

David Robbins, thesis opponent

B.A. Thesis Evaluation

Daniel Litochleb

Entropy and Consumerism in Pynchon's Works

This thesis examines, as the author says, "the difficult concept of entropy and how certain trends in contemporary culture and society, such as consumerism, exhibit tendencies similar to those of entropy." The process of examination proceeds through a very long and detailed consideration of Pynchon's early short story "Entropy" to a shorter and less specific look at the development, applications, and implications of that concept in *The Crying of Lot 49* and in *Gravity's Rainbow*.

In general, Mr. Litochleb has handled the examination with skill, subtlety, and accuracy. Pynchon's work is very difficult even for native speakers, and the complexities of Pynchon's diction, deployment of colloquial language, and allusions to popular culture are handled here knowledgeably and with nuance. Mr. Litochleb's use of Pynchon's autobiographical introduction to *Slow Learner* also provides useful retrospective testimony.

I have certain reservation to Mr. Litochleb's references to Lot 49 and Gravity's Rainbow as among Pynchon's "later" works (which they are, in comparison to "Entropy," but not compared to *Vineland*, *Mason & Dixon*, *Against the Day*, and *Inherent Vice*); and it might be an interesting later project for him (beyond the reasonable limits of this B.A. thesis) to explore the continuing development of "entropy" in those subsequent works.

I also have some concern that, given Pynchon's very outspoken concern about and discussion of metaphor and its significance in the works discussed, Mr. Litochleb has not chosen to characterize or examine "entropy" as a metaphor or to focus on its metaphorical, as opposed to its conceptual, applications and implications in Pynchon's work. I think that this oversight may be the thesis's major shortcoming.

All of that said, however, this is a laudable piece of analysis and writing for a student at the B.A. level. Mr. Litochleb deserves praise and recognition, and his thesis director congratulations, for its accomplishment.

Thesis evaluation: "1, vyborne"

Signed:

Prof. David L. Robbins, Ph.D.

Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

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If the reader has any questions or needs additional information, please contact me at drobbins@suffolk.edu.