Prose Fiction in U.S. English: or, on Thomas Ruggles Pynchon" In: *A2. 21/11* (18–23). Praha. 2011

—. *The Dialectics of Late Capital: James, Balzac and Critical Theory*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2007

Russell, Alison. *Crossing Boundaries: Postmodern Travel Literature*. Palgrave. 2000

Said, E. W. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge. 2000

Saltzmann, Arthur. "'Cranks of Ev'ry Radius': Romancing the Line in *Mason & Dixon.*" (63–72) In: Horvath, Malin (eds.) *Pynchon and* Mason & Dixon. Newark: University of Delaware Press. 2000

Sartre, Jean-Paul. Annette Michelson (trans.). "On *The Sound and the Fury:* Time in the Work of Faulkner." *Literary and Philosophical Essays*. London: Rider, 1955. URL Available at: http://drc.usask.ca/projects/faulkner/main/index.html (Retrieved: August, 2011)

Schaub, Thomas H., "Plot, Ideology, and Compassion in *Mason & Dixon*." (189–202) In: Horvath, Malin (eds.) *Pynchon and* Mason & Dixon. Newark: University of Delaware Press. 2000

Schieweg, Larissa S. "The Decline of the Baedeker Country: The Representation of Geographical and Cultural Identity in Pynchon's Novels" (108–117) In: *Pynchon Notes*. 50–51. 2002

Schmitt, Carl. Schwab, George (trans.) *The Concept of the Political*. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago. London. 1996

Seed, David. "Mapping the Course of Empire in the New World." (84–99) In: Horvath, Malin (eds.) *Pynchon and* Mason & Dixon. Newark: University of Delaware Press. 2000

Sobel, Dava. *Longitude: True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time*. Penguin Books. 1995

Soja, Edward. W. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. Verso. London, New York. 1989

Spurr, David. *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*. Duke University Press, Durham & London. 1993

Strandberg, Victor "Dimming the Enlightenment: Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*" (100–112) In: Horvath, Malin (eds.) *Pynchon and Mason & Dixon.* Newark: University of Delaware Press. 2000

Tanner, Tony. "Caries and Cabals" (49-67) In: Levine, George & Leverenz, David. (eds.) *Mindful Pleasures. Essays on Thomas Pynchon*. Little, Brown and Company. Boston, Toronto. 1976

Tölölyan, Khachig. "War as background in *Gravity's Rainbow*" (31–68) In: Charles Clerc (ed.) *Approaches to Gravity's Rainbow*. Ohio State University Press. 1983

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Harvard University Press. 1989

Tumir, Vaska "The City, the Labyrinth and the Terror Beyond: Delineating a Site of the Possible in *Gravity's Rainbow*" (pp.134–151) In: Kraft, John M., Duyfhuizen, B., Tölölyan, K. (eds.) *Pynchon Notes 42–43*. 1998

Vernon, Peter. "It's Just Not Cricket: Cricket as Metaphor in Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day*" Pynchon Wiki. September, 2007. Available at URL: http://against-the-day.pynchonwiki.com/wiki/index.php?title=Cricket_in_Against_the_Day (Retrieved: November, 2011)

Wallhead, Celia ""Kit and *Kim*: Espionage in *Against the Day*" In: Pöhlmann, Sascha (ed.) *Against the Grain: Reading Pynchon's Counternarratives*. Rodopi. Amsterdam, New York. 2010

Weisenburger, Steven C. *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion*. The University of Georgia Press. Athens. London. 2006

White, Michael A. "Science in *Against the Day*: Vectors and Quaternions" (6/10/2007) Available at URL: http://adaptivecomplexity.blogspot.com/2007/06/science-in-against-day-vectors-and.html (Retrieved: December, 2011)