Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Knowledge Repository @ IUP

Theses and Dissertations (All)

6-8-2012

A Thomas Pynchon Guide to Contemporary Resistance

Sean Carswell
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd

Recommended Citation
Carswell, Sean, "A Thomas Pynchon Guide to Contemporary Resistance" (2012). *Theses and Dissertations (All)*. 732.
http://knowledge.library.iup.edu/etd/732

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Knowledge Repository @ IUP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations (All) by an authorized administrator of Knowledge Repository @ IUP. For more information, please contact cclouser@iup.edu, sara.parme@iup.edu.

A THOMAS PYNCHON GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Sean Carswell

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2012

© 2012 by Sean Carswell

All Rights Reserved

Indiana University of Pennsylvania
The School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Sean Carswell

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

_____ _____
David B. Downing, Ph.D.
Professor of English, Advisor

_____ _____
Thomas J. Slater, Ph.D.
Professor of English

_____ _____
Todd Thompson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English

ACCEPTED

_____ _____
Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.
Dean
The School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: A Thomas Pynchon Guide to Contemporary Resistance

Author: Sean Carswell

Dissertation Chair: Dr. David B. Downing

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Thomas J. Slater
Dr. Todd Thompson

Vineland marks a significant turning point in Pynchon's oeuvre, specifically with regard to Pynchon's politics. Previous to *Vineland*, Pynchon's work was concerned largely with the radicalism of the sixties and seventies as a resistance to totalitarian powers. Pynchon's early works tended to feature paranoid characters swept up in a conspiracy beyond their comprehension and hurtling toward fragmented and somewhat dismal ends. Beginning with *Vineland*, this paranoia gives way to a more fully articulated global system of power. Pynchon's four most recent novels (*Vineland, Mason & Dixon, Against the Day*, and *Inherent Vice*) feature an examination of neoliberal capitalism's exploitive system of privatization, deregulation, militarization, and free market fundamentalism. The novels also seek sites for resistance to this exploitative system. This study elaborates upon the global systems of power that Pynchon constructs in his four most recent novels and examines the possibilities Pynchon explores for resistance to and advancement beyond these systems of power.

Pynchon's description of a global network of sovereignty exemplifies Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's conception of an "Empire" consisting of government agencies, multinational corporations, and international financial institutions that work like governments but beyond the jurisdiction of national rule. This is not an empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth century model, which is characterized by governments and

their militaries colonizing a foreign region to exploit it for its natural resources. Instead, it is Empire without a single sovereign. This Empire works as a network with various negotiations of power occurring between a limited number of players who contend for a greater share of it while ensuring that power does not expand beyond this network.

In opposition to this network of global sovereignty, Hardt and Negri discuss the formation of a multitude. Pynchon likewise examines this formation. *Vineland* and the three novels that succeed it differ from the three novels that precede it by exploring the possibilities for resistance represented in the multitude. Breaking from Marxist and Enlightenment ideologies, Hardt and Negri resist the notion of the multitude as a unified whole. Instead, the multitude consists of discursive voices with various concerns. Key to the concept of the multitude is the idea that the many who construct the multitude never lose their singularity. They remain many. Nonetheless, they share in common their exploitation by Empire and by the neoliberal capitalism that drives it. They must resist Empire by remaining a horizontal network without a single goal or sovereignty.

In the end, applying Hardt and Negri's concepts of Empire and the multitude to Pynchon's novels helps to remove the shackles of sixties counterculture from Pynchon's works and recognize the complex view of global commodity culture, neoliberalism, Empire, counternarratives, countermovements, singularities working as a multitude, and creative commons that Pynchon has constructed over his four most recent novels. Perhaps we can all find inspiration in the hopeful endings that these four novels provide and begin to envision for ourselves a world that promises a greater freedom than the failed neoliberal utopia that has become hegemonic.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1	A SEAN CARSWELL GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE	1
2	A *VINELAND* GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE	24
3	A *MASON & DIXON* GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE	61
4	AN *AGAINST THE DAY* GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE	102
5	AN *INHERENT VICE* GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE	161
6	AN ‘UKULELE GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE	187
	ENDNOTES	210
	WORKS CITED	218

CHAPTER 1:

A SEAN CARSWELL GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE

There is something personal about *Vineland*. It is something about the narrative voice. Though no narrator is identified, from my first reading onward of *Vineland*, I have always imagined a narrator in my head: someone of my father's generation, but with whom my father would not typically socialize; a veteran of sixties student rebellion but maybe not someone who stuck around the university long enough to graduate; someone who is living by his wits and working a series of handyman jobs; someone in a ratty T-shirt that he picked up free in a bar somewhere. Maybe the shirt has a pun on it, like "Shuck it! Let's go to Frankie's Raw Bar," or just an ironic slogan, like a dive bar proclaiming, "The ambiance will seduce you." The narrator is drinking a can of Black Label beer, leaning back on a wooden picnic bench, and explaining the sixties to me in a way that makes sense in the present.

This image is not completely a construct of my imagination. In no small way, Pynchon's narrative voice in *Vineland* is that of a sixties revolutionary giving context to the generation coming of age in the eighties. I am a member of the latter generation. I am the exact age of Prairie Wheeler, *Vineland*'s protagonist. When she fishes through the archives of the activist group her mother belonged to, 24 fps, I learn about Pynchon's version of the sixties with her. Together, we get a sense of how student rebellions operated—both through the fictional 24 fps and the very real Students for a Democratic Society that Pynchon likely used as a model. We come to understand street protests and campus occupations and neo-anarchist violent revolutionaries in a way that is far

removed from the typical sound bites and montages of the sixties that we have been fed through the mass media since childhood. I feel as if I am right there with Prairie through it all. When Prairie's mother, Frenesi, imagines Prairie "in the embrace of some surf bum with a downy mustache, named Shawn or Erik" (68), well, she misspells my name (it is Sean, not Shawn) and she accidentally places me in California instead of the coastal Florida town I grew up in, but she otherwise subjunctively hunts me down in the mid-eighties. How could I not feel a personal connection?

Vineland was not my first foray into the works of Thomas Pynchon. Like so many others, I started with Pynchon's shortest novel, *The Crying of Lot 49.* I shamefully shoplifted it from a Tallahassee bookseller at a point in my life when I could not seem to come up with the forty-five cents the bookseller was asking for the battered and dog-eared paperback. The previous reader of my absconded copy had clearly taken a course at Florida State University with noted Pynchon scholar Douglas Fowler. The margins were heavily annotated with comments that a professor makes and a student writes without a clear sense of what he is writing. No matter. The annotations helped. I plowed through the novel in an afternoon and an evening, afraid to stop reading even to make dinner lest I forget some key element of the Tristero system and lose all possibility of understanding the ending. When *Crying of Lot 49*'s Oedipa Maas "settled back, to await the crying of lot 49" (152) in the novel's final sentence, I was confused. After another dozen readings of the novel, after wading through decades of criticism about the novel, after teaching the novel in university-level literature courses several times, I am still a little confused at the end. I have made my peace with the confusion. I am willing

to stand beside Oedipa and stare into the great mass of knowledge about the universe that I will never understand.

So *Vineland* was my second foray into Pynchon. I picked it up when I was fresh out of Florida State University. It was the first book I read as a university graduate. I paid for this one (though perhaps only because the book itself was too large to slide into the pockets of my baggy plaid Bermudas). I read Salman Rushdie's blurb on the back of the book, which came from his review in *The New York Times*, declaring *Vineland* to be "a major political novel about what America has been doing to itself, to its children, all these many years" (BR 37). I daydreamed about that blurb. I thought, *yes! Salman, Tom, and me. We will know exactly what America has been doing to itself all these years.* I took my time with this novel, reading and rereading passages, mulling them over as I worked the first in what would be a series of post-graduate construction jobs, even going to the library after work to look up information on sixties rebellion, eighties forfeiture laws, and the Fourth Amendment. I felt as if the narrator were explaining something very important to me. Rushdie and Pynchon had a firm understanding of it. My grasp was more tenuous.

What came to confuse me the most about *Vineland* over the next few years was the ambivalence of the critical and academic communities to the novel. With the exception of Rushdie's *New York Times* review and a few other positive passages in reviews, most critics I read seemed disappointed in the novel. Likewise, the scholarship I was able to find on Pynchon all still focused on his first three novels. Even among my (albeit small) contingent of friends who were fans of Pynchon, *Vineland* was viewed as a minor novel.

When I did read *Gravity's Rainbow*, I came to understand the ambivalence. I did not agree with it, for reasons I will elaborate below, but I understood it. *Gravity's Rainbow* is dazzling in its scope. Like *V.*, Pynchon's first novel, *Gravity's Rainbow* demonstrates an encyclopedic breadth of knowledge. The novel seems to explore everything from Herero uprisings to British spy novels to rocket science to mysticism to the dodo bird. Pynchon can combine this wisdom with drug-fueled paranoia and comic absurdity seamlessly. There is one scene in the novel in which the protagonist, Tyrone Slothrop, attempts to escape from a US Army Ordnance officer Major Marvy (leader of Marvy's Mothers) in a hot air balloon smuggling custard pies into occupied Berlin. The set-up alone is comic absurdity: the alliterative names of Major Marvy's Mothers, the act of smuggling custard pies (which, much like Chekhov's oft-quoted gun that must be fired once mentioned, must be thrown into someone's face), and the hot-air balloon as a getaway vehicle. The scene that follows fulfills the promise of comic absurdity. Slothrop and Schnorp the balloon captain manage to win an aerial confrontation with Marvy's Mothers using only custard pies and balloon ballasts as weapons. Major Marvy does get a pie to the face. The scene is so much more than comic absurdity, though. It also delves into Teutonic mythology. It links Rolls Royce, General Electric, Harvard, the Office of Strategic Services (the predecessor to the CIA), and Nazi scientists together in a global political and economic network. Pynchon demonstrates a breadth of knowledge about World War II military aircraft, hot-air balloons, and various forms of weaponry. And it all occurs in less than ten pages. The scene can exist as a microcosm of the entire novel for its ability to juggle the comic, the political, the spiritual, and the academic. *Gravity's Rainbow* continues to exist as one of the few novels to treat contemporary

global culture with the depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding necessary for unpacking meaning within this culture. Thus, when *Vineland* followed up *Gravity's Rainbow*, critics and academics alike could not be blamed for expecting Pynchon to use the intervening decades to create a work of fiction that rivaled *Gravity's Rainbow* in both scale and scope. Instead, Pynchon narrowed both, focusing largely on the United States (and, more often than not, California), exploring mostly the sixties and the eighties through the point of view of a few (for Pynchon) characters. Likewise, I understand why critics and scholars celebrated seven years later when Pynchon released *Mason & Dixon*, a novel that demonstrates a return to the precedents set by *Gravity's Rainbow*. There are dozens and dozens of characters in *Mason & Dixon*. The novel wanders from continent to continent. It is encyclopedic in breadth. It blends together the seemingly disparate worlds of spirituality, economics, politics, and literature. It conveniently seconds as a doorstop for even the heaviest door on the windiest day. The narrative expands into far too many pages for even the baggiest-pants-ed delinquent to slide into his pocket. Nonetheless, I disagree with critics and scholars who overlook *Vineland*.

Perhaps the beginning of my disagreement is personal. *Vineland* seems to speak to me personally. Among all of Pynchon's novels, it exists as the only one that creates worlds similar to the world I recognize as my quotidian reality, or describes a past that lives both in his fiction and in my memory. Certainly, all of Pynchon's novels have been relevant to my life outside the novels. As Sascha Pöhlmann observes in his introduction to a collection of essays on Pynchon's *Against the Day*, "Politics are always already global *and* local in Pynchon's novels" (*Against the Grain* 22). Therein lies part of the significance of Pynchon's oeuvre: his ability to connect global issues and global systems

of power directly to the personal lives of readers. I have experienced this sensation more than once. While researching source materials for *Gravity's Rainbow*, I discovered that Albert Zeiler, one of the key German rocket scientists who created the V-2 rocket bomb which factors prominently in the novel, was the father of the guy who lived three houses down the street from the house I grew up in. My father had worked for the lead rocket scientist, Wernher von Braun, in the Apollo program. My father did not know von Braun. Von Braun was the head of the operation; my father one of several explosives technicians on the landing craft. But, in a moment similar to Pynchon's "Proverbs for Paranoids, 1: You may never get to touch the Master, but you can tickle his creatures" (*Gravity's Rainbow* 237), my father did tell me he shook hands with von Braun once.

Along these lines, I choose to begin my exploration into Pynchon with the personal, the local. The economics that Pynchon explores in *Gravity's Rainbow*—the aerospace industry—was the company that ran the company town I grew up in: Merritt Island, Florida, home of Kennedy Space Center. One of the Nazi rocket scientists he discusses was literally father and grandfather to my neighbors. *Vineland*'s Frenesi imagines her daughter, the novel's main character, running around with the generic adolescent boy of my generation. She describes the adolescent version of me as that generic kid. She even gives him, if not my name, the homonym of my name. And the personal can never be fully removed from the text. Nonetheless, the personal is simply a doorway into the enjoyment of the text. The real reward lies in what we can find in the text that is useful. In other words, the significance lies in the intersections of the global and the local of Pynchon's politics.

In Pöhlmann's introduction to *Against the Grain*, he also warns readers of the danger inherent in attempting to shoehorn Pynchon's work into postmodern theory. Pöhlmann argues that, while *Gravity's Rainbow* "is still the defining text of postmodernism in literature" (10), Pynchon's subsequent works move beyond the theory and its constructs (however loosely defined postmodernism's constructs are). Likewise, I argue that, Pynchon's politics are informed by sixties radicalism and his first three novels stand as significant texts exemplifying that radicalism. However, it would be a mistake to attempt to force Pynchon's complex political views into the confines of sixties radicalism. Instead, beginning with *Vineland*, Pynchon creates a model for viewing contemporary power systems and the forces that oppose them.

As I mention above, I believe it is a mistake to overlook *Vineland*, to confuse Pynchon's return to the stylistic devices of *Gravity's Rainbow* in *Mason & Dixon* with a return to serious, literary writing. Pynchon never took a break from serious literature. For all the humor in *Vineland*, it is a serious text, a lens through which all of his subsequent texts can be viewed. That is part of the project of this study. I will argue that *Vineland* marks a significant turning point in Pynchon's oeuvre, specifically with regard to Pynchon's politics. Previous to *Vineland*, Pynchon's work was concerned largely with the radicalism of the sixties and seventies as a resistance to totalitarian powers. Pynchon's early works tended to feature paranoid characters swept up in a conspiracy beyond their comprehension and hurtling toward fragmented and ultimately dismal ends. With the publication of *Vineland*, this paranoia gives way to a more fully articulated global system of power. Pynchon's four most recent novels (*Vineland*, *Mason & Dixon*, *Against the Day*, and *Inherent Vice*) feature an examination of neoliberal capitalism's

exploitive system of privatization, deregulation, militarization, and free market fundamentalism. The novels also seek sites for resistance to this exploitative system. The purpose of this study, then, will be to elaborate upon the global systems of power that Pynchon constructs in his four most recent novels, and to examine the possibilities Pynchon explores for resistance to and advancement beyond these systems of power.

Of course, Pynchon has always written about power structures and opposition. From his earliest short stories like "Under the Rose," he has used historical narratives to criticize global systems of power. He has done this throughout most of his works by using expansive narratives to explore an increasingly connected world on a political, social, cultural, and economic level. While Pynchon has done this both before and after *Vineland*, his three novels that precede *Vineland* (as well as the short stories and newspaper articles he wrote before 1990) all end on a fairly dismal note. Pynchon is critical of global systems of power throughout, however his first three novels afford little room for resistance. Pynchon hints about pockets of resistance, certainly. The Whole Sick Crew of *V.* are somewhat of a reconstituted familial community similar to the communities in which Pynchon places so much value in his later works. A "Counterforce" is established at the end of *Gravity's Rainbow*, that will, to some extent, confront the political and economic powers that dominate the characters in the novel. These two examples, however, differ from the sites of resistance in Pynchon's later works mostly with regard to their scale—they are brief moments instead of sustainable alternatives—and their potential. Both the Whole Sick Crew and the Counterforce leave little hope for a lasting movement of resistance. Instead, Pynchon's first three novels are steeped in paranoia in part because the characters have little recourse against power

structures. The characters recognize that a network of government agencies and multinational corporations exists and maintains power over their lives, yet the characters lack the facilities necessary to understand this network well enough to counter it. However, beginning with *Vineland*, the paranoia lessens as the characters begin to find pockets of resistance.

It is helpful here to utilize the terms that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri articulate in *Empire*. Pynchon's description of a global network of sovereignty exemplifies Hardt and Negri's conception of an "Empire" consisting of government agencies, multinational corporations, and international financial institutions that work like governments but beyond the jurisdiction of national rule. This is not an empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth century model, which is characterized by governments and their militaries colonizing a foreign region to exploit it for its natural resources. Instead, it is Empire without a single sovereign. This Empire works as a network with various negotiations of power occurring between a limited number of players who contend for a greater share of it while ensuring that power does not expand beyond this network. Since the 1944 Bretton Woods agreements, "post-Fordist" neoliberal capitalism has been driven by this global network. It has been characterized by organizations like the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund; by multinational corporations whose members are instrumental in drafting trade and tariff treaties that allow for the exploitation of labor while facilitating profits of these corporations; and various "First World" governments who work largely in concert with big business. This capitalism is a far cry from Adam Smith's *laissez faire* conception largely because capital and governments are so frequently inseparable. In fact, as scholars like Wendy Brown

and David Harvey demonstrate, the purpose of contemporary national governments seems to be largely economic. Under neoliberalism, every aspect of society becomes saturated by the logic of the marketplace.

From Pynchon's earliest novels, he has explored this Empire of late capitalism. It is the power system that Stencil seeks to understand in *V.* It is Them, who manipulate Tyrone Slothrop throughout *Gravity's Rainbow*. It is the Tristero that haunts Oedipa Maas in *The Crying of Lot 49*. This Empire continues throughout his later novels. Brock Vond in *Vineland* is Empire's hired thug, perpetually vying for greater power. Mason and Dixon travel throughout the nascent Empire, witnessing the slavery and exploitation that fuel and empower it. Dixon observes that these chartered companies—with their attendant exploitation—are becoming the new shape of the world. *Against the Day* traces various anarchists, revolutionaries, mathematicians, ukulelists, and fictional balloonists through the rise of nineteenth-century economic liberalism's race toward the annihilation that was World War I. Several of these characters recognize the devastating outcomes of economic liberalism, capital's material effects, and organize to oppose it. Finally, Doc Sportello of *Inherent Vice* is the private detective engaged in investigating—though not necessarily hired to investigate—the massive reach of Empire as it is represented in the fictional organization, the Golden Fang.

Utilizing Hardt and Negri's conception of Empire helps to articulate exactly how the global systems of power that Pynchon criticizes operate and also how effective sites of the countermovement and resistance can emerge. Because Empire is indelibly tied to late capitalism, my study must rely on several scholars and theorists whose work overlaps Hardt and Negri's, yet approaches Empire from different directions. To better understand

Empire, one must also recognize Wendy Brown's argument that, at the core of Empire's power is an unquestioned neoliberal ideology that insists every aspect of life must be subject to the rule of the marketplace. Brown's notion compliments David Harvey's study, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, which traces the rise of this neoliberal ideology and suggests that the core to opposing it lies in a discussion of the concept of freedom. Harvey argues that, in a neoliberal society, freedom comes to denote the freedom of economic elites to exploit labor and land as a means of accumulating massive fortunes. Harvey petitions for a more egalitarian concept of freedom, one that is based upon social relations and mutual benefits instead of endless accumulation. Finally, because Pynchon is primarily a historical novelist, understanding the contemporary neoliberalism that he confronts requires an exploration into the historical predecessor of neoliberalism, economic liberalism. Karl Polanyi's seminal work, *The Great Transformation*, elucidates the transition of global economies from economies of social relations—which were the core of all economic systems prior to the industrial revolution—to economies of gain. Polanyi provides the framework for understanding the pseudo-spiritual aspects of capital, with its Invisible Hand mystically guiding markets. Polanyi instead argues against this concept of unregulated markets, concluding that, if a market were truly unregulated, it would lead to annihilation. Polanyi supports this conclusion by demonstrating the ways in which insufficiently regulated markets in the nineteenth century were the catalyzing factor behind the twentieth century's two world wars. Polanyi also develops the notion of double movements or countermovements, which are resistance movements that spontaneously rise to oppose unregulated financial markets and economies of gain.

These double movements or countermovements lead to the second useful concept from Hardt and Negri: the multitude. Hardt and Negri envision the multitude as the sites of resistance against Empire. Breaking from Marxist and Enlightenment ideologies, Hardt and Negri resist the notion of the multitude as a unified whole. Instead, the multitude consists of discursive voices with various concerns. Key to the concept of the multitude is the idea that the many who construct the multitude never lose their singularity. They remain many. Nonetheless, they share in common their exploitation by Empire and by the late capitalism that drives it. They must resist the network of Empire by remaining a horizontal network without a single goal or sovereignty. The most concrete example of the multitude Hardt and Negri present in their critical trilogy resides in the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999. During these protests, environmentalists, labor union activists, anarchists, anti-war activists, and various other discursive (and at times seemingly contradictory or antagonistic) groups worked in concert against a common site of exploitation: the Empire as represented by the WTO. The groups retained their singularity. Identity was never surrendered to a unified concept like "the people" or "the masses." Instead, labor opposed Empire on the grounds of labor exploitation and environmentalists protested Empire on the grounds of environmental exploitation, but they worked together opposing the common exploiter.

Since the publication of their critical trilogy, Hardt and Negri have continued to clarify their definition of the multitude by examining resistance movements that arose in 2011 in Egypt, Spain, Greece, and the United States. In "The Fight for 'Real Democracy' at the Heart of Occupy Wall Street," Hardt and Negri link the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo and Syntagma Square in Athens with encampments in Madrid's

Puerta del Sol, Barcelona's Plaça Catalunya, and New York's Wall Street, as well as with the extended protests at the Wisconsin capitol. While Hardt and Negri acknowledge that the specific grievances of the protesters in each case is different, they resist a common oppression. In all cases, the protestors recognize that "politics has become subservient to economic and financial interests" and representative democracy as it has been constructed in these states is merely a pretense. Hardt and Negri assert, "These movements have all developed according to what we call a 'multitude form' and are characterized by frequent assemblies and participatory decision-making structures." They further observe that no leaders have arisen from these protests. The protestors have instead developed a "horizontal network structure" in which real, participatory democratic experiments are taking place. While, in some cases, the protestors did have specific messages (Egyptians rallying around a cry of "Mubarak must go," Wisconsinites joined in defense of collective bargaining rights), in all cases protestors agitated against the exploitative power of Empire and in favor of a new form of participatory democracy that allows for a multitude of singularities.

Understanding this concept of the multitude is key to understanding the shift that occurs in Pynchon's work beginning with *Vineland*. Pynchon's novels have always featured a multitude of characters from marginalized social positions. However, prior to *Vineland*, these characters are disparate and fragmented. To use Pynchon's term from *Gravity's Rainbow*, his characters compose the "preterite": those who exist outside the boundaries of society, who are cast off, forgotten, abandoned. This is best exemplified by Tyrone Slothrop at the end of *Gravity's Rainbow*, when he himself seems to fragment and disperse as if he were a rocket that exploded. There is little sense among the preterite

that they exist as a network or that, despite their discursive perspectives, they have an understanding of a dominant global system of power to resist. Hardt and Negri's definition of the multitude is based on a reworking of Marx's notions of both the public commons and the proletariat. Whereas for Marx the proletariat was the source of resistance to capital, the multitude is a much broader concept, more appropriate for the contemporary, complex global networks of capitalism. This sense of the multitude first appears at the end of *Vineland*, when the disparate characters gather for the Becker-Traverse family reunion. The reunion expands the notion of a family beyond bloodlines. In attendance are a motley collection of Wobblies, communists, activists, snitches, mad men, punk rockers, drug dealers, Vietnam veterans, and even a few dead people thrown in for good measure. All of these characters retain their singularity, but (either consciously or unconsciously) share their need for the commons as a site of resistance against private capital's Empire. Significantly, it is in the face of this assembly of the multitude where the imperial Brock Vond meets his insurmountable resistance. The fact that this resistance occurs in the Northern California backcountry on land that has no clear owner—property that is seemingly neither public nor private property—suggests another form of commons for the multitude. In this case, it is a representation of what Marx classified as the global commons. David B. Downing articulates these commons as "local spaces of *relative* autonomy from direct capital appropriation of surplus value and from private property as regulated by law" (28). This commons is the literal site of resistance at the end of *Vineland*. It will also prove to be the figurative site of resistance—and, beyond resistance, advancement—throughout Pynchon's four most

recent novels. It is here, for the first time, Pynchon leaves his readers with a sense of hope at the end of one of his novels.

The three novels that succeed *Vineland* differ from the three novels that precede it by exploring the possibilities for resistance represented in the multitude. In this study, I seek to articulate this site of resistance. Inasmuch as English studies in the twenty-first century should be geared toward a pedagogy of social justice, this articulation of Pynchon's resistance against a network of global exploitation is significant. The concept of the multitude allows my examination to expand into several arenas of social injustice. As I mention above, Hardt and Negri's (as well as Pynchon's) representation of the multitude is dependent upon a construction that rejects unification and embraces multiple singularities. Along these lines, my articulation of Pynchon's site of resistance requires an exploration into issues of gender (particularly with respect to *Vineland* and the intergenerational relationships between mothers and daughters as represented by Sasha Gates, Frenesi Gates, and Prairie Wheeler), issues of race (spanning all four novels, but perhaps most salient in *Mason & Dixon*, which confronts the burgeoning concepts of race with respect to Native Americans, Africans, and African Americans), and issues of sexuality (as represented by openly lesbian characters in the nascent United States in *Mason & Dixon* and the several openly gay or lesbian characters in *Against the Day*). These singularities are all intertwined with class when considered through the lens of the multitude. Perhaps the most powerful aspect of examining global issues of gender, race, sexuality, and class through the concept of the multitude lies in both Pynchon's and Hardt and Negri's concept of the inside and outside of society. Hardt and Negri reject the notion of an inside and an outside of society. Starting with *Vineland*, Pynchon likewise

rejects this notion. Instead of constructing a worldview that suggests certain people reside in the center or mainstream of society while others are marginalized or on the fringes, Pynchon and Hardt and Negri construct a worldview that holds no center, no mainstream. Instead, it is a network of autonomous beings with discursive perspectives in concert and at odds with one another. From this perspective, an exploration into gender, race, sexuality, and class avoids the trappings of placing these issues on the margins of society. Gender, race, sexuality, and class issues are treated as inextricable injustices shared in a common exploitation. Further, like Pynchon's four novels that succeed *Gravity's Rainbow*, my study goes beyond social criticism and into the arena of resistance and sites for negotiating social justice.

The chapters that follow adhere to a basic pattern of exploring, first, the systems of power that Pynchon confronts in each of his novels and, second, the sites of resistance Pynchon proposes. While all four chapters expand on notions of Empire and the multitude, I approach these notions from different aspects, utilizing different theorists, and attempting to expand and complicate the machinations of contemporary power and resistance. In Chapter Two, I begin to trace the shift in Pynchon's oeuvre with the novel *Vineland*. I expand upon the argument that the power structure in Pynchon's novels is very much in line with Hardt and Negri's concept of the Empire and that Pynchon constructs a multitude in *Vineland* which can serve as a model of resistance to Empire. I explore these notions in *Vineland*, first, by presenting Empire as engaged in a series of civil wars as a means of restricting civil rights, second, by examining the multitude's complicity in perpetuating Empire, third, by analyzing the failure of violent revolution, and finally, by providing a positive site for resistance. Specifically, I locate this positive

site for resistance at the Becker-Traverse family reunion and in the social and economic alternatives suggested by the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives. As I mention above, the Becker-Traverse family reunion works as a site of resistance by seeking a Marxist commons as a meeting place, bringing together a network of individuals who are notable in their differences yet have the ability to work in concert to resist Empire, and by reconstructing a familial community that may be tied together by circumstances of birth, socioeconomic factors, and places in a system of power, but nonetheless form a system of nurture, support, and cooperation. The family reunion also provides room for the wise elder of the family, Jess Traverse, to deliver a speech that presents a counternarrative to Empire's history of resistance movements. Jess's history links these movements together and validates the work that groups like the Wobblies, sixties activists, and punk rockers have done.

The Sisterhood represents another site of resistance to Empire. It resides in a social business: one that is complicit to corporate society but recognizes that complicity and moves beyond it; one that rejects consumerism by refusing to sell consumables and by rejecting the notion of spirituality as a commodity; one that accepts payments beyond the typical system of cash currency; one that exists for mutual profit instead of exploitative profit; one that reconstructs notions of family and community to provide a safe harbor; and one that rejects competition in favor of cooperation. Through these sites of resistance, Pynchon resurrects the American Left, which, though seemingly destroyed during the Reagan years, still has the potential to resist the corporate takeover of the American promise.

Chapter Three further explores the concepts of Empire and the multitude, this time focusing on *Mason & Dixon*. By following the eponymous characters Mason and Dixon through the slave colonies of Dutch South Africa, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, I examine the interrelationship between Empire and slavery, as well as examine the depth of injustice and exploitation that exists beyond chattel slavery in a system of global commodity culture. Pynchon's use of chartered companies—the eighteenth-century predecessor to contemporary multinational corporations—demonstrates the political and economic power that built the Empire. He demonstrates how, beginning in the eighteenth century, Empire's power permeated every aspect of human society. It controlled the direction of scientific inquiry, it produced and distributed products to which consumers became addicted, and it reorganized land and labor under its ideology. Pynchon's representations of the so-called Founding Fathers further elucidates the ways in which the construction of the United States was inextricably linked to the shadier sides of commerce. Pynchon presents a burgeoning United States founded less by an ideology of freedom and equality and more by wealthy landowners seeking to expand their wealth at the expense of women, slaves, Native Americans, and contract employees like Mason and Dixon. By doing so, Pynchon complicates labor and exploitation. He goes beyond the simple notion that chattel slavery is unethical. Instead, he links the exploitation of divorcing labor from the wealth it produces with the injustice of global economic systems.

I further examine Pynchon's use of the subjunctive as a means to confront the ideology of Empire. For Pynchon, the subjunctive—or the imagined as real—provides a site for counternarratives. As Mason and Dixon voyage deeper into the American

continent, they encounter a supernatural world that the American Empire will devour. It's a world where mechanized ducks fly faster than the human eye can detect, golems wander the countryside, men turn into werebeavers (similar to werewolves, but the human morphs into a different animal form), vegetables grow large enough for families to carve out homes in the center of them, and inhabitants are haunted by ghost visions and memories of mythical worms. This subjunctive world of tall tales and ghost stories becomes a magical realm in which the locals can disseminate the values of their culture through stories that represent their multitude of singularities. This subjunctive world is where Pynchon reinserts the magic that preceded the Age of Reason into the history of America. Pynchon's forays into the subjunctive allow him to control which magic is reinserted into the narrative. As opposed to "the magic system" that Empire promulgates through its marketing arms, Pynchon presents a magic system in which discursive voices are written back into the narrative of colonial times, in which Pynchon is able to promote a value system that radically differs from the one produced by multinational corporations and national governments. Ultimately, Pynchon does not provide a single clear proposal for a more just world. He does not even provide a few clear proposals from which the reader can choose. Instead, *Mason & Dixon* narrates a series of subjunctive testimonies that serve to trigger the reader's imagination regarding what a world beyond Empire could look like.

In Chapter Four, I concentrate on Pynchon's most encyclopedic novel, *Against the Day*. I begin the examination with Pynchon's concept of bilocation, which means, literally, being in two places at the same time. I argue that Pynchon creates a bilocation between the time period when the novel is set (the end of the nineteenth and beginning of

the twentieth century) and the time when the novel was released (the early twenty-first century). The specific focus of this bilocation is the economic liberalism and anarchism that opposed it during the novel's historical time period and contemporary neoliberalism and Pynchon's construction of a resistance to it and advancement beyond it. Exploring this bilocation gives form to the project Pynchon has been undergoing since *Vineland*: envisioning a future that wrests wealth and power from the opulent few who steer at the helm of national governments, multinational corporations, and supragovernmental organizations like the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund; a future that moves the contemporary ideology away from the free market/neoliberal utopian ideal of accumulation of wealth; a future that replaces this power system and ideology with a life based upon social relations constructed out of reconstituted family systems and communities.

My investigation begins with Pynchon's use of fiction to envision new worlds and to give ideas the form and freedom they need to play themselves out logically. I move from there to an exploration of political violence. I acknowledge the immense violence in the novel and Pynchon's sympathy for the disenfranchised characters who employ violence as a means of resistance, but argue that Pynchon ultimately dismisses this violent resistance as futile. Pynchon also seems to take an ethical stance against political violence, demonstrating the impossibility of separating the means of a revolution from its ends. Nonetheless, Pynchon must give political violence freedom to reach these conclusions in his novel.

Along the lines of freedom, Chapter Four investigates notions of freedom in a neoliberal society, questioning the neoliberal hegemonic view that freedom equates to

free markets. Pynchon seems to work toward the goal of replacing the neoliberal concept of freedom (which can be further defined as the freedom to accumulate goods) with a freedom that creates more meaningful social relations. *Against the Day* builds upon constructions of alternative possible societies that Pynchon began in *Vineland* and *Mason & Dixon*. In particular, *Against the Day* situates a vision for a better society—one that replaces the contemporary neoliberal one—with freedoms based upon the concepts of nomadism, spiritual journeys, immaterial labor, intellectual inquiry, and community. His conclusions should by no means be read as a simple prescription for a new way to live. As I demonstrate below, Pynchon's subjunctive future is a flawed one. It is predicated on humans having the freedom to make choices regarding the specific forms of their nomadism, immaterial labor, and intellectual inquiry. These characters act human and at times make selfish and petty choices. They are often self-destructive. Social relations are distressed as a result. Further, due to the bilocation of the novel, the reader cannot ignore that this historical novel's future is, to some extent, the twenty-first century's past. The resistance of the Traverse family in *Against the Day* will not result in a utopia of the multitude. Or, if it eventually does, it must do so after it first withstands the twentieth-century's second world war, attacks on organized labor, witch hunts and neoliberal takeovers that threatened to destroy the American Left. Nonetheless, Pynchon is substituting his imperfect but improved vision of the future for neoliberalism's failed vision of a utopia inspired by unregulated markets.

In Chapter Five, I focus on Pynchon's most recent novel, *Inherent Vice*. With so many of the initial critics and scholars approaching *Inherent Vice* as a pastiche built from the work of Raymond Chandler, I begin my investigation of the novel by noting the

similarities between the novel and not only Chandler's *The Long Goodbye*, but also the Coen Brothers pastiche of *The Long Goodbye*, *The Big Lebowski*. I borrow from Christian Moraru's notion of rewriting to recognize not only the similarities between the novels and film, but to examine the differences. Much of the significance of Pynchon's thematic argument in *Inherent Vice* can be teased out by exploring his deviations from the texts he rewrites. Undergoing a deeper examination into Pynchon's interplay with the tropes of detective fiction and his meandering from the form's conventions affords a deeper understanding of not only the novel but the novel's place in Pynchon's construction of contemporary resistance. Specifically, I explore Pynchon's deviations with regard to masculinity, complicity, money, and love. The end result situates Pynchon's site for resistance as lying in an incremental drifting away from notions of public and private property and into a living example of an economic system based upon the commons.

To conclude once again on a personal note, something happens to a person when she rereads Pynchon's entire oeuvre in a row and delves into the bulk of the scholarship regarding his work. For me, I now begin to view myself through the metaphoric Iceland spar that Pynchon discusses in *Against the Day*. I feel as if, looking at myself, I can see the light split. In one vision, I see a scholar who has consulted all the texts, studied all the evidence, and presented his findings. In the other vision, I see multiple worlds of Pynchon scholars, all of whom approach Pynchon's vague and complex texts as so many preachers have viewed Revelations in the past. We divide into camps, all predicting our new apocalypse predicated upon obscure language that can be twisted, reformed, and sculpted into whatever worldview we wish to present. I do not say this as a means of

discounting the work I have done. One vision still shows a scholar who is convinced by the arguments I present below. I merely mention these other scholars, the bilocated ones, as a way of borrowing a notion from Brain McHale's *Constructing Postmodernism* and turning down the grand narrative of this study to a little narrative, and hopefully a useful one. In the end, hopefully that useful narrative helps to remove the shackles of sixties counterculture from Thomas Pynchon and recognize the complex view of global commodity culture, neoliberalism, Empire, counternarratives, countermovements, singularities working as a multitude, and creative commons that Pynchon has constructed over his four most recent novels. Perhaps we can all find inspiration in the hopeful endings that these four novels provide and begin to envision for ourselves a world that promises a greater freedom than the failed neoliberal utopia that has become hegemonic.

CHAPTER 2:

A *VINELAND* GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE

The final pages of *Vineland* mark a shift in Thomas Pynchon's oeuvre. Unlike the somewhat bleak, fragmented endings of his first three novels, *Vineland* ends on a hopeful note. Protagonist Prairie Wheeler has successfully completed her search for her mother, despite the interference of the diabolical federal agent, Brock Vond. In a playful allusion to *Star Wars*, the Darth Vader-like Brock descends from the sky and tells Prairie, "I'm your father." Prairie quips back, "But you can't be my father… my blood type is A. Yours is preparation H" (376). This exchange highlights Pynchon's parody of television and film's impact on contemporary Americans' cultural engagements by demonstrating characters self-reflexively using television and movie clichés in their daily dialogue. It also immediately proceeds the end of Brock Vond's power and the beginning of Prairie's liberation. Brock dies shortly thereafter and is escorted to an underworld by a pair of shady tow-truck drivers. Peace reigns among the Wobblies, communists, activists, snitches, mad men, punk rockers, and drug dealers who, along with Prairie, populate the Becker-Traverse family reunion. Even Desmond, the family dog that vanished after being attacked by blue jays in the opening paragraph of the novel, returns with a face full of blue jay feathers in the novel's final sentence. This ending gives hope, specifically, for a resistance to the power structure represented by Brock Vond. The irony of Pynchon lighting his spark of hope for resistance in 1984 is salient. Beyond the irony, though, and beyond the mixed and often negative reception that *Vineland* received upon its publication, the novel provides an entry into ideas that Pynchon went on to explore in his

next three novels. *Vineland* begins Pynchon's articulation of power and resistance in a globalized society. Though the novel precedes Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's critical trilogy *Empire*, *Multitude*, and *Commonwealth*, it is helpful to explore Hardt and Negri's concepts of Empire and the multitude in conjunction with this shift in Pynchon's oeuvre. Reading Pynchon through the lens of Hardt and Negri clarifies Pynchon's conceptions of power and resistance. It helps to alleviate David Harvey's justified criticism that Hardt and Negri offer no concrete model for resistance through the multitude. This analysis also demonstrates that the power structure in Pynchon's novels is very much in line with Hardt and Negri's concept of the Empire and that Pynchon constructs a multitude in *Vineland* which can serve as a model of resistance to Empire.

As I mention above, prior to *Vineland*, Pynchon's novels all had bleak endings. These endings were tied to the paranoia of the characters, the narrator, or both. In *Crying of Lot 49*, protagonist Oedipa Maas watches her life unravel as she gets wrapped up in the mystery of the possibly fictitious Trystero system. Like the rocket bomb that he is indelibly tied to, *Gravity's Rainbow* protagonist Tyrone Slothrop ends the novel fragmented and dispersed. Likewise, Sidney Stencil is swallowed in a freak waterspout on the final page of *V.* In all three cases, an overarching, sometimes seemingly supernatural or legendary power structure guides and manipulates the characters. Power is abstract and haunting. It has mysterious names: V. or the Trystero. In the case of *Gravity's Rainbow*, it is only ominously referred to as They. These power structures are far less abstract or supernatural in *Vineland*, which makes them seem far more surmountable. As N. Katherine Hayles observes in "'Who Was Saved?': Families, Snitches, and Recuperation in Pynchon's *Vineland*," "[T]here are also chances for

recovery in *Vineland*. Precisely because it operates on a diminished scale, the problems seem more solvable, more as if they had a human face in contrast to the inhuman, looming presences that haunt *Gravity's Rainbow*" (25). As the supernatural They or the legendary Trystero, systems of power become a force greater than Tyrone Slothrop or Oedipa Maas can comprehend, much less oppose. Prairie Wheeler, the protagonist of *Vineland*, can look her oppressor in the eye and make a joke about hemorrhoid cream. The human face of the oppressor makes possibilities for resistance palpable.

Of course, it is ironic that Pynchon situates his hope for resistance in the year 1984. It is the year in which George Orwell set his fascist dystopia, after all.[1] Several critics have commented on Pynchon's irony. In her essay "Feminist Theory and the Politics of *Vineland*," Molly Hite describes the eighties as "a time when the phrase 'American Left' sounds dangerously like an oxymoron" (140). Though Hite does not expand upon this notion, her point can be articulated fairly easily. 1984 is the year of Reagan's reelection. It signifies the heart of the neoliberal takeover. As David Harvey articulates in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, the eighties were a time when multinational corporations, governments, and supragovernmental agencies conglomerated into the power system that Hardt and Negri refer to as Empire. Beyond the accumulation of neoliberal power, the eighties represent a cultural void for some critics. In *Pynchon and History*, Shawn Smith addresses this cultural void. He states, "Rather than the real values that make for a just society, such as charity, compassion, and responsibility to one's self and others, *Vineland* shows an America largely blinded by the illusory and empty values of the culture industry and the consumerist ethos of the mid-eighties" (106). These illusory and empty values are particularly salient with regards to television.

Several critics have addressed the motif of television—or the Tube, as Pynchon refers to it—in *Vineland*. Perhaps the most in-depth analysis of the Tube in *Vineland* comes in Brian McHale's "Zapping, the Art of Switching Channels: On *Vineland*," in which McHale demonstrates the power of television over the multiple characters in the novel. McHale goes so far as to describe "an ontology of television" (126), in which "TV worlds insinuate themselves into the real world to pluralize the latter" (129). As McHale argues, the Tube shifts the ways in which the characters develop their conception of reality. This is demonstrated several times throughout the novel. For example, Prairie's boyfriend, Isaiah Two Four, cheers up Prairie in a particularly stressful moment by assuring her that the worst is nearly over. He tells her, "Only a couple more commercials, just hold on, Prair" (105). DEA agent Hector Zuñiga is not only addicted to the Tube, he finds validation for his life in cop shows. The motif persists throughout the book. It works both to comment upon and analyze the impact of the Tube on contemporary American culture and to establish a backdrop of a cultural void left by the monologue created from television's blue light.

This becomes the world and the context for Pynchon to establish a site of resistance against Empire: a society so hypnotized by television that they barely notice the neoliberal revolution taking place around them. In "The Fourth Amendment and Other Modern Inconveniences: Undeclared War, Organized Labor, and the Abrogation of Civil Rights in *Vineland*," David Thoreen explains the context: "Like Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle, who slept through the political transition from monarch to democracy, Zoyd Wheeler and the contemporary American voter have slept through a change in governments, this time from democracy to fascism" (217). This shift from

democracy to fascism, from the engaged citizenry of the sixties to the thanatoids bathed in the blue light of the eighties, creates more than an ironic situation for a nascent multitude. It creates, as Molly Hite observed, a situation in which any sense of the American Left seems like an oxymoron. However, no matter how dominant a power structure is, its power can never be complete. Empires inspire resistance movements. Exploitation breeds revolution. Economic historian Karl Polanyi explores this trend in *The Great Transformation.* He discusses double movements or countermovements that arise spontaneously to resist unregulated marketplaces. These countermovements typically lack a strong ideological or theoretical backing. Instead, they simply recognize the inevitable annihilation of land and labor inherent in a liberal market economy and rise to protect both humans and the environment.

Hints of budding countermovements can be read in glancing passages throughout the novel. For example, when Prairie meets her friend Ché at a shopping mall, they reminisce about what the narrator refers to as the Great South Coast Plaza Eyeshadow Raid (327). This raid consists of several adolescent girls roller skating into a department store to rob the make-up counters. On the surface, this may be a simple romp, kids having fun. What makes this particular flashback significant is, first, the number of girls who are involved. The narrator describes security guards overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of roller-skating adolescent shoplifters. The numbers are too great for the security guards to contend with. This resistance through sheer numbers is reminiscent of Wobblie protestors who would flood a protest in numbers so great that local jails could not contain them all. Police had no recourse for the Wobblies who outnumbered the space in the local jails other than to allow them to protest.[2] It is also reminiscent of the

great nonviolent protests led by Mahatma Ghandi in India. Of course, Ché, Prairie, and their compatriots were not outwardly staging a protest. They were shoplifting. What they did with the make-up they stole is significant, however. If the girls had kept the make-up, their actions would have validated a consumerist society by continuing to place value on consumer goods. This validation of a society based on consumerism would be, by extension, a validation of Empire because multinational corporations, governments, and the supragovernmental agencies that regulate them are all funded on consumer products. Consumerism is at the core of Empire. However, the girls involved in the Great Eyeshadow Raid attack this site of consumerism, then reject its goods. Their stolen items are "turned immediately for cash from an older person named Otis, with a panel truck headed for a swap meet far away" (328). The girls' attack is an imperfect form of resistance, yet placed in the context of both Polanyi and Pynchon's entire oeuvre, it is significant. First, the girls' raid demonstrates the machinations of a countermovement. They rise spontaneously, without great theoretical or ideological grounding, to attack a system that exploits both land and labor. Further, as Katherine Hume explains in "The Religious and Political Vision of Pynchon's *Against the Day*," "In *Gravity's Rainbow*, [Pynchon] argued that any degree of organization inevitably resulted in hierarchy and control, and only temporary black-market arrangements remained free" (173). Otis's act of trafficking stolen goods at the swap meet makes at least his stall, if not the swap meet itself, a type of black market and therefore outside the hierarchy and control of Empire. Of course, this is an imperfect example. Problems still arise. While the girls do make cash from their raid, this cash only has value in a marketplace. Thus, the attack cannot be a complete rejection of the marketplace[3]. They cannot completely remove themselves

from it. Characters such as Ché and Prairie have both demonstrated a certain amount of self-sufficiency and responsibility beyond their years. Those characteristics and their parents' unwillingness or inability to provide for the girls' basic needs may suggest the cash was used to buy food or necessities instead of the fast moving consumable goods represented by the make-up they steal. Pynchon does not follow the aftermath of the Great Eyeshadow Raid far enough to make this point clear. Nonetheless, the Great Eyeshadow Raid is an attack on Empire at its consumerist core. It somewhat rejects consumer goods. It reapportions wealth from the multinational corporation represented by the department store to a local economy represented by Otis and his swap meet. Most importantly, it gives the slightest hint to the ways in which Pynchon situates his resistance. The resistance is more fully articulated in the examples of the Becker-Traverse reunion and the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives, which I discuss below. For the time being, it is important to note that, though it is ironic and sometimes seemingly oxymoronic to situate hope for a resistance to Empire in 1984, we see that Pynchon uses the height of the neoliberal takeover as the place where the multitude begins to coalesce.

Pynchon's examinations of both this neoliberal takeover and this nascent multitude marks the beginning of the stylistic and thematic shift that occurs in *Vineland*. While Pynchon's novels are all political, his construction of a material Empire instead of a faceless, supernatural They coupled with his shift from the fragmented "preterite" characters of his first three novels to a multitude that can assemble from different perspectives yet work together against a common enemy (even if that enemy is as seemingly superficial as a department store) marks a stage in his oeuvre where Pynchon is becoming more overtly political. In "Attenuated Postmodernism: Pynchon's

Vineland," David Cowart reads Pynchon's explicit political perspective as a departure. He argues, "Pynchon produces, in *Vineland*, a fiction devoted less to indeterminate postmodernist 'play' than to totalizing modernist 'purpose' " (4). Cowart's argument that Pynchon's explicit politics marks a shift to a modernist metanarrative is compelling. It affords the opportunity to examine the theoretical framework behind these explicit politics. Cowart's conceptualization of the postmodernist rejection of grand narratives surely alludes to Jean-Francois Lyotard's "[simplified] to the extreme" definition of postmodernism "as incredulity towards *metanarratives*" (xxiv). Cowart's application of this definition to Pynchon's politics raises the question of what is meant by a metanarrative. Typically in the modernist sense, metanarrative denotes an attempt to utilize narrative form—a story with a beginning, middle, and end—to find some sort of unifying Truth or universal insight into the human condition. But does Pynchon's articulation of a global power structure and a global resistance to it constitute a totalizing modernist purpose?

First, Pynchon does not seem to be searching for a grand narrative. While he does historicize sixties rebellion (particularly the leftist student movement) and develop a site for new resistance to spring from it, he does not seem to be examining the underlying nature of rebellion and power structures. His historiography depends upon the material. He examines a specific time and the specific trends, technologies, ideologies, music, and fashion of that time. The main site of sixties rebellion is at the College of the Surf, which is firmly rooted in its unique geographical location in the neoliberal, militaristic enclave of Richard Nixon's power. The music of the sixties also plays a role significant enough to suggest that Pynchon is examining a specific rebellion rather than rebellion in general.

Even Weed Atman the ostensible leader of the rebellion, which is significantly renamed the People's Republic of Rock and Roll (PR^3), questions his role as leader by alluding to a rock and roll song. When the students of PR^3 gather behind Weed, he discourages his role as the leader of the rebellion by claiming he has no qualifications, stating, "I'm just tall, that's all" (207). This denial is a catchy allusion to "Skinny Minnie," a song originally released in 1958 by Bill Haley and the Comets, but perhaps better known by the PR^3 kids from The Sonics 1966 version.[4] The place of the PR^3 and the music surrounding it are more than window dressing. They are the foundation upon which this particular rebellion stands. Because it is so necessarily rooted in a time and place and the material conditions of that time and place, it rejects the possibility of becoming a grand narrative about the nature of rebellion. Pynchon is exploring the meaning of the sixties rebellion among American youth culture, not some unifying modernist truth about the human condition of rebellion. Pynchon even seems to reject the idea that human condition could be modified by the definite article. Surely, there is more than one human condition.

Instead, Pynchon's relationship with metanarratives seems more in line with Brian McHale's analysis of postmodern stories in *Constructing Postmodernism*. McHale suggests that postmodern writers and critics need not abandon metanarratives. Instead, "we 'turn them down' from metanarratives to 'little narratives'" (24). By removing the modernist sense of the universal, Pynchon is able to explore the parameters of both the power structures in question and the movements of resistance against them. The Empire he discusses, then, is not a timeless abstract. It is not a unifying truth of the human condition that envisions power as forever remaining concentrated in a few hands.

Instead, it is situated in a time and a place. Power becomes attributed to a network of multinational corporations, government, and supragovernmental organizations like the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the World Bank. This network may seem universal because its reach expands across the globe, but there is a difference between the universal and the global. The universal implies a timelessness, whereas Empire is rooted to specific historical events such as the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944 and the neoliberal takeover orchestrated by Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and other world leaders during the eighties. The universal implies an abstraction, a power structure like They of *Gravity's Rainbow*, whereas the global places a human face on Empire. By turning down the grand narrative of Pynchon's purpose to a little narrative, Empire becomes a force humans can directly confront and resist.

Of course, before confronting the problem of Empire, Pynchon must define what Empire denotes. Hardt and Negri define Empire as a global form of sovereignty "composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule" (xii). They define it as such in their 1999 text *Empire.* Of course, *Vineland* precedes this definition. Nonetheless, as Pynchon brings the systems of power he criticizes down to earth in *Vineland*, his description of these systems of power match Hardt and Negri's description of Empire. To understand this, it is helpful to return to the point where Pynchon moves the narrative of *Vineland* to Japan, places it in the perspective of Takeshi Fumimoto, and weaves Cold War-era monster movie tropes into his pastiche.

Takeshi, working as a freelance insurance investigator, is called to investigate the destruction of a Chipco research laboratory. Little information is given about what type

of corporation Chipco is, exactly, but the chip in their name, their ownership of a research laboratory, and their claims to have an invisible robot suggest that they are a technology company operating specifically in the computer industry. The size of their laboratory, their fleet of passenger helicopters, their private railway station, and other signifiers of opulence suggest that they are a wealthy (and therefore powerful) corporation. Takeshi is called in because, apparently, a Godzilla-type sea monster stepped out of the ocean and stomped on the research lab. Conveniently, the monster did this during an evacuation drill. Also conveniently, Chipco had recently expanded their insurance plan to cover damage done by marine animals. There are seemingly no eyewitnesses to the event.

Takeshi is, of course, skeptical. He does not know how much Professor Wawazume—the insurance whiz who sent the investigation work to Takeshi and the adjuster who recently wrote the floater for Chipco's insurance coverage—knows. Takeshi encounters a government bomb-squad expert named Minoru in the monster's footprint. Minoru shows Takeshi the shrapnel from an Eastern bloc explosive with modifications made in South Africa. The device reminds both Takeshi and Minoru of time they spent together in the Himalayas dealing with a nuclear incident.

This particular moment elucidates Pynchon's construction of the system of power in the novel. First, Chipco has clearly hired an outside explosives expert to blow up their research laboratory and make the explosion look like a monster's footprint. Wawazume's insurance company was somehow complicit in Chipco's actions. This investigation brings together a seemingly freelance insurance investigator and a government bomb-squad expert. Takeshi acknowledges that his independence as an investigator is nominal. Despite his lack of a company pin, he is indelibly tied to the

multinational corporate system. Minoru presents an interesting case as a government bomb-squad expert in a nation that not only has not been at war for over thirty years, but that ostensibly has no standing army (though, of course, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces call that assertion into question). Minoru's work investigating explosions and defusing bombs keeps him so busy that his only moments of peace occur when he is in transit, typically by airplane. The mere fact that Minoru and Takeshi know each other so well suggests that corporate and national interests are often inseparable. The investigators' knowledge of Czech and South African explosives and bomb scares on the Indian/Tibetan border demonstrates the international scope of their interests. They are clearly tied to something much larger than a single insurance claim. They are operating as appendages of a system of power that exists as a network of corporate, national, and global interests. This network is extremely wealthy, powerful, and corrupt. The narrator observes, "Far above them some planetwide struggle has been going on for years, power accumulating, lives worth less, personnel changing, still governed by the rules of gang war and blood feud, though it had far outgrown them in scale" (146). Professor Wawazume's complicity with this system of power keeps him wealthy and powerful enough to have paparazzi following him. Minoru, who refuses to believe that a monster made the footprint, unaccountably disappears, much like Joseph Heller's Dunbar, who "is disappeared" in *Catch-22*.[5] Takeshi falls somewhere between Wawazume and Minoru. He neither profits off the Empire nor challenges it. He is simply swept along by it.

Takeshi's passivity in this scene could be familiar territory. Like Tyrone Slothrop in *Gravity's Rainbow* and Oedipa Maas in *Crying of Lot 49*, Takeshi is paranoid and subject to the whims of gigantic power systems. However, Takeshi's paranoia is

validated more by his affinity for amphetamines and its common side effects than as the result of a nefarious and incomprehensible They. The gigantic power systems, again, are brought down to earth. They are a network represented by a multinational technology corporation and the militaries of a few different nations. Pynchon further explores this network by following Takeshi and Minoru from the footprint of Empire to the most clear-cut representative of the machinations of the Empire in the novel, Brock Vond.

Takeshi and Minoru, seeking clarification on the explosives debris they found under the footprint, go to a conference of federal prosecutors in search of an explosives expert. Takeshi encounters Brock Vond at this conference. Before moving on to their encounter, it is important to examine Brock's presence in Tokyo. He is there to attend this conference. The nature of the conference is not explored, but it is nonetheless curious. As a federal prosecutor for the Department of Justice, Brock's job would be more concerned with domestic laws and domestic affairs, not international laws and international affairs. Thus, his presence at an international conference would raise questions regarding what type of information the prosecutors would be sharing. Clearly, since Minoru knows he can find an expert at the conference who can identify on sight eastern European and South African explosives by the debris they leave behind, the prosecutors' scope of competence expands beyond basic legal issues. The presence of explosives experts and prosecutors like Brock who specialize in quelling domestic resistance suggests that this conference is about sharing information regarding the maintenance of multinational corporate, national, and supranational interests. In other words, Brock Vond is at a conference designed to perpetuate the power of Empire. His presence in Tokyo is thematically important because, throughout the rest of the novel,

Brock is concerned solely with domestic issues—quelling sixties rebellion and waging a drug war. At the conference, he becomes part of a global force as well as a national one.

Throughout the novel, Brock is constructed as the face of Empire. He is tied to international business concerns, domestic disputes, upper echelons of governmental powers, and to wars fought by Americans against Americans. These wars are particularly relevant to Hardt and Negri's conception of Empire. Hardt and Negri argue that "war has become a general condition: there may be a cessation of hostilities at times and in certain places, but lethal violence is present as a constant potentiality, ready always and everywhere to erupt" (*Multitude* 4). In other words, Empire maintains its power through a politics of perpetual warfare. They explain that periods of war suspend democracy, subverting human rights by claiming that winning the war supersedes the rights of individuals, and, if war can be perpetual, the suspension of human rights can be perpetual as well. The character of Sasha Gates echoes this sentiment when she recalls that, prior to World War II, her life had been about fighting exploitative corporate powers by working with unions, participating in general strikes, advocating for the release of wrongfully imprisoned union leaders, and campaigning for the labor-friendly gubernatorial candidate Culbert Olson. However, Sasha says, "The war changed everything. The deal was, no strikes for the duration. Lot of us thought it was some last desperate capitalist maneuver, a way to get the Nation mobilized under a Leader, no different than Hitler or Stalin" (77). Sasha, like Hardt and Negri, observes that the resistance to Empire often takes a back seat to the ostensibly more important issue of winning a war. Thus, Empire makes war "the primary organizing principle of society"

(Hardt and Negri, *Multitude* 12). Brock Vond becomes a figurative general of this perpetual warfare.

Vineland is largely divided between the activism of the sixties and the events surrounding the characters living in 1984. Brock is fighting a war during both of these time periods. His first war is against sixties student activism. His second is the so-called War on Drugs. Of course, neither of these are wars according to the traditional usage of the term. As David Thoreen observes, "The War on Drugs is the fourth non-war war of the century, after the 'war' on the economic problems of the Great Depression, the Cold War, and President Johnson's War on Poverty" (224-5). Thoreen further argues that the War on Drugs is fought more like a traditional war than the previous "non-war wars." Brock demonstrates this. He organizes forces against first the student activists of the PR^3 and second the residents of Vineland, who either passively condone marijuana cultivation and sales in their town or actively grow and sell marijuana. In the War on Drugs, in particular, the narrative voice[6] of *Vineland* takes on a martial tone. The narrator explains that

> most of Brock's troops had departed after terrorizing the neighborhood for weeks, running up and down the dirt lanes in formation chanting 'War-on-drugs! War-on-drugs!' strip-searching folks in public, killing dogs, rabbits, cats, and chickens, pouring herbicide down wells that couldn't remotely be used to irrigate dope crops, and acting, indeed, as several neighbors observed, as if they had invaded some helpless land far away, instead of a short plane ride from San Francisco. (357)

Hardt and Negri claim, “High intensity police action, of course, is often indistinguishable from low-intensity warfare” (*Multitude* 39). The narrative description of Brock’s war on Vineland supports this conflation. The police forces are described as “troops,” they run in formation like soldiers, they engage in chemical warfare, and, as the neighbors observe, they act as if they are invading some land far away. Brock’s version of the War on Drugs is described as an invasion of American soil by the troops of Empire. The language is similar when Brock organizes local police forces to invade the College of the Surf and dismantle the PR^3. After the invasion, Brock even brings several of the students to a facility that closely resembles a prisoner-of-war camp. The camp, which is named the Political Re-Education Program, or PREP, turns the prisoners of Brock’s war on sixties activism into double agents for the Department of Justice. The ironic name, PREP, should not be overlooked. Brock turns sixties hippies into eighties preppies. Most importantly, however, through his invasions and prison camps, Brock demonstrates that his work goes beyond the Department of Justice and engages in Empire’s politics of perpetual war.

Beyond his role in these domestic wars—which could perhaps be described as civil wars—Brock holds onto his role as an agent of Empire by only a tenuous thread. Granted, Brock is incredibly powerful, particularly with regards to characters like Frenesi Gates, her husband Flash, and Zoyd Wheeler. Even his partner Roscoe seems to be under Brock’s sovereignty. Roscoe handles Brock the way an amateur snake handler deals with the cobra in his hand: keeping it an arm’s length away, perpetually aware that it could strike at any second. Brock also works throughout the novel to perpetuate the power of

Empire. He seeks to be part of the upper echelons of power. Nonetheless, he himself is not Empire.

As I mention above, Pynchon brings the power systems down to earth in *Vineland*. He mentions them by name, identifying Them as

> Hitler, Roosevelt, Kennedy, Nixon, Hoover, Mafia, CIA, Reagan, Kissinger, that collection of names and their tragic interweaving that stood not constellated above in any nightwide remoteness of light, but below, diminished to the last unfaceable American secret. (372)

Thus, for Pynchon, the once supernatural They becomes the earthly leaders who consolidated neoliberal power: the fascist Adolf Hitler; the anti-labor, corporate-friendly presidents Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon; criminal organizations like the Mafia and federal organizations like the CIA who both strive to maintain a multinational, consumer-driven corporate culture; leaders of anti-democratic military coups like Henry Kissinger; and perpetuators of a politics of perpetual warfare like Franklin (or even Theodore) Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy.

The systems of power, as they are named here, represent the more powerful members of Empire. Hardt and Negri invite readers to view Empire "as a tree structure that subordinates all of the branches to a central root" (*Empire* 300). Hitler, Roosevelt, and that "collection of names" are perhaps higher branches. Utilizing other metaphors, Hardt and Negri refer to Empire as both a horizontal network and a hierarchy. Empire's power is spread out among various competing interests who hold various amounts of power, yet power is not expanded beyond this network. Thus, to return to the metaphor of the tree, Brock aspires to climb to a higher branch. After all, "He'd caught a fatal

glimpse of that level where everybody knew everybody else, where however political fortunes below might bloom and die, the same people, the Real Ones, remained year in and year out, keeping what was desirable flowing their way" (276). Brock feels limited in his ability to rise within the hierarchy of Empire. He believes that the more powerful individuals would forever view him as little more than a hired thug whose services benefited them, and, further, who became expendable once his services were no longer needed. Like the Darth Vader Brock alludes to in his final scene with Prairie Wheeler, Brock has only limited power. He is manipulated by the Real Ones who hold a greater amount power within Empire.

This represents a significant divide in the way in which Pynchon deals with power. Unlike the black-and-white, binary opposition of *Gravity's Rainbow*, where They held power over a preterite population that would ostensibly represent Us, *Vineland* brings power relations into a discursive, gray area where They, to some extent, become Us. Or, at least, We are indelibly, perhaps even inevitably, complicit in perpetuating Them. While Brock Vond is certainly complicit in perpetuating the power of Empire, he is also excluded from it at its highest levels and he is exploited by it. His power is largely an illusion—despite the fact that he can manipulate the system to create very real consequences—because his power is subject to the whims of Empire. This is exemplified in his attack on Vineland. Though Brock is allowed to invade the area, confiscate land (including Zoyd Wheeler's trailer), and direct operations, his power is stripped away when, "Suddenly, some white male far away must have wakened from a dream, and just like that, the clambake was over" (376). Brock's funding is pulled away from him. He is forced to retaliate on the verge of his greatest authoritarian victory. This pulling of

Brock's funding and his power illustrates that he is only as powerful as the Real Ones allow him to be and that he can be discarded at whim without upsetting the nature of their power. Just as Frenesi and Flash were earlier victims of budget cuts that ended their federal career as snitches, so was Prosecutor Vond, who believed he had a greater stake in this system of power. In this respect, Brock is coupled not with Empire, which exploits his talents and discards him as soon as those talents are no longer profitable to them, but with characters like federal snitches Frenesi and Flash, who are neither part of the Empire nor part of the multitude, exactly. Further, Brock becomes aligned with the Mafioso figure of the novel Ralph Wayvone, who recognizes that, regardless of his underworld power, he will remain a "wholly-owned subsidiary" (93). Ralph is a subsidiary of a multinational corporation while Brock (and Frenesi and Flash) are subsidiaries a the American government. Nonetheless, they are all complicit in perpetuating the power of Empire while, at the same time, being exploited by it.

In general, this characteristic of being simultaneously complicit and exploited extends to most of the characters in the novel and is significant to the concept of resistance against systems of power. The significance lies in the details of the complicity and exploitation, specifically, how complicit one is and in what ways one is exploited. As Molly Hite observes, "In *Vineland*, complicity is a fact of life, but it … is not by definition total and does not by definition rule out resistance" (147). Instead, characters must ask themselves in what ways they are complicit in perpetuating systems of power, and they must examine the sites for resistance. These issues of complicity, which lie at the heart of *Vineland*, echo one of the arguments Linda Hutcheon makes in *The Politics of Postmodernism*. Hutcheon asserts, "[T]he postmodern we know has to acknowledge

its own complicity with the very values upon which it seeks to comment" (10). In other words, resistance can only begin once the characters (and by extension, the readers) recognize the ways in which they perpetuate the system they criticize. The character of Zoyd Wheeler provides a convenient illustration of this concept.

Throughout the novel, Zoyd and his nemesis Hector make much of Zoyd's "virginity" with regards to his non-informant status. When seemingly everyone in the novel is selling, trading, or bargaining for information to take down sixties rebellion, Zoyd refuses to become an informant. His virgin status in this regard validates, for him at least, his identity as a countercultural figure. His resistance takes a negative status—that he was never an informant—rather than a positive status as one who has advanced any sort of cause. He is presented as someone who operates outside the boundaries of consumerist culture and government oppression, yet his very livelihood is provided by the federal government in the form of Supplemental Security Income provided by his annual acts of public insanity. Should he fail to perform one of these acts annually, he stands to lose not only his income, but custody of his daughter Prairie. In this way Zoyd—like Frenesi, Flash, and Brock—is in the employ of the federal government. Further, because the SSI checks are not enough to fully support Zoyd, he works a variety of odd jobs in and around Vineland. Most of these jobs are piecemeal. None of them are union. His willingness to take this work undermines the power of the unions that once organized in Vineland, the very unions for which Prairie's grandmother Sasha worked, the unions Prairie's great-grandfather Jess Traverse fought for and, during the fight, lost the ability to walk. Thus, Zoyd's self-identification as a countercultural figure is complicated by his complicity. The first thing he must do to engage in viable resistance

is recognize this complicity. He is dependent upon the federal government for his livelihood. His scab status helps to perpetuate the ever-widening divide between the those who control the wealth and those who create it. His complicity undermines his resistance. Nonetheless, as I argue below, his complicity does not completely eliminate his power to resist.

In order to discover the site where Zoyd and, by extension, Pynchon's audience can resist Empire despite our complicity in perpetuating it, I turn to the opposing sites of resistance created by Pynchon in *Vineland*: the failed student movement of the sixties[7] and the emerging multitude of the eighties. Like Pynchon's novel, this essay will begin with an analysis of the failed rebellion and end with an exploration into new possibilities. Because *Vineland* views sixties rebellion through the retrospective eyes of Prairie Wheeler, I will do the same.

At its core, *Vineland* is a novel about Prairie Wheeler, the daughter of sixties revolutionaries, searching for her deadbeat mother. Entwined in Prairie's search for her mother is a search for ways in which to create an identity. This identity is reliant upon a family and cultural history that Prairie has limited access to. In this regard, Prairie's search for her mother is also a search for herself, her future, and her role in an America that Pynchon presents as at war with itself. Prairie's search is most poignant when she investigates her mother's role in the student activist group 24 fps. Prairie experiences the sixties through files stored on the Kunoichi archive computers and the film archives kept by former 24 fps member Ditzah in her house in the San Fernando Valley. The counternarrative to sixties rebellion told through these archives serves as a synecdoche of student rebellion. Pynchon's historiography matches that of his former Cornell classmate

and collaborator[8] Kirkpatrick Sale's description of real-life activists Students for Democratic Society in his book *SDS*. According to Sale, the story of the SDS is

> a story which above all tries to explain how in ten years an organization could transform itself from an insignificant band of alienated intellectuals into a major national force; what that force meant to the universities, the society, and the individuals it touched; what happened to undo it just as it appeared to reach the height of its power; and what legacy it left behind. (6)

Likewise, Prairie watches 24 fps from its inception as an insignificant band of alienated activists to its confrontation with the Justice Department at the College of the Surf, where student activism has gained in power, arrogance, and naivety enough to commandeer private property and secede from the United States. Prairie traces this evolution down to its failure, just as Sale does with the SDS.

In both cases, the failure is coupled with a turn toward violent resistance. Sale begins his historiography of the SDS with the explosive end of the group. The explosion was both literal—several members of the SDS were killed when the bombs they were making exploded—and figurative—the explosion effectively ended the SDS; nothing was left of the movement but metaphoric fragments. The stylistic decision of Sale's to begin his story of the SDS with its violent ending reminds his readers that, regardless of what happens throughout the rest of his history, it will end in failure. This structure serves to use the history of the SDS as a warning against the futility of violent resistance. In *There's Something Happening Here: The New Left, the Klan, and FBI Counterintelligence*, David Cunningham's history of COINTELPRO, Cunningham seconds Sale's interpretation, stating, "The emergence of the Weather Underground

signaled the end of SDS as a viable mass movement" (65). In other words, when the members of the SDS transformed into the Weather Underground and employed violence as its primary tool of resistance, the entire movement crumbled.

Likewise, Pynchon uses the violence at the College of the Surf to explode 24 fps. Prior to their engagement in the College of the Surf, 24 fps is a not exactly pacifistic. One of the novel's protagonists, the character named Darryl Louise Chastain (DL), has a violent role in the organization. She serves as "security," which means violent engagement to her. What is significant about her role, however, is its scale and its scope of practice. She uses violence only as a resistance, never as an advancement. She defends. She does not attack. In almost every case, when, as a member of 24 fps, she engages violently with her opposition, the engagement is tailored to transport herself and other members of 24 fps away from danger and to a safe place. Once 24 fps enters the College of the Surf, however, the actions of their rebellion mirrors those of civil war. The members of PR^3 secede from the United States. The members of PR^3 must know that the act of commandeering American soil for foreign purposes will be seen as an act of aggression or invasion by the United States. Thus, this secession is a direct confrontation. The members had to know that it would—as it did—provoke a hostile response from the federal government. Further, the PR^3 ultimately fails as soon as a gun is introduced into the equation. Brock Vond gives the gun to Frenesi Gates, who passes it on to her fellow activist Rex Snuvvle, who uses it to kill Weed Atman, the reluctant leader of the PR^3. Following the shooting, federal forces invade the PR^3 and violently take it back. The members of 24 fps disperse, never to reassemble as an activist group. The student resistance is quelled.

Prairie witnesses these events in the novel's 1984, in the context of Brock Vond's pursuit of her and her mother. She contemplates the methods of ridding herself of Brock. DL tells her, "[U]nless you can call on troops in regimental strength, and the hardware that goes with 'em, best not even think about messing with Brock" (266). For DL, who has already tried to kill Brock once and who has witnessed Brock's ability to wage war against the American people in both the sixties at the College of the Surf and in the eighties in Vineland, violent resistance to Brock is futile. Implicit in her comment, though, is the notion that, unless a resistance group can assemble the military might of Empire, violent resistance is futile. The College of the Surf incident demonstrates exactly how undermanned the PR^3 is to deal with the forces assembled by the Justice Department. After all, Brock's troops decimate the entire movement in a matter of hours. Likewise, the SDS demonstrated the futility of bomb-making against the world's largest military power.

Part of the impetus behind violent resistance in *Vineland* is presented as naivety. While discussing the PR^3's secession, the narrator comments, "In those days it was still unthinkable that any North American agency would kill its own civilians and then lie about it" (248). From Prairie's 1984 perspective and the reader's nineties perspective, this disbelief in the U.S. government's willingness to wage war against its citizens is naïve. After all, both Prairie and Pynchon's initial audience are experiencing the War on Drugs, the most militaristic of America's twentieth-century non-war wars. Even from Sasha Gates's perspective as the daughter and granddaughter of labor activists familiar with the wrongful convictions and executions of the Haymarket martyrs in Chicago in 1887; the wrongful conviction and execution of Joe Hill; the battle between striking steel

workers and Andrew Carnegie's mercenaries (who were backed by the state militia) in Homestead, Pennsylvania in 1892; the massacre of striking miners and their families by the National Guard in Ludlow, Colorado in 1914[9]; and various other incidents in this vein, an American war on American people is far from unthinkable. By showing this violent strain of sixties rebellion both through the perspective of Prairie and following explorations into Sasha's activism in the thirties, forties, and fifties, *Vineland* presents violent resistance to Empire as futile and lacking in both historical knowledge and critical thought.[10]

Thus far in the novel, Pynchon—like Hardt and Negri—defines Empire not as a faceless or supernatural enemy but as a network of humans at the helm of multinational corporations, governments, and supragovernmental agencies; he presents Empire as engaged in a series of civil wars as a means of restricting civil rights; he considers the role of complicity with Empire among those who resist it; and he analyzes the failure of violent revolution. His final step, then, is to provide a positive site for resistance. He does this most saliently in two places: first, with regards to the family at the Becker-Traverse family reunion, and second in the social and economic alternatives suggested by the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives.

Vineland ends with most of the major characters gathered at the Becker-Traverse family reunion. The narrator introduces the reunion in idyllic tones, describing dawn gracefully emerging in the great north woods of California. The Beckers, Traverses, and other guests arise to this almost mythical morning. Even woodland creatures arise among them. This is followed by a bustle of pleasant activity that denotes families enjoying quality time with one another. The land upon which they gather is also intriguing. The

reunion is held, apparently, not in a state or national park nor on a campground or any other type of private property. No one has paid a fee to camp there. The land lies off the beaten path, away from county or state roads, in a place that, strictly speaking, may not exist in Northern California. It is clear that no one in the Becker-Traverse clan owns the land. No one profits from the land. It seems to be an old growth forest that the Beckers, Traverses, and whomever else attends the reunion use gently, then leave for the next creatures who should pass by. Because the land is not turned into a commodity (a campground, timberland for a logging company) or a public property (a park, a preserve), because it lies off the network of public and private roads and is instead accessible through paths worn by vehicles accessing the land, because it is not policed by federal, state, or county employees or by private security, the land is relatively autonomous from capital and Empire. It therefore exemplifies the Marxist notion of the commons. This is where Pynchon begins to develop his site for resistance to Empire.

The notion of family at the family reunion is greatly expanded in the narrative. Significantly, very few of the characters assembled at the Becker-Traverse family reunion are named Becker or Traverse. Several, strictly speaking, cannot be considered related to the Beckers or the Traverses. This is particularly true once characters like DL, Takeshi, and a handful of Thanatoids join characters like Zoyd at the reunion. While all are taken to be family, none are related. Instead, those who gather at the reunion constitute a reconstructed familial community that has been drawn together by their resistance to (and, to some extent, complicity in) Empire. The metaphor of family is important because the characters seem to be together less by choice and more as a circumstance of their births, their socioeconomic status, and their place in a systems of power. Like most

families, the guests at the Becker-Traverse reunion are not a unified group. Pynchon has constructed them, instead, as a motley assemblage. They cannot be lumped together into a false concept like The People. Instead, they mirror Hardt and Negri's definition of the multitude. According to Hardt and Negri, "The multitude is composed of innumerable internal differences that can never be reduced to a unity or a single identity—different cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations; different forms of labor; different ways of living; different views of the world; and different desires" (*Multitude* xiv). In accordance with this definition, those who gather at the reunion come from various walks of life. They are Wobblies, pot growers, victims of the fifties red scare, socialists, labor activists, veterans of the sixties student movement, and others living on what is often conveniently and erroneously referred to as the fringes of society.

Several critics have interpreted this assembly at the Becker-Traverse family reunion as a site of resistance. Among them, Shawn Smith notes, "Families, surrogate families, and communal social structures oppose the text's fascist collective" (129). Smith's simple passage highlights the importance of a sense of family and community as the specific resistance to fascism. His statement echoes N. Katherine Hayles's argument in " 'Who Was Saved?': Families, Snitches, and Recuperation in Pynchon's *Vineland*," where she convincingly argues that Pynchon develops a dichotomy in *Vineland*, positing the anti-family agents of suppression such as Brock Vond against the more family-oriented activists such as Sasha Gates and Zoyd Wheeler. Pynchon further articulates the nature of the resistance when he has Jess Traverse read a passage from Ralph Waldo Emerson, which Jess first encountered in William James's *The Variety of Religious Experience*:

> Jess reminded them, " 'Secret retributions are always restoring the level, when disturbed, of the divine justice. It is impossible to tilt the beam. All the tyrants and proprietors and monopolists of the world in vain set their shoulders to heave the bar. Settles forever more the ponderous equator to its line, and man and mote, and star and sun, must range to its line, or be pulverized by the recoil.'" (369)

The many layers of this citation are significant. The fact that it comes from Jess Traverse, who is less a patriarch in the family—after all, he has hardly appeared in the pages of the novel until this moment, and he is presented as someone who neither seeks for nor wants control of the lives of his family members—and more simply the family elder suggests that Pynchon is connecting the wisdom of this citation not with patriarchy but with a wisdom drawn from shared history. That shared history is passed on not only from family elders, but from intellectuals who have come to represent a certain freedom of thought and questioning of authority. Because Jess originally read the passage in a "jailhouse copy" (369) of James's book, the wisdom also comes from some anonymous, community-oriented individual who saw fit to donate this book—through one means or another—to a jail library. Finally, this citation comes to the reader from Thomas Pynchon as a way of highlighting the importance of creating a counternarrative to Empire's narrative of resistance. Whereas a "traditional" or Empirical view of history would likely attempt to promote history as a single objective truth and a collection of unrelated events, this counternarrative, which ties together the resistance of Transcendentalists, Wobblies, criminals, communists, hippies, and punk rockers, suggests that their resistance movements have taken on what Hardt and Negri refer to as a "multitude form" ("The Fight for 'Real Democracy'"). That is, while each of these

movements retain their singularity, they are nonetheless bound together by a common resistance to economies that privilege accumulation over social relations. Thus, while Pynchon does investigate the failure of turning to violence in sixties rebellion, he also argues, through this passage, that sixties rebellion, like that of communists and labor activists that preceded it, like the punk rockers of Prairie's generation that follow it, all aid in "restoring the level… of the divine justice." This counternarrative echoes Polanyi's notion of a countermovement.

Jess's validation of resistance movements at the end of Pynchon's novel which, to some extent, explores the failures of those movements, demonstrates what Stefan Mattessich refers to as Pynchon's "refus[al] to surrender the myth of the American promise" (9). The American Left, with their desire for a more democratic society, with their embrace of the commons, with their focus on reconstructed families and communities, are not an oxymoron and they have not been destroyed by the Reagan years. They are, in fact, gathered to resist the corporate takeover of the American promise. As Molly Hite observes, "This return is not a restoration; it does not bring back the sixties—or the thirties, or the teens. But it does reconstitute a community of resistance in a widened historical context" (148). The Becker-Traverse reunion groups together resistance movements that have previously been historicized as separate: the Wobblies, fifties communists, sixties student activists, and eighties punk rockers. In his history of the SDS, David Cunningham notes, "The SDSers … clearly separated themselves from many Old Leftists by asserting that such reforms did not require the working class as the driving agent of change" (44). In *Vineland*, Pynchon heals this separation. He does not present the Old Leftists and the New Left as a unified whole.

They are instead part of the multitude: “groups we had previously assumed to have different and even contradictory interests manag[ing] to act in common” (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude* 86) Zoyd Wheeler, despite his scab activities, aligns himself with a family of labor activists. Frenesi Gates, the federal snitch, jitterbugs with her mother Sasha Gates, whose career in Hollywood was destroyed by federal snitches through the House Un-American Activities Committee. The multitude at the reunion resist the Empire that exploits them by gathering on land in the public commons and turning to reconstructed families and communities for support. As Eric Solomon argues, “[A]ll the characters and themes of the novel will coalesce at the end as surreal forces will combine to sustain family and defeat the government” (163). The text supports Solomon’s argument and expands beyond it. Not only do the characters coalesce to sustain family and defeat the government. They strike a blow to the multinational corporations and supragovernmental agencies that comprise Empire, as well. Brock Vond, the agent of the Empire, the Darth Vader, is destroyed. Prairie, the hope for a new generation, stands up to him. The reunion demonstrates Hardt and Negri’s notion, “Dominance, no matter how multidimensional, can never be complete and is always contradicted by resistance” (*Multitude* 54). The Becker-Traverse family reunion is the site of resistance against Empire’s dominance.

The reunion as Pynchon’s site of resistance, however, is incomplete. The multitude assembles at the reunion. The assembly serves to demonstrate the power of the commons and community. Prairie’s arrival at the reunion is preceded by her flashback to the Great Eyeshadow Raid, which allows the reunion to also be cast as a rejection of consumerism. Pynchon’s construction of the reunion further serves as a counternarrative

to the typical historiography of sixties rebellion. All of these points are significant. This idyllic moment in mythical Vineland even has a moral like any other fable. N. Katherine Hayles summarizes the moral: "If salvation comes, it will arrive by cherishing the small everyday acts of kindness that flourish in networks of kinship and friendship" (28). However, it is equally significant to recognize that the multitude, the commons, the reconstructed family and community, the rejection of consumerism, and the counternarrative are not enough to defeat Brock Vond. Brock instead suffers his real defeat when his funding is pulled by a nameless white man in the upper echelons of Empire. Further, Brock's defeat may symbolize a temporary respite for the multitude from the tyranny of Empire, but Empire has not suffered any real defeat. They have simply moved their perpetual war to another front.

The reunion alone as the site of resistance is problematic. The first problem lies in its lack of efficacy. Again, the reunion does not defeat Empire. The second problem lies in the reunion's lack of acknowledgement of its own complicity. On this public commons, among this reconstructed community, the Beckers, Traverses, and guests watch televisions, they camp in recreational vehicles that are notorious gas guzzlers, they cook breakfast in RV microwaves or on propane stoves, they drink coffee, and they generally consume their consumables. Appearances to the contrary, they have not completely escaped Empire. Their gasoline and propane purchases support multinational oil corporations. Their recreational vehicles support the automobile industry. The coffee they drink is emblematic of globalized trade and Americans addiction to it (a point Pynchon extensively articulates in *Mason & Dixon*). Perhaps most importantly, television, as Isaiah Two Four points out, at least partially led to the failure of sixties

rebellion. All of this money spent on the reunion helps to perpetuate Empire. If Pynchon's hope for resistance is to expand beyond what Hayles refers to as "a few moments of grace" (28), the reader must look elsewhere in the text.

This expansion of Pynchon's site of resistance lies in the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives.[11] Unlike the Becker-Traverse family reunion, which is an annual respite from the power of Empire, the Sisterhood serves as a perpetual safe harbor for the multitude. When DL becomes too entwined in the interests of Empire, culminating in her assassination attempt on Brock Vond, she flees to the Sisterhood, knowing it is the only safe place for her to untangle herself. Likewise, when Brock Vond begins sniffing around Vineland and posing a threat to Prairie, DL brings her to the Sisterhood's mountainside retreat, where Prairie is able to hide out long enough to make sense of her dilemma. Even Takeshi seeks his resurrection through the Sisterhood. A complex set of coincidences leads DL to nearly assassinate Takeshi by using a martial arts technique known as the death touch, which sets in motion a pattern that will result in the death of the victim one year after the technique has been used. Realizing her mistake, DL flees. Realizing that he has been touched, Takeshi pursues. The Sisterhood offers a place for both, and, absurd as it seems, the Sisterhood even possesses the machinery needed to reverse the effects of the death touch. Because it exists in the novel as a safe harbor, a hideout, and a place of rebirth, the mountainside retreat of the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives deserves further examination as a site of resistance.

In all likelihood, the mountainside retreat strays from the vision of Hardt and Negri with respect to the multitude. While Hardt and Negri come from a Marxist tradition and demonstrate an inherent mistrust of private property, the mountainside

retreat of the Sisterhood exists within the logic of late capitalism. The retreat is on private property. They protect this property with a gate. Thus, it is even a gated community. Further, they are funded through the lucrative "self-improvement business" (107). They advertise in mass market magazines. They market themselves to children. They rely on a mixture of nostalgia and orientalism to sell their self-improvement platform. Through all of these elements, they demonstrate their complicity within Empire.

Recognizing this complicity is the first step in the Sisterhood's resistance. They understand the logic of the market and work within it. Despite their somewhat deceptive marketing attempts, however, their program of spiritual rebirth is not presented as a façade. All of the characters in the novel who turn to the Sisterhood in a time of need find what they need at the retreat. DL is untangled from Empire there. Prairie does begin to find her mother and, through that act, begins to find herself and her role in society while she is at the retreat. Takeshi is reborn there (annually, in fact). Even the Sisterhood's advertising campaign's soft promises of "some chorus line of Asian dewdrops" (107) are destroyed when visitors arrive to find the Sisterhood a multi-ethnic group. Further, though they exist on private property, that property is open to members of the multitude who can, as Prairie explains it, "earn what you eat, secure what you shit" (109). Even the gates function in the book to prevent Empire's invasion rather than to prevent the arrival of the multitude. Through these methods, the Sisterhood's complicity becomes conscious. This consciousness allows them to manipulate it in their favor.

When Hardt and Negri discuss the specifics of resistance from the multitude, they observe, "The most important organizational characteristic of these various movements is

their insistence on autonomy and their refusal of any centralized hierarchy, leaders, or spokespeople" (*Multitude* 86). In other words, resistance movements are organized more like a network that do have leaders and spokespeople, just not centralized ones. For example, Subcommandante Marcos can exist as a voice for the resistance movement in Chiapas, but he cannot exist as *the* voice for the resistance movement. He is free to speak provided he clarifies that he speaks for himself. Likewise, the Sisterhood does have leaders, just not centralized leaders. For example, Prairie, in her effort to earn her place at the retreat, becomes the head of the kitchen. She takes charge over the menu and the use of resources. She manages the others in the kitchen. She is not, however, part of a hierarchal chain of command. She simply fills a need. Sister Rochelle, who is described as "Senior Attentive, or mother superior of the place" (108), does fill a leadership role. She outlines conditions for DL, Prairie, and Takeshi's stay at the Kunoichi, but her role rejects the logic of late capitalism in two significant ways. First, as I mention above, all of these characters find what they need at the retreat. Sister Rochelle facilitates this process. Her role is one of nurturing and assistance. She does not seek to profit off DL, Prairie, or Takeshi. She does not exploit their labor. She instead ensures that their time at the retreat is communally profitable. Second, Sister Rochelle rejects standard notions of competition associated with capitalism. Though the Sisterhood is in the business of spiritual readjustment, Sister Rochelle tacitly supports DL and Takeshi's enterprise into what they refer to as karmic readjustment. The two groups work in concert for their mutual benefit rather than attempting to destroy each other through profit-driven competition.

Ultimately, the Sisterhood stands in opposition to Empire. Pynchon makes this clear from the very introduction of the mountainside retreat. The narrator introduces the retreat through the eyes of Prairie:

> As they got closer, Prairie saw archways, a bell tower, an interpenetration with the tall lime surfaces of cypresses, pepper trees, a fruit orchard ... nothing looked especially creepy to her. She was a California kid, and she trusted in vegetation. What was creepy, the heart of creep-out, lay back down the road behind her, in, but not limited to, the person, hard and nearly invisible, like quartz, of her pursuer, Brock Vond. (108)

This description first envisions the retreat through an ecological perspective. The lushness of the vegetation is welcoming, a sense of home from Prairie (as, perhaps, her name itself would suggest). It secondly presents a dichotomy: Prairie's very identity is reinforced by the retreat while the Empire (and I say "Empire" because the heart of creep-out for Prairie includes but is not limited to Brock) that lies behind her threatens to destroy her. In this way, Pynchon signals to his reader another site of resistance to Empire. It resides in a social business: one that is complicit to corporate society but recognizes that complicity and moves beyond it; one that rejects consumerism by refusing to sell consumables and by rejecting the notion of spirituality as a commodity; one that accepts payments beyond the typical system of cash currency; one that exists for mutual profit instead of exploitative profit; one that reconstructs notions of family and community to provide a safe harbor; and one that rejects competition in favor of cooperation. This social business alone is not enough to take down the Empire in the novel. It exists only as a respite from the novel. But the Sisterhood of Kunoichi

Attentives' mountainside retreat coupled with the Becker-Traverse family reunion serve to introduce Pynchon's conceptions of a world that can exist in opposition to Empire.

These two examples serve only as the beginning of Pynchon's investigation into new sites of resistance. His three subsequent novels expand and articulate these notions. *Mason & Dixon* travels back to the revolutionary atmosphere that preceded the new republic of the United States to construct a coherent vision of the multitude as the true founders of the American promise. *Against the Day* both further explores the futility of violence in resistance to Empire and expands the counternarrative of resistance movements, specifically the anarchist and socialist movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. *Inherent Vice* further develops the socially conscious alternative economic structure hinted at by the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives. All three of these novels enlarge the notion of a reconstructed familial community and its revolutionary potential.

While these novels more clearly articulate Pynchon's sites for resistance, they all rely on the framework established in *Vineland*. After all, *Vineland* serves to bring systems of power down to earth, to give these powers human faces, and present them as surmountable. *Vineland* introduces and explores the destructive elements of Empire's perpetual civil war and highlights the importance of recognizing how these non-war wars are really attacks on both the American people and the American promise. *Vineland* shifts complicity away from binary structures of us versus them and into a gray area wherein people can recognize their complicity in perpetuating the systems they oppose yet use this recognition as a starting point for a new path of resistance. *Vineland* demonstrates the futility of violent resistance to Empire while simultaneously proposing

new methods of peaceful attack. For all of these reasons, *Vineland* serves as the thematic foundation for *Mason & Dixon*, *Against the Day*, and *Inherent Vice*. Pynchon's new approach to the American promise begins here.

CHAPTER 3:

A *MASON & DIXON* GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE

Mason & Dixon continues the shift in Thomas Pynchon's oeuvre initiated by *Vineland*. The novel's narrator, Reverend Wicks Cherrycoke, tells the story of astronomer Charles Mason and land surveyor Jeremiah Dixon constructing the border between Pennsylvania and Maryland, the border which would bear their names and go on to become the infamous dividing line between the North and South, or, as Dixon phrases it in the novel, the "Line between their Slave-Keepers, and their Wage-Payers" (692). The story begins with Mason and Dixon's time in South Africa, recording the first transit of Venus in 1761[12] for the British Royal Society. Their story continues through their years on the line (1763-1768), their separate recordings of the second transit of Venus in 1769, Dixon's death in 1779, and until the death of Charles Mason in 1786, a week prior to Cherrycoke embarking upon his nearly-month-long storytelling session. As a postmodern reprisal of Walter Benjamin's storyteller[13], Cherrycoke narrates the construction of the concept of America and how it was born in concert with global trade. He bears witness to the nascent Empire (as Michael Hardt and Antonia Negri define the term) built of national governments and the sovereignty they share with global trade companies like the British and Dutch East India Companies that were referred to in the eighteenth century as "chartered companies" though today would be referred to as multinational corporations. By following Mason and Dixon through the slave colonies of Dutch South Africa, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, Cherrycoke confronts the interrelationship between Empire and slavery, as well as examines the depth of injustice

and exploitation inherent in a system of global commodity culture. Finally, through this self-reflexive historiography in which Cherrycoke is given free reign to wander into the subjunctive, or the imagined as true[14], Pynchon explores the possibilities of creating a more just America, one that changes the course of the visto carved from a legacy of slavery, genocide, and class and gender oppression.

Before Cherrycoke is able to begin his tale, he and his listeners are situated in a context of conspicuous consumption. Just as *Gravity's Rainbow* begins with, "A screaming comes across the sky" (3), which serves notice to the reader: she is about to embark upon a breakneck journey through the birth of rocket science and into humanity's perhaps sexual love of death, *Mason & Dixon* begins with a loaded projectile. In the latter case, the screaming across the sky is softened to the lob of a snowball: "Snow-Balls have flown their Arcs" (5). The flight is followed by a scene of wealth, privilege, and abundance. The children put away their toys and enter into a rich scene of consumables "punctuated by the ringing Lids of Boilers and Stewing-Pots, fragrant with Pie-Spices, peel'd Fruits, Suet, heated Sugar" (5), decorated by expensive (and not-so-expensive) furniture either purchased from or constructed from materials found in various spots around the globe. All of these representatives of global commodity culture have been paid for by the ethically dubious weapons dealer and family patriarch, Wade LeSpark. The reader learns in a subsequent chapter that "Mr. LeSpark made his Fortune years before the War, selling weapons to French and British, Settlers and Indians alike,—Knives, Tomahawks, Rifles, Hand-Cannons in the old Dutch Style, Grenades, small Bombs" (27). Further, LeSpark's brother-in-law and the novel's storyteller Wicks Cherrycoke begins his tale by explaining that he has been banned from England but

continues to live on a stipend that his father "has ever kept his promise to remit to me, by way of certain Charter'd Companies" (9). In this way, Cherrycoke establishes his complicity in the chartered companies, their global trade, and the subsequent wars and slavery inherent in this system of Empire. Further, when his nephews ask for a story of America, the story opens following the precedent Pynchon set in *Gravity's Rainbow*, that is, major themes are established in the first sentences. The story is told, and therefore understood, through the context and the lens of a society built upon consumables, global trade, dubious ethics, war, and slavery. Moreover, Cherrycoke's complicity in these injustices which he will criticize is established at the onset of his tale.

Just as Cherrycoke must live under the umbrella of chartered companies, Mason and Dixon's trajectory is established by them. The power of these chartered companies is first presented to Mason by the future Royal Astronomer Nevil Maskelyne, with whom Mason is stationed at St. Helena. Maskelyne says:

> "We are quite the Pair, then,— that is, I presume," peering at Mason, "both subjects of the same Invisible Power? No? What is it, think ye? Something richer than many a Nation, yet with no Boundaries,— which, tho' never part of any Coalition, yet maintains its own great Army and Navy,— able to pay for the last War, as the next, with no more bother than finding the Key to a certain iron Box,— yet which allows the Britannick Governance that gave it Charter, to sink beneath oceanick Waves of Ink incarnadine." (140).

Though the power of which Maskelyne speaks is "invisible," he sees its workings quite clearly. He speaks specifically of the East India Company, which has the power to wage and fund a series of colonial wars in the Indian subcontinent. Perhaps Maskelyne's direct

connection to the East India Company through his brother-in-law and the administrator of the E.I.C., Clive of India, allows Maskelyne to recognize the power this chartered company holds, the wealth it is capable of amassing, and the political power it wields. Long before Mason or Dixon connect their work for the Royal Society to these chartered companies, Maskelyne—whose connections to Clive will perhaps be the deciding factor in his ascension to Astronomer Royal—outlines the power for Mason. Maskelyne's explanation serves to articulate for Mason and Dixon "the connections between the [East India] Company and their Royal Society employers, portrayed in terms of marriages no less dynastic than those between royal families" (Olster, 112). Mason is not yet prepared to confront the overwhelming power of Empire, so he dismisses Maskelyne's explanation with a joke.

On the verge of their voyage to America to create the line that will bear their name, Mason and Dixon finally do acknowledge their complicity with Empire. Dixon asks Mason, "[W]hy has ev'ry Observation site propos'd by the Royal Society prov'd to be a Factory, or Consulate, or other Agency of some royally Charter'd Company?" Mason responds, "Charter'd Companies may indeed be the form the World has now increasingly begun to take" (252). Dixon, like Mason in the earlier conversation with Maskelyne, dismisses this revelation with a joke. Nonetheless, the repetition of revelations helps to build the seriousness of this theme within *Mason & Dixon*. Similar to what he did with Empire in *Vineland*, Pynchon establishes a genuine larger force that is controlling the characters. Mason and Dixon are not paranoid. They are pawns in a game played beyond them. In Pynchon's first three novels, these larger forces were vague; their very existence was questionable. Pynchon gave them nebulous-sounding

names like V., the Tristero, or simply They. In *Vineland*, he begins naming these larger forces, making them less mythical, casting them in human terms and therefore creating a force that a counterforce can confront. The names these forces are given in *Vineland* are "Hitler, Roosevelt, Kennedy, Nixon, Hoover, Mafia, CIA, Reagan, Kissinger, that collection of names and their tragic interweaving that stood not constellated above in any nightwide remoteness of light, but below, diminished to the last unfaceable American secret" (372). In *Mason & Dixon*, the larger forces are the British and Dutch East India Companies, the Royal Society, and, to a lesser extent, the British government. Mason and Dixon find themselves engulfed by what critic Stacey Olster describes as "a world in which a shift from imperialist to imperial sovereignty has resulted in the decentered and deterritorialized apparatus that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri call 'Empire' " (108). Despite common notions that a true sense of nationhood was built during the American and French Revolutions, both of which occurred historically after the majority of the events in the novel, Mason and Dixon's travels suggest that individual nations have less sovereignty over the protagonists lives than international commerce does. Whether they are in the Dutch colony of South Africa, England, or the British colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland, Mason and Dixon seem to be more subjects of chartered companies than subjects of any nation. The chartered companies dictate the political and cultural events that surround the novel. Their impact is widespread enough to steer the very scientific inquiries that Mason and Dixon pursue.

From a scientific standpoint, the work pursued by Mason, Dixon, Maskelyne, and the other astronomers in the novel is primarily concerned with facilitating global trade. Mason and Maskelyne are both "Lunarians," that is, they subscribe to a system of

determining longitude at sea through the careful observation and calculation of lunar distances. Maskelyne, in particular, must confront his beliefs regarding the determination of longitude when a watchmaker named John Harrison produces a chronometer that keeps perfect time at sea, thereby making lunar calculations obsolete. While the events surrounding Lunarians and chronometers make for dramatic and at times hilarious passages in the book, the passages are underscored by the fact that longitude at sea is not so much a pursuit inspired by scientific curiosity but a pursuit to facilitate navigation for navies and freighters. Further, Mason and Dixon's very legacy lasting into the twenty-first century is the boundary they created. This boundary was an impressive scientific achievement. For eighty years, surveyors and astronomers tried and failed to draw the boundary that Mason and Dixon marked. However, all of this is underscored by the fact that the boundary is fundamentally a property enclosure, a means for wealthy politicians to levy taxes, a way of separating private property from that which would belong to the public (or, in the case of the Native Americans whom the line encroached upon, that which would belong in the commons). All of Mason and Dixon's endeavors throughout the novel facilitate the acquisition and retention of wealth that is not shared with Mason or Dixon or redistributed in any way that could be described as just.

Astronomy's coupling with the eighteenth century marketplace exhibits a common connection between science and the marketplace. Mason and Dixon's enterprises for the benefit of chartered companies and national governments follow the same pattern that continued through the twentieth century and into today. During the two World Wars and the Cold War that defined much of the twentieth century, physics became the prominent science. This rise is indelibly tied to national governments and

their desire to wage war from as far away as possible—a service which the study of physics can accommodate through rockets, bombs, and the combination resulting in intercontinental ballistic missiles—and with wartime profiteers building an industry out of the construction (and destruction, frequently at the cost of many human lives) of these rockets and bombs. Not incidentally, Pynchon traces this entanglement in *Gravity's Rainbow*. Currently, the wealthiest industry in the United States is the pharmaceutical industry. This coincides (more through causation than correlation) with the current rise and advancements in the field of biology. Likewise, at the birth of global trade which was contingent upon navigation at sea, astronomy became the science of the empire.

Though I mentioned earlier that Mason and Dixon seem to be more subjects of chartered companies than subjects of any nation, it is important to note the Hardt and Negri's notion of Empire also articulates the deep links between national governments and multinational corporations. In fact, they define Empire as sovereignty that has taken a new form "composed of a series of national and supranational organisms [like multinational corporations and institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization] united under a single logic of rule" (*Empire*, xii). Thus, their pursuit of astronomy does not simply fall under the auspices of chartered companies. In an early flashback, Mason explains to his wife Rebekah, "Astronomy is as soil'd at the hands of the Pelhamites as ev'ry other Business in this Kingdom" (209). The Pelhamites to whom Mason refers are the followers of then-Prime Minister Henry Pelham. In this passage, Mason is asserting that the British government stands to gain in both power and wealth similar to that of the companies to which they grant a charter.

By demonstrating the interrelationship between astronomy and Empire, Pynchon highlights the ontological ramifications behind Empire's control of intellectual inquiry. Under the umbrella of Empire, scientific inquiry is typically steered by the funding or de-funding of the power structures in control. For this reason, not only is scientific inquiry limited to or by the whims of the marketplace, our cultural imagination and curiosity face similar limitations. The significance of this will become more clear below, where I discuss Pynchon's use of the subjunctive and his discussions of what, exactly, was lost in the Age of Reason.

Mason most poignantly confronts the ways in which his scientific inquiry is complicit in perpetuating the unjust machinations of Empire when he and Dixon are on the verge of sailing to America. In a conversation with Dixon, Mason laments "Foolishly seeking in the Alignment of Sun, Venus, and Earth, a moment redeem'd from the Impurity in which I must ever practice in life" (247). Mason's lamentation diffuses the typical perspective astronomers (and casual eyewitnesses) frequently experience when witnessing a major astronomical event like the transit of Venus: the sense that our human lives seem so small compared to the grandeur of the universe. Instead, that moment when Earth, Venus, and the sun align is brought down to material concerns. Instead of a moment of epiphany, the conclusion Mason draws from his experience comes in the form of an internal voice announcing to him, "The Business of the World is Trade and Death, and you must engage with that unpleasantness, as the price of your not-at-all-assur'd Moment of Purity.— Fool" (247). In this fashion, Mason's experience of the transit of Venus among the context of the slavery in South Africa forces him to acknowledge his complicity just as Cherrycoke's complicity is acknowledged in the setting of his

storytelling. Hopefully, this acknowledgement expands beyond the pages of the book and into the reader's lap, encouraging her to examine her own complicity.

Beyond the entanglements of science and global trade, Pynchon continues his examination of the burgeoning Empire by historicizing Mason and Dixon's encounters with the so-called Founding Fathers as inextricably linked to the shadier sides of commerce. In "General Wolfe and the Weavers," Frank Palmeri observes, "Pynchon's narrative is very interested in debunking conventional and strongly entrenched heroes" (194). Palmeri refers specifically to Pynchon's portrayal of General James Wolfe, but the sentiment can be expanded to include Pynchon's characterization of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington.

Thomas Jefferson makes a cameo appearance in the novel. Dixon encounters Jefferson in a Virginia tavern. At a loss to produce a revolutionary sentiment when it his turn to propose a toast, Dixon raises his glass "To the pursuit of Happiness" (395). Jefferson is taken by the phrase and expresses his plans to use it himself. This innocuous, largely-humorous scene divests Jefferson of any authorship of his famous phrase regarding the natural rights of men, those being "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." John Locke is the original author of the natural rights of man, specifically life, liberty, and property. If Jefferson gets the phrase "pursuit of happiness" from Dixon (in a toast at a tavern, no less), he can take credit for none of the originality of the opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence. It is a subtle poke at Jefferson. It works mostly as a joke, very much in line with Jefferson's declaration, "Virginia. This Land of Sensual Beasts" (396), in other words, Virginia is for lovers—a sentiment to be found on T-shirts currently for sale throughout the state. The sophistry attached to Dixon

and Jefferson's phrase "the pursuit of happiness" also suggests that many of the values of the American Revolution may have been rhetoric picked up willy-nilly more than the genuine belief system of the leaders of the revolution.

Benjamin Franklin has a much larger role in the novel. He first encounters Mason and Dixon in a backstreet drugstore. Dixon is plotting to purchase "an hundred Cases" (267) of Daffy's Exilir, a blended concoction of alcohol and opium. Franklin instructs Mason and Dixon, in line with the pithy phrases he produces in *Poor Richard's Almanac*, "Strangers, heed my wise advice,— Never pay the Retail Price" (267). This adage demonstrates Franklin's trademark frugality. More significantly, Franklin's presence in a shady drugstore on a "mission of chemical Necessity" (266) also exposes the connection between global trade and addictive substances. This connection is reinforced when the three reconvene at a coffee house. The opium that Dixon seeks to purchase by the case; the wine, whiskey, and ale that spur the debates between grape and grain and follow every adventure of Mason and Dixon's; and the ubiquitous coffee houses and overindulgences in caffeine all serve to complicate the characters' complicity with systems of global trade. Not only metaphorically, the characters tend to be literally addicted to the products of a global consumer culture. Franklin's first appearance in the novel shows him as a man well-versed in these addictive substances.

Further, Franklin is taken off his pedestal as an American hero and a Founding Father through his actions in the novel. He is presented originally as an entertainer (Mason and Dixon watch him perform on the glass harmonica), a paranoid double agent (he suspects that Dixon is a Jesuit spy and that Mason is an agent for the East India Company), and a philanderer (he attracts the lovely Dolly and Molly to his side). In this

way, Franklin becomes more of the human he represents himself as in his autobiography, wherein he frequently engages in questionable, if not abhorrent, behavior toward women, or his essays, in which he frequently expresses views that are horrifyingly racist to a twenty-first century audience. Franklin is divested of the role of the idealized hero that he has become in American folklore.

George Washington provides the most conflicting example of a Founding Father debunked. He is certainly constructed as an affable character. He sends a preternatural carriage to pick up Mason and Dixon in Philadelphia. Somehow, this horse-drawn carriage is able to travel the hundred and fifty or so miles from Philadelphia to Mount Vernon in a single night. Washington is generous enough to stock the carriage with porter and sandwiches. And, upon Mason and Dixon's arrival, Washington invites them to sit on his porch and engage in a relaxing conversation. He even offers them marijuana, a pipe to smoke it out of, and snacks to cure any subsequent munchies. He is a fun character. The conversation that follows Mason and Dixon's wild ride to Mount Vernon, however, takes on a air of seriousness.

First, Washington betrays his personal greed. He outlines for Mason and Dixon his desire to establish an Ohio company, that is, a chartered company profiting off the natural resources of what, at the time, was land occupied by Native Americans, land that the British government prohibited American colonists from settling upon. Washington is daunted by neither law nor ethics. He tells Mason and Dixon, "Americans will fight Indians whenever they please, which is whenever they can,— and the Brits wherever they must, for we will be no more contain'd, than tax'd" (277). The Americans of whom Washington speaks are specifically any army Washington can raise—that which will later

become factions of the Revolutionary Army. His desire to kill Native Americans may be lightly expressed, but it gains depth in retrospect when the reader compares Washington's flippant attitude toward Native Americans with the atrocity committed by the Paxton Boys in Lancaster later in the novel. Separately, both Mason and Dixon visit the site where the Paxton Boys slaughtered a tribe of Native Americans. Both characters confront their separate disgust at the act. Nonetheless, the act serves as a concrete explication of what Washington means when he says, "Americans will fight Indians whenever they please." Specifically, Washington is expressing his willingness to commit a genocide in order to form a chartered company. This version of Washington is a far cry from the honest lad of folklore who confesses to cutting down his father's cherry tree because he cannot tell a lie.

Beyond Washington's genocidal ideations, his sexism is inescapable. The sweets that he, Mason, and Dixon munch on are provided by his wife, Martha. Martha is so pressed upon, so overworked that she is described as seeming "to bustle even when standing still" (280). Nonetheless, she produces for the men "Tarts, Pop-overs, Gingerbread Figures, fried Pies, stuff'd Doughnuts, and other Units of Refreshment" (280). The sugar that supplies the treats both at the Washington residence and at the LeSpark household where Mason and Dixon's story is told will become significant below for its own legacy of oppression. Before exploring that point, however, it is significant to notice how much free labor Martha Washington is expected to perform, and the negative impact it has on her well-being.

In addition, Pynchon presents Washington as a slave-holder. This is a complex presentation. On the one hand, Washington's slave, Gershom, seems so happy that

Washington claims to be Gershom's master in name only. Nonetheless, Washington still views himself as a master and still orders Gershom around. Gershom's happiness is tied to his outlet as a stand-up comedian. This role is, of course, one more of Pynchon's clever anachronisms. While it is impossible to prove a negative, I nonetheless feel confident supposing that colonial Virginia boasted very few, if any, slave stand-up comics in the style of Gershom. He is, instead, a sort of pre-Revolutionary Redd Foxx. He tells "King Joaks," which he describes as "Slave-and-Master Joaks, re-tailor'd" (284). The jokes he tells are superficially pleasant, making light of the imbalance of power. Like Redd Foxx himself, and Foxx's joke about getting fired upon in World War II and running so far back away from the line of fire that he bumped into a general, Gershom's jokes reveal a deep-seeded sense of injustice. Gershom reflects Tony Tanner's assessment of Pynchon's tone in *Mason & Dixon*: "What Pynchon realises, beyond any other contemporary writer, is that the best way to be deadly serious is to be whimsically unserious" (234). Gershom, and by extension Pynchon, is deadly serious in portraying the foundation of America as motivated less by an ideology of freedom and equality and more by wealthy landowners seeking to expand their wealth at the expense of women, slaves, Native Americans, and contract employees like Mason and Dixon.

Gershom further presses the issue of slavery into the novel. The issue is inescapable. Any discussion of American literature—or America as a construct—sooner or later must confront this legacy. The specter of slavery haunts Mason and Dixon. As their time in America draws to a close, Dixon processes his experiences not only on the line, but in traveling throughout the empire. He concludes that one common element follows him and Mason everywhere. Dixon tells Mason:

> "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… Pretending it to be ever somewhere else, with the Turks, the Russians, the Companies, down there, down where it smells like warm Brine and Gunpowder fumes, they're murdering and dispossessing thousands untallied, the innocent of the World, passing daily in to the Hands of Slave-owners and Torturers, but oh, never in Holland, nor in England, that Garden of Fools…? Christ, Mason." (692-3)

Dixon recognizes just how entangled he, his actions, and his culture are with slavery. He sees the concept that Hardt and Negri summarize: "slave labor in the colonies made capitalism in Europe possible" (*Empire* 122). Dixon meditates upon his complicity in the system. And he, in particular, has been bothered by slavery throughout the novel. His discomfort with the institution made him suspicious to the whites in South Africa; it made him dangerous among the slaveholders in America. Pynchon seems to revel in the irony that the historical Jeremiah Dixon was a Quaker who, according at least to Dixon family legend, confronted a slave driver in Baltimore and took his whip[15], yet this same Dixon's name would be adapted and come to serve as a nickname for the slaveholding states: Dixie.

Much has been written about Dixon's abhorrence toward the institution of slavery, and about Pynchon's treatment of slavery in the novel. Most of the critics point to the aforementioned specific moment when Dixon confronts the slave driver. The

incident occurs late in the novel, shortly before Mason and Dixon are to return to England. Both are in Baltimore when they witness a slave driver beating slaves unmercifully. Dixon intervenes, takes the whip from the slave driver, punches him in the face, takes his keys, and unlocks the chains that hold the slaves. This is, in a sense, a moment of catharsis in the novel. Dixon has opposed slavery throughout the novel, but this is his most dramatic moment of action against it. T. C. Boyle, in his review of *Mason & Dixon*, refers to this as Dixon's moment of "true heroism" (9). Barry Lewis, in his essay "Teaching Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*," refers to this as the "moment of final suspense" (156) in the novel, that is, the moment upon which the author's major theme is revealed. Lewis goes so far as to suggest teaching the novel as a way of unpacking the meaning of Dixon's action with the slave driver. Lewis claims, "This episode, and the novel as a whole, therefore illustrates the insight that all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing" (156-7). While Lewis does provide a well-meaning adage, I strongly disagree with his suggestion that the novel should be simplified in this way. *Mason & Dixon* is a gigantic novel. It is a rich vein that scholars can mine for entire careers. I do not pretend that I am doing more than digging in one part of the thematic caverns that Pynchon has created in *Mason & Dixon*. Beyond the empire, slavery, and subjunctive that I discuss in this chapter, there is rich work that has been done and is yet to be done with Pynchon's historiography, his notions of time in the novel, his gendered reading of the new republic, and various other topics. To minimize the novel to a slogan that fits on a bumper sticker, as Lewis has done, does a disservice to a novel with the breadth, depth, and insight of *Mason & Dixon*. The other problem with

Lewis's reading[16] lies in the events that immediately follow Dixon's unchaining of the slaves.

In his essay "The Sweetness of Immorality," Brian Thill revisits Dixon's confrontation with the slave driver. Thill investigates the complexity of this moment. He observes the problems with situating heroism in this moment of violence. First, Thill argues that Dixon's attack can be read as one more reification of the "suffering black body" (51) and violence privileged with a sense of paternalism. Further, Thill points out that nothing is accomplished by this confrontation. While punching the slave driver may have been cathartic for Dixon and may even be cathartic for the reader, it does nothing to hinder the progress of slavery. The institution will be unmarred by Dixon's actions. The uselessness of escape is immediately noted after Dixon unchains the slaves. A slave tells Dixon, "Sheriff's men'll be here any moment,— don't worry about us,— some will stay, some'll get away" (699). This statement by the slave highlights the futility of the situation. While Dixon has unchained them, the slaves still stand in the middle of a slaveholding city in the middle of a slaveholding state. The hue of their very skin makes them conspicuous. Their chances of escape are slim. And, even if they do escape, their options for a peaceful, just life are severely limited. In other words, the slaves may be temporarily unchained because of Dixon's actions, but they are far from free.

Thill also suggests, "Part of the problem for characters like Dixon is that their actions are tainted by complicity with the system that they seem to oppose" (55). As Dixon himself has noted throughout the text, he benefits greatly from the system of global commodity culture and its subsequent slavery. He benefits directly when slaves serve him food (as they do both in the Vroom household in South Africa and in various

inns in Pennsylvania) or when, as in the case with Gershom, they entertain him. He benefits less directly from the institution when he relishes in sugar and coffee that is imported from slave colonies. Dixon's very employment derives from his superior ability as a surveyor to create a border between the wage-payers and the slave-holders (though, it should be noted that slavery was legal in both Pennsylvania and Maryland during the time when Mason and Dixon worked in the two colonies; the primary difference being that slavery was generally practiced on a larger scale in Maryland).

Dixon reveals his frustration with his own complicity when, instead of fleeing the scene where he has assaulted a slave driver and where a hostile crowd is closing in on him, he pauses to wonder, "What's a man of Conscience to do?" (699). In other words, how can one person like Dixon, who is simultaneously disgusted by the injustice of slavery yet addicted to the spoils of it, work toward a more just world? Brian Thill raises the same issue, stating, "[W]hat is much less clear is what should be done about it" (68). The answer Thill arrives at is bleak. He concludes,

> If there are choices to be made in the world of *Mason & Dixon*,… they would seem to be between the doomed ineffective heroism of the small act of kindness and violence, the radical reorganization of economic power based on the mass awakening of the socially conscious consumer class, or the retreat into any of a number of attractive, albeit temporary, fantasies. (74)

Thus, Thill suggests that, short of a revolution that alters the system of Empire explored in the novel, almost nothing can be done about these injustices that Dixon confronts. Just as I resist Lewis's reading of the novel due to its simplicity, I have a resistance toward Thill's conclusion. His analysis of the novel is both thoughtful and insightful. It

provides a solid foundation to build upon. There are problems with the suggestion of a revolution—which, not incidentally, I do not think Thill is calling for. Unlike, for example, Therese Ebert, whose monograph *The Task of Cultural Critique* suggests that role of cultural critique is to confront and ultimately dismantle capitalism, Thill does not conclude that revolution is inevitable or necessary. He simply expresses the futility of Dixon's actions and the frustration they leave with a twenty-first century reader.

I resist both this call for Marxist revolution—specifically when it is projected onto a novel by Thomas Pynchon, who did so much to problematize sixties rebellion in *Vineland*—and the futility felt about what Thill characterizes as Pynchon's "attractive, albeit temporary, fantasies" (74). Instead, I will re-characterize these "fantasies" as Pynchon's use of the subjunctive and argue that Pynchon seeks hope for social justice in this subjunctive. Before getting there, I need to spend more time on Pynchon's investigation into slavery in the novel.

As I mention above, there is a danger in placing too much in Dixon's act of violent resistance to slavery. It can be over-simplified. Along similar lines, Tony Tanner argues that it does Pynchon a disservice to read the novel as "a sort of politically correct disguised tract concerning the treatment of Indians and Blacks by white settlers" (232). Indeed, little new information can be gained from the insight that chattel slavery is unethical. Instead, as Christy L. Burns suggests in "Postmodern Historiography," readers of *Mason & Dixon* "interpret history as a dialogue between the differences and the uncanny similarities of that time's 'angle' and their own." Following the lead of both Tanner and Burns, it is important to question what, exactly, Pynchon's exploration into eighteenth century slavery says about twenty-first century society.

It may be helpful to take an unorthodox approach to this question by briefly discussing the 2003 documentary *The Yes Men.* The documentary features two American anti-globalization activists, Jacques Servin and Igor Vamos, who have succeeded in masquerading as representatives of the World Trade Organization. At one point, the documentary follows the pair to Finland, where they pose as lecturers from the WTO. As such, the give a presentation at an international trade conference. The presentation focuses on slavery and its adaptation to market forces. Servin argues that the invisible hand of the marketplace would have altered slavery had the American Civil War not ended the institution of chattel slavery. According to Servin, it would be much cheaper for multinational corporations to move their factories to the location where the workers already reside than to kidnap, enslave, house, and feed the slaves. He compares the costs of maintaining a slave in Finland to the benefits of instead keeping slaves in overseas sweatshops, where, Servin ironically notes, the slave is free. Servin's conflation of the term slave (referring to chattel slavery of the eighteenth and nineteenth century) and employee (referring to laborers in overseas factories who are paid wages below a basic subsistence level) makes a powerful statement about the exploitation of workers in the twenty-first century. Injustices are frequently incommensurable and a ranking system of injustices is counterproductive. Regardless, Servin's presentation in *The Yes Men* demonstrates that, while chattel slavery may be mostly relegated to history books, exploitation and injustice continues to be inextricable from global commodity culture. As Hardt and Negri observe, "[S]lavery and wage labor engaged each other as dance partners in the coordinated steps of capitalist development" (*Empire* 122). As Reverend Cherrycoke reflects, "Commerce without Slavery is unthinkable" (108). For a twenty-

first century audience, it becomes important to understand the requisite exploitation and injustice bred from those same systems that created chattel slavery and continue to exist.

Mason & Dixon is largely concerned with understanding this injustice and exploitation. Pynchon broadens his examination beyond the issue of chattel slavery. Like Servin, he conflates the term slave with other terms for workers. One notable early example of this occurs when Mason and Dixon are still in South Africa. Because Dixon immediately shows an abhorrence for slavery, the white South Africans avoid him. Mason's views are not as readily transparent. Because of this, the family with whom Mason and Dixon typically dine, the Vrooms, ensnare Mason into their dubious plot. The family matriarch, Johanna Vroom, wishes to couple Mason with her slave, Austra, the result of the coupling being to produce a slave child. As Austra explains to Mason, Johanna desires Mason's "Whiteness" (65) because slaves with a lighter tint to their skin sell for more on the slave market. The Vroom's plot is unsettling for most contemporary readers of the novel. Mason is likewise troubled when Austra approaches him with Johanna's plan. He says it is unthinkable in England for one person to feel entitled to bid another person to have a child. Austra shrugs off Mason's assertion, saying, "Poh. White Wives are much alike, and all their Secrets are common knowledge at the Market. Many have there been, oblig'd to go on bearing children,— for no reason but the man's pride." Mason responds, "Our Women are free" (65). As Austra observes, Mason's professed belief in freedom is compromised by his use of the possessive pronoun "our." Pynchon thus subtly reminds his reader that marriage laws in eighteenth century England still considered wives to be the property of their husbands, perhaps not slaves, exactly, but humans who were legally the property of other humans.

In fact, the gendered exploitation of the entire Vroom plot is telling. First, all three Vroom daughters are drawn into the intrigue. Though all three are adolescents less than half the age of Mason (the youngest daughter is twelve, the oldest sixteen), Johanna sets them loose to sexually titillate Mason into a state of priapism. They chase after Mason, wiggle on his lap, rip their bodices (which are cleverly designed to allow a young Vroom to both rip open her bodice and re-fasten it quickly), and otherwise tease him in hopes that his desires will be transferred onto Austra in a profitable way. Nor does Johanna leave the teasing solely to her daughters. Finding herself alone in a room with Mason, she takes the opportunity to rip her own bodice. Pynchon presents these exploits in a madcap fashion, but the serious undertones are not ignored. Austra's seemingly willful participation in the plan does not lessen the fact that she remains a slave and the Vroom's ownership of her extends to her womb. The limited opportunities for all of the Vroom women are suggested by their complicity in such an unsavory plan. Mason is similarly highlighted as the subject of a different type of exploitation, this time at the hands of the disenfranchised women. The family's patriarch, Cornelius Vroom, seems to be intentionally oblivious to the entire intrigue. He manages to turn a blind eye to the girls' dinnertime flirtation; he manages to consistently avoid the rooms of ripped bodices. Nonetheless, should Austra provide the Vroom's with a light-skinned baby to sell in the slave market, it is Cornelius who would become the custodian of the wealth produced. Untangling this complex web of exploitation presents the reader with a situation in which she understands that chattel slavery is merely one symptom of the larger disease of exploitation in the marketplace.

Mason confronts the conflation of the term slavery again in America. During the first break in the work on the line, Dixon travels south into Virginia while Mason goes north into New York. While in Brooklyn, Mason falls in with a group of American revolutionaries led by the mysterious Captain Volcanoe. The revolutionaries and Mason discuss the concept of virtual representation—the name the British government used to describe the representation that American colonists had in Parliament. During the conversation, Mason admits that he has never owned land, that the rooms he has inhabited have all been part of his contract for employment. One of the revolutionaries[17] responds, "Then you're a Serf. As they call it here, a Slave" (406). Pynchon's ironic employment of the Marxist concept of a wage slave by an American revolutionary is amusing. It is one of the many ways in which Pynchon links the American revolutionaries in *Mason & Dixon* with the sixties revolutionaries in *Vineland*. Nonetheless, Pynchon's point is complicated when Mason dismisses this notion of slavery as "shallow Sophistry" (407). The conversation among the revolutionaries continues to address the exploitation of contract employees and other laborers. Specifically, because Mason is from the Stroud, the revolutionaries discuss the deplorable working conditions of the weavers there. This discussion again solidifies the connection both Pynchon and Yes Man Jacques Servin make between the exploitation and injustice of chattel slavery and the further exploitation and injustice inherent in a system of global commodity culture. As critic Stacey Olster observes, this conflation does not "suggest that Pynchon is preaching equivalency among the various forms of bondage—whether denoted in terms of hirelings, indented servants, contractual agents, or slaves—the novel depicts" (109). Instead of suggesting equivalency, Pynchon complicates labor and

exploitation. He goes beyond the simple notion that chattel slavery is unethical. Instead, he links the exploitation of divorcing labor from the wealth it produces with the injustice of global economic systems.

To understand the danger in simplifying the issue of chattel slavery, it is helpful to turn to theorist Megan Boler. In her book *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*, Boler warns against what she refers to as empathetic readings of texts. She uses the example of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and her introductory multicultural literature course. She finds that her students tend to empathize with the character of Art, who is listening to his father tell stories of the Holocaust. Through their empathy with Art, the students are divested from the experience of the Holocaust itself and any feelings of complicity. They are able to, in fact, largely dismiss issues of injustice in the text. According to Boler, additional problems with empathetic readings occur when a reader tries to imagine herself as a character in a book about a disenfranchised culture of which she is not a part and imagine how she would react as a member of that culture. Boler demonstrates the impossibility of this type of genuine empathy. She further suggests that this attempt to empathize more often than not leads to readers judging the characters. It is this judgment that Boler wishes to avoid. Hopefully, readers in general wish to avoid the same judgment.

Boler's warnings can instruct a reader's approach to *Mason & Dixon*. When confronted with slaveholding societies such as those Mason and Dixon reside in, the temptation to separate oneself from feelings of complicity is powerful. A reader cannot be blamed for seeking refuge in the knowledge that chattel slavery was outlawed before she was born, or for imagining herself in Dixon's shoes and feeling the cathartic release

when Dixon assaults the slave driver. Both of these reactions, however, separate the reader from the injustice in the text (in the same way that empathy with Art separates the readers from the injustices in *Maus*). Boler suggests that readers perform what she calls testimonial readings, readings that bear witness to the injustices the characters face, that refrain from judgment, that investigate the systems of power that create these injustices, and that explore the reader's complicity in these systems. Pynchon's connections with Empire and slavery affords the reader the opportunity to bear witness to the injustices upon which the wealth in America was built and to recognize our own role in this system of injustice. Finally, with the use of the subjunctive in the text, Pynchon allows us to imagine possible worlds in which we confront this injustice in meaningful ways.

*

To begin an inquiry into Pynchon's use of the subjunctive as a tool for envisioning social justice, it is helpful to examine the ways in which Reverend Wicks Cherrycoke narrates the story. As the primary storyteller in the novel, Cherrycoke relates information that he could not possibly possess firsthand. He narrates Mason and Dixon's innermost thoughts, though neither character chooses to share those thoughts with him. In fact, Mason and Dixon seem to view Cherrycoke as something between a tolerable nuisance and an intolerable one. Beyond this, Cherrycoke narrates events that occurred continents away from him, in worlds and time periods that he has no firsthand access to. The audience who listens to Cherrycoke's story in the Le Spark parlor frequently accost Cherrycoke for his storytelling liberties. Cherrycoke's response is more complex than contradictory. He both seeks shelter in the subjunctive, that is, his prerogative to present the imagined as true, and self-reflexively admits his unreliability. In this way, he is a

prototypically postmodern storyteller. He rejects what Jean-François Lyotard terms "grand narratives." Instead, he acknowledges that our conceptions of the world are built upon narrative knowledge and therefore contain all the dubious elements attendant to reframing experiences into narrative formats. Cherrycoke articulates this most clearly when he writes:

> Facts are but the Play-things of lawyers,— Tops and Hoops, forever a-spin… Alas, the Historian may indulge no such idle Rotating. History is not Chronology, for that is left to Lawyers,— nor is it Remembrance, for Remembrance belongs to the People. History can as little pretend to the Veracity of the one, as claim the Power of the other,— her Practitioners, to survive, must soon learn the arts of the quidnunc, spy, and Taproom Wit,— that there may ever continue more than on life-line back into a Past we risk, each day, losing our forebears in forever,— not a Chain of single Links, for one broken Link could lose us All,— rather, a great disorderly Tangle of Lines, long and short, weak and strong, vanishing into the Mnemonick Deep, with only their Destination in common. (349)

This passage reflects the postmodern condition suggested by Brain McHale in *Constructing Postmodernism,* where McHale clarifies "that we need not abandon metanarratives—which may, after all, do useful work for us—so long as we 'turn them down' from metanarratives to 'little narratives' " (24). In other words, Cherrycoke self-reflexively abandons a search for epistemological truth. Instead, he seeks narratives as we understand them, full of the gossip of the quidnunc, the hidden intelligence of the spy, and the humor of the taproom wit. While Cherrycoke cannot be relied upon to spin facts or to wield history as a weapon, he can be relied upon to recognize discursive voices

from which we can draw meaning, provided we turn that meaning down from a grand narrative into a little narrative.

It is further notable that this selection of Cherrycoke's comes not during his story, but as a passage that he cites from his (subjunctive) book *Christ and History*. This citation adds to the discursive voices a spiritual one. Entwining a spiritual element into a postmodern history about the Age of Reason proves to be a significant move on Cherrycoke's part. Several critics[18] point to Cherrycoke's—and by extension, Pynchon's—lament that a certain amount of spirituality and magic are lost in the Age of Reason. Christy L. Burns summarizes this most succinctly when she observes that Pynchon, mostly through the character of Mason, "struggles to hold onto the magical, even as Enlightenment thought was calling for its extinction." Thus, the Astronomer Royal Nevil Maskelyne is caught casting clandestine horoscopes and his fellow astronomer Charles Mason—who, let us not forget, is one of the premier scientists of his day—converses with ghosts and narrates tales of pygmies living in a mythical time perpetually relegated to eleven days ago. As Mason and Dixon clear their visto into the depths of the Maryland and Pennsylvania woodlands, they cast a pallor of enlightenment, with its rigid scientific proofs and mathematical precision, over the myths, legends, and folklores that bring meaning to the lives of the cultures bisected by the line. Personally, I agree with the various critics who have observed Pynchon's use of the subjunctive to highlight the magic and spirituality lost in the Age of Reason. I wish to add to these observations by examining a different use of the subjunctive, one that presents itself from the time when Mason and Dixon first arrive in America.

Mason and Dixon barely have the time to disembark from their transatlantic voyage before they are besieged with advertisements in America. They step off the ship to be greeted by various hawkers selling aphrodisiacs, flasks, the services of a prostitute, and even salvation. This concept of religion-as-commodity greeting Mason and Dixon upon their arrival in America is significant. It introduces another conflation Pynchon plays with in *Mason & Dixon*: the conflation of business and religion. To understand where Pynchon is going by blending these two elements, it is helpful to jump forward in the story.

Later in the novel, Cherrycoke's narrative is interrupted by his benefactor, Wade Le Spark. Le Spark narrates his adventures dealing weapons. It is dangerous work. He sells to all sides of the conflicts, providing the possibility that two warring factions could both be armed by Le Spark. Nonetheless, Le Spark characterizes his experience as

> safe inside the belief as unquestioning as in any form of Pietism you could find out there that he, yes little JWL [J. Wade Le Spark], goeth likewise under the protection of a superior Power,— not, in this case, God, but rather Business. What turn of earthly history, however perverse, would dare interfere with the workings of the Invisible Hand? (411)

In other words, the higher power that Le Spark recognizes is capitalism, attended by Adam Smith's concept of the "invisible hand" of the economy. For Le Spark, this invisible hand does more than Adam Smith's original concept, which was expected to self-regulate excesses in the marketplace, and protects him amid the wilderness of violence and war that he both fosters and profits from. In both cases, a genuine age of reason would have to recognize the invisible hand as something based more in magic or

spirituality than in logic[19]. Le Spark's vision of the invisible hand, though, is downright religious. It is a higher power—indeed, a superior one. It is a benevolent protector. Like Pynchon's conflation of slavery and wage labor, this conflation of religion and business does not suggest an equivalency. Instead, Pynchon blends these terms together as a means of better understanding the impact of Empire on contemporary society. Specifically, the conflation highlights the illogical, quasi-religious belief in a self-regulating marketplace that is a foundational ideology of Empire.

Returning to Mason and Dixon's arrival in America, the barrage of hawkers are significant because they draw attention to the fact that, while the Age of Reason sought to eliminate magic, Empire simultaneously created a new magic system. To better understand this system, I turn to cultural theorists who have explored it. Specifically, I will rely on the work of Sut Jhally.

Building upon Raymond Williams's essay that coins the term "the magic system" in relation to the messages transmitted through advertising in contemporary corporate culture, Sut Jhally examines the value system implicit in advertising. Jhally argues that, if an alien anthropologist were to study contemporary American culture through the primary stories that are promulgated throughout our society (which is how he characterizes advertising), the anthropologist would likely conclude that we are a society obsessed with magic. This equates to Mason and Dixon's voyage deeper into the depths of the American continent. The further they sally from Philadelphia, the more mythical the land becomes. Mason and Dixon encounter perfectly symmetrical mounds beyond the capacity of human construction, coaches and taverns with interiors vastly larger than their exteriors, a sentient mechanical duck that can fly at speeds faster than the human

eye can detect, ghost visions, memories of mythical worms, tall tales of mythical astronomers, a cameo by Popeye in a western Pennsylvania tavern, even a werebeaver (similar to a werewolf, but the human morphs into a different animal form). Among these preternatural elements Mason and Dixon encounter are a golem whose footsteps can be heard from miles away, who is essentially a giant, and a field of vegetables so large that a family can carve a house out of a single beet and live inside, eating the walls as it deems necessary. Combining these last two elements, a giant and magical vegetables, a contemporary reader can make connections to this magic system of advertising: among the mythical elements Mason and Dixon encounter is, essentially, the Jolly Green Giant of General Mills's longstanding advertising campaign. The giant in Pynchon's world is a golem. He follows a poet. The vegetables are the property of a distant race of beings. The Native Americans who oversee the vegetables assume this race of beings is from another planet. A contemporary reader can see, instead, that the size of the vegetables is metaphoric for the size of late twentieth century factory farming; the role of the Native Americans as mere custodians of land until it can be repurposed for the profit of a multinational corporation is problematic; the Jolly Green Giant is constructed out of, well, that material from which golems are constructed. Christy L. Burns oberves, "Re-imagining, in Pynchon, may often be a way of progressive revisioning, but it can alternately be co-opted for exploitative forms of entrepreneurship." In the case of the golem and the giant vegetables, the myths of early America can be seen as not lost to the Age of Reason but co-opted by the age of Empire.

Nonetheless, a reader should not ignore the first half of Burns's observation above. The subjunctive in Pynchon does work as a form of "progressive revisioning."

Sut Jhally asserts that, while advertising does produce a magic system wherein the stories transmit the value system that perpetuates Empire in our culture, it is a fragile system. Jhally recommends dismantling this system by producing new stories that are more attractive than, say, a giant selling vegetables. I will argue that Pynchon's use of the subjunctive does exactly that. He creates his own magic system, one that is far more attractive and that transmits very different values than the one produced by multinational corporation and national governments.

In "Bordering the Subjunctive in Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*," Adam Lifshey asserts, "Subjunctive America, the antithesis of declarative imperialism, is that unmapped and atemporal space where alternative possibilities yet abound, where plural local realities exist side by side, a culturally creative place that is distinct from, and therefore resistant to, the imperial cartography imposed upon the New World" (6). In other words, Pynchon creates not just one rebuttal to the "declarative imperialism" of an Age of Reason, not just one counternarrative to the doxa of Empire. Instead, he creates multiple spaces, stories, and worlds that call into question any sense of the "normal" or "natural" in the hegemony of global commodity culture. Just as Pynchon's prose itself is complex, discursive, and open to various approaches and avenues for meaning, the stories in Cherrycoke's subjunctive chapters afford freedom to readers. As Tony Tanner claims, "Pynchon does not care for single authorised versions" (233). Instead, Pynchon provides multiple possibilities for meaning.

This discursive approach is in line with Brian McHale's exploration into the usefulness of postmodernism. McHale states, "Above all, we choose one story or variant over another for its superior *interest*. Minimally, we strive to tell stories that are at least

relevant to our audience; optimally, we hope to make our stories compelling, if possible even gripping" (26). Intentionally excluded from what McHale argues stories do is provide any sense of epistemological truth. McHale, like Reverend Cherrycoke, aborts the search for a grand narrative, replacing it with a series of little narratives that may not satisfy any criteria of epistemological truth but can be useful. When applying this to *Mason & Dixon*, the question remains, useful in what ways?

To help answer this question, I will turn to the scene in the novel in which Cherrycoke focuses his narrative on a Quaker in a Philadelphia coffee house. Amid the revolutionary discussion in the coffee house, the Quaker points out the abundance of sugar everyone is consuming. He observes that the sugar is produced from the slavery south of Philadelphia. The Quaker asks, "If we may refuse to write upon stamped paper, and for the tea of the East India Company find a tolerable *Succedaneum* in New-Jersey red root, might Philosophy not as well discover some Patriotic alternative to these vile crystals that eat into our souls as horribly as our teeth?" (329-30) In broader terms, the Quaker is asking what other stories we could tell to replace the magic system's narrative of consumption, specifically the self-destructive, addictive consumption in that coffee house. True to his form of providing discursive testimonials without judgment, Cherrycoke gives the Quaker time to speak without affording a commentary or rebuttal.

One answer to the Quaker's question may be: protesting sugar is too specific. Just as, above, I discuss the problem of attacking chattel slavery without acknowledging that even its abolition leaves intact the destructive and exploitative practices of Empire, attacking sugar without acknowledging its role in the greater system of global consumer culture is simply a means of metaphorically punching a slave driver in the face. Instead

of creating a direct substitute for sugar while leaving Empire intact, perhaps a more effective approach would be to tell stories of a better world existing independent of Empire's exploitation.

This challenge harkens back to a literary discussion surrounding the novel of the early American republic. Notably, critic W. Channing in 1815 called for a new type of American literature[20], one built of historical novels that did similar work in the service of constructing an American identity to the work Walter Scott's novels had done in constructing an identity for the British Empire. These historical novels would then help to determine the idealized values of American culture and transmit what that cultural value system was. The most canonized novels that answered Channing's call were the Leatherstocking Tales of James Fennimore Cooper. In these novels, Cooper promotes the values of white supremacy, particularly in relation to Native Americans, and narrates the genocide of Native Americans as inevitable. Perhaps, as Carolyn L. Karcher argues, these values led to the survival and canonization of Cooper's novels. After all, regardless of its professed values, much of the wealth in the United States was built on the backs of exploited populations and justified through policies of genocide and institutionalized racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism.

At the same time, other novelists who promoted different value systems answered Channing's call and wrote novels that rivaled Cooper's in popularity. Specifically, Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok* and Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* produced a counternarrative to the Leatherstocking Tales. Both Child and Sedgwick endeavored to write women and Native Americans back into the history of the early republic. From a twenty-first century perspective, there are problems with both of these novels. *Hobomok*

ends with the eponymous Native American character willfully vanishing to make room for European settlers and thereby seeming to portray the genocide of Native Americans as part of the natural course of events.[21] *Hope Leslie*, while inviting the possibility of interracial marriage through two minor characters who live among the Native Americans, leaves no room for interracial marriage within European American society. Nonetheless, both Child and Sedgwick's novels serve as important—perhaps vital—counternarratives to those of Cooper's. Instead of judging the troubling elements of *Hobomok* and *Hope Leslie*, a reader would be better served to remember Megan Boler's argument in *Feeling Power* and instead read the novels as testimonials. Doing so allows the reader to investigate issues of gender and race in the new republic, to raise questions about the systems that created these injustices, to recognize complicity in those systems, and to seek possible avenues leading toward a more just world. Child and Sedgwick's novels provide that first, necessary step.

Likewise in *Mason & Dixon*, Pynchon endeavors to answer Channing's call to write the new historical novel of America (albeit nearly two centuries after Cooper, Child, and Sedgwick). Like Child and Sedgwick, Pynchon writes discursive voices back into the narrative of colonial times. Like Child and Sedgwick, Pynchon addresses systems of injustice. Like its predecessors, aspects of Pynchon's novel can be troubling. Specifically, Pynchon's representation of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin as collectively philandering slave holders embarking upon genocide can be upsetting for an American audience schooled from a very young age to idealize—perhaps even worship—these historical figures. Pynchon even goes so far as to attack the Founding Fathers more or less directly. At one point in the novel, a patron of a tavern named the Rabbi of

Prague states, “The coming Rebellion is theirs,— Franklin, and that Lot,— and Heaven help the rest of us, if they prevail” (488). For a twenty-first century reader reading this statement with a balanced sense of American history, this line echoes with the resonance of a revolution fought in the name of liberty and justice that produced instead a legacy of slavery, genocide, economic exploitation, institutionalized sexism and heterosexism, and various other injustices. This, in fact, is the fundamental problem that all American authors have faced when historicizing American history: the contradiction inherent in a racist, sexist, classist, heterosexist society founded in the name of justice. Nonetheless, American fiction has been and continues to be one battlefield upon which these injustices are confronted.

Pynchon seems to recognize this. Fiction and other types of literature factor heavily within Cherrycoke’s storytelling. Cherrycoke’s narrative is a bricolage of texts that have drifted in and out of American literary canons. He directly alludes to Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* and Jonathan Swift’s *Tale of the Tub*. British novelist Samuel Johnson makes more than a cameo appearance. Though subjunctively, Johnson is a major character in one chapter. Another minor character, Timothy Tox—the poet responsible for the oft-quoted though only existing within the pages of *Mason & Dixon* poem, *The Pennsylvaniad*—seems to be a fictionalized version of Joel Barlow, the real life poet who wrote the poem *The Columbiad*, which has more than a few similarities to Tox’s poem. Mason’s dream of the North Cape and the exploitation of the native population bears an eerie resemblance to a chapter of Bartolomé de las Casas’s *A Brief History of the Devastation of the Indies* in which Casas describes Spaniards working Arawak pearl divers literally to death. Even Mason’s final memory of Dixon relates a

story in which a Benjamin Franklin who bears more than a passing resemblance to Dr. Frankenstein electrocutes Dixon. The tone of the stories at times drifts into a recognizable form of American Gothic storytelling reminiscent of Washington Irving and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

This bricolage is most notable through its incorporation not only of gothic elements, but of a fictional gothic serial that invades *Mason & Dixon*. Throughout the novel, characters both in the 1760s tale of Mason and Dixon and in the 1786 Christmastide when Cherrycoke narrates the story read magazine and book installments of *The Ghastly Fop*. At one point, *The Ghastly Fop* actually takes over the narration of the tale. The story is no longer told entirely in Cherrycoke's voice. It is read from the pages that his niece and nephew share. The installment of *The Ghastly Fop* that is incorporated into the narrative borrows much from early American captivity narratives. It traces a European American settler named Eliza who is kidnapped from her Pennsylvania farm by Native Americans and taken into the wilderness northward. Eliza's kidnapping and voyage to Montreal follows closely Ann Eliza Bleecker's 1790-1791 serial "The History of Maria Kittle." This is perhaps an intentional allusion; perhaps Pynchon names the captive Eliza as a nod to Bleecker. Regardless, the narrative manages to further write the discursive experiences of French and Spanish Jesuits and one Chinese *feng shui* master into a colonial narrative. Perhaps more importantly, Eliza is a lesbian[22]. Upon her return to Pennsylvania, she engages in a loving relationship with Zsuzsa Szabó, a Prussian cavalrywoman. They continue to work on the line with Mason and Dixon's crew. Their presence and their open sexuality seems to cause no problems beyond a few broken hearts of axmen who had a crush on Zsuzsa. *The Ghastly Fop*'s

intrusion into the novel, then provides one more fiction transmitting values that are then incorporated into the "real world." It is one more testimony among the many discursive voices from which readers can seek to recognize systems of injustice, complicity, and subjunctive ways for a more just world.

Pynchon, of course, does not provide a single clear proposal for a more just world. He does not even provide a few clear proposal from which the reader can choose. Instead, *Mason & Dixon* narrates a series of subjunctive testimonies that serve to trigger the reader's imagination regarding what a world beyond Empire could look like. Two subjunctive testimonies in particular strike me as narratives that are useful. First, after Mason and Dixon leave America, Cherrycoke lingers behind to tell one more story. The final chapter in the section titled "America" follows a subjunctive Mason and Dixon who do not stop the nearly forty miles short of the Ohio territory the way the historical Mason and Dixon did. Instead, the subjunctive Mason and Dixon continue the line deep into the continent, moving through lands that would become Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and on into the Great Plains. Their progress is not halted until their nightly astronomical sessions allow them to discover the new planet, Uranus. Upon this discovery, the subjunctive Mason and Dixon decide to turn around and head back to England. As they are making this decision, Dixon asks, basically, what people will do without their line. Mason responds, "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" (709). Mason's choice of words is intriguing. He states that, without the line, people will have to find a way to live "unseparated." More common terms for unseparated would be

"together" or "unified." But Mason—and by extension Pynchon—is not suggesting togetherness or unity. He is suggesting simply a lack of separation, the absence of a dividing line. It calls to mind Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's definition of the multitude: " The multitude is composed of innumberable internal differences that can never be reduced to a unity or a single identity—different cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations; different forms of labor; different ways of living; different views of the world; and different desires" (*Multitude*, xiv). In fact, the discursive voices Cherrycoke represents throughout the novel, with their different cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations, are a representation of the multitude. Without the boundaries born of an age so ostentatious as to call itself the Age of Reason, without the tyranny of Empire and the divisions and exploitations that accompany it, without the co-opted magic system, the multitude may envision a new way to live, one in which the "World's Business and Heart's" is the same thing.

Finally, in what I would refer to as the "moment of final suspense"—and I do so somewhat facetiously because this moment occurs on the final page of the novel—Mason's sons William and Doctor Isaac envision their new life in America. It is a subjunctive America, not the America they found when they traveled there with Mason in his dying days, but the one they imagined when they were children and Mason was carving his visto through the wilderness. It is the America that lives up to its promises of freedom and equality. William and Doctor Isaac imagine "Stars so close you won't need a Telescope" and "Fish jump into your Arms" (773). This vision conjures the image of a relationship with the land and the people on the land that Mason and the Native Americans envisioned at the end of the Mason-Dixon line, when they discussed "Sky-

fishing" (651). Sky-fishing referred initially to stars that attend astronomers while astronomers attend the stars. This sense of reciprocity can be expanded. Within the context of the original conversation, sky-fishing is about Mason and Dixon attending Native Americans while Native Americans attend Mason and Dixon. Beyond that, sky-fishing reciprocity can mean an activity in which discursive voices attend one another and the various subsequent testimonies, in which what the multitude fishes for in the sky is a magic system that envisions a more inclusive, more just world. All of this is summed up by Mason's youngest son, Doctor Isaac: "We'll fish there. And you too" (773).

This discussion of the subjunctive, when taken as a whole, does come with a caveat. Just as Tony Tanner warned against reading *Mason & Dixon* as "a sort of politically correct disguised tract" (232), I am careful to avoid reading the subjunctive in *Mason & Dixon* as nothing more than an example of a postmodern discussion of difference and hybridity. In *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri criticize the transformative potential of postmodernism. They assert, "When we begin to consider the ideologies of corporate capital and the world market, it certainly appears that the postmodernist … theorists who advocate a politics of difference, fluidity, and hybridity in order to challenge the binaries and essentialism of modern sovereignty have been outflanked by the strategies of power" (138). In other words, Hardt and Negri view postmodernism's play with difference, its attacks on Enlightenment grand narratives, and its push to include discursive voices as a means of supporting Empire's drive to break down national borders and encourage difference and hybridity as concepts that justify global commodity trade and the free exchange of markets.

To a certain extent, I agree with Hardt and Negri that the discourse of Empire, particularly with its adherence to the magic system, embraces the discourse of postmodernism. When postmodern theorists envision a world which is more inclusive across the lines of race, gender, class, and sexuality, they provide a dream that the magic system can sell back to them. Empire can take these notions of diversity and present them through an advertising campaign that represents diversity, yet it is important to recognize that this representation of diversity does not promote the concept. It instead promotes the commodity which the advertisement features. If a more diverse world accompanies it, that is fine from the perspective of the marketplace. But that is not the goal of the advertisement. This is also the point where Pynchon's discussion of slavery and exploitation becomes most significant. From Empire's perspective, this discussion of diversity can accompany an advertisement, but a celebration of difference cannot go so far as to suggest that the workers in overseas factories are equally human and have a right to just working conditions.

In short, I agree with Hardt and Negri that Empire—particularly through its magic system—has learned to tell postmodern stories. Nonetheless, there is a difference between telling a story that adheres to the characteristics of a theory and actually subscribing to the ideology. While the marketplace of global commodity culture can repackage ideas of difference and hybridity and sell those ideas back to potential customers, corporate culture is still dependent upon mass production, which, by its definition, is neither difference nor hybridity. It is a repetition of the same. Most postmodern stories told through Empire's magic system are merely stories told to mask the similarities of fungible commodities. Likewise, any talk of inclusion for discursive

voices on the part of the magic system ignores the racism and ignorance necessary to perpetuate the abhorrent labor conditions of many of the factories producing the goods.

Pynchon's stories, on the other hand, seek to genuinely include discursive voices. Particularly through his discussions of storytelling, nation building, madness in the Age of Reason, slavery, exploitation, and the subjunctive, his novel seeks to understand the systems that cause injustice, the ways in which we are complicit in these systems, and the possible avenues for resistance to or advancement beyond these systems of injustice. This is a far cry from simply representing difference as a means of selling mass produced, fungible commodities. Nonetheless, the conclusions drawn from both Hardt and Negri and Pynchon seem very similar. Hardt and Negri conclude, "Difference, hybridity, and mobility are not liberatory in themselves, but neither are truth, purity, and stasis. The real revolutionary practice refers to the level of *production*. Truth will not make us free, but taking control of the production of truth will" (*Empire* 156). For Hardt and Negri, the truth is not the liberating element. Liberation instead comes from the ability to promulgate the truth. In context, the truth that Hardt and Negri seek to tell regards the activities of death squads in Central America or similar incidents. This is not the type of truth that postmodernism, in general, seeks to erase. Postmodernist theorists like Jean-François Lyotard and Brian McHale argue against the tyranny of epistemological Truth in the modernist sense. As McHale has stated, he does not oppose grand narratives, provided that they are presented as little narratives. In *Mason & Dixon*, Pynchon does take control of the production of American stories. He does tell the "truth" of the injustices that Hardt and Negri wish to promulgate. His representation of, for example, the Paxton Boys massacre of Native Americans at Lancaster is based very much in the

historical record. Pynchon goes even one step further and uses actual words that the historical Charles Mason wrote in his journal in 1764 to describe the fictional Mason's reaction to the massacre. Pynchon's meticulous research throughout his historical novels allows him to tell these types of truths, or little narratives. Yet Pynchon takes the project of liberation beyond Hardt and Negri's conclusion. He does not seek to take control of the production of truth; he instead controls—to a certain extent—the production of stories. This is why his use of the subjunctive is so significant in *Mason & Dixon*.

Pynchon lets facts remain as the playthings of lawyers (as Cherrycoke describes them) or of ineffective historians. He recognizes, instead, that cultural values are created and empowered through stories. The real liberation becomes the ability to create a counternarrative that is more attractive than the narrative promoted by Empire and its magic system. Through the subjunctive, Pynchon creates a narrative that includes difference and hybridity, but it also incorporates community, family, and autonomy. In his subjunctive storytelling, Pynchon creates worlds that the marketplace, by definition cannot deliver. Because the marketplace of Empire is based upon gain, because profit is the overriding value, the marketplace is antithetical to an economy of social relations. As Karl Polanyi argues in *The Great Transformation*, for a self-regulating marketplace to work, the economy must take precedence over land and labor. Land and labor, humans and the nature surrounding them, are the essential elements to social relations, to community, family, and autonomy. Thus, Pynchon's subjunctive stories can (and do) deliver something that is ultimately more attractive than the stories of Empire, of the marketplace. Pynchon's subjunctive stories narrate a world where social relations seize priority back from the annihilation of the marketplace.

CHAPTER 4:

AN *AGAINST THE DAY* GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE

In *Mason & Dixon*, Thomas Pynchon infuses his historical novel with clever anachronisms—not limited to but mostly comprised of technologies or allusions that would not have been available for his eighteenth-century characters. These anachronisms serve as a means of tying the historical text to the time when the novel was written. They signal to the reader that *Mason & Dixon* is as much a text about America in the late twentieth century as it is about an astronomer and a surveyor traveling through the empire of Enlightenment. It is simultaneously a text about America's past, present, and future. These anachronisms are frequently humorous. Reverend Wicks Cherrycoke is warned that, should he smoke any of the hemp in the colonies, not to inhale—a joke that would be meaningless in the eighteenth-century but resonates for a twentieth-century reader who remembers President Bill Clinton's notorious claim to have once smoked marijuana, but not inhaled. Perhaps the most humorous anachronism is the character of Gershom. Gershom is George Washington's slave, but also a stand-up comedian with a sense of humor that would slide seamlessly into a contemporary comedy night in the Apollo Theater in Harlem. The humor of Pynchon's anachronisms—and of his novel in general—make more palatable his explorations into the chattel slavery, exploitation, and injustice that constructed America.

Pynchon continues this project of writing a historical novel to expose and criticize past injustices and tie them into contemporary economic and political systems in *Against the Day*. *Against the Day* expands the scope from *Mason & Dixon*. *Mason & Dixon*

explores the construction of the American republic through Enlightenment justifications of traditional imperialism to foster nascent global trade. *Against the Day* moves the exploration into an era of more fully realized globalization. *Mason & Dixon* does have a somewhat global perspective. The protagonists are Englishmen who travel from England to South Africa to America and back to England, yet the focus of the novel, as well as the bulk of the action in the novel, centers around the burgeoning United States and is told from a post-revolutionary perspective. *Against the Day* starts in the United States, but the focus of the novel is less specific to any nation state. Characters roam across the states, into Europe, deep into Asia (sometimes literally underground Asia), to points antipodal to Colorado, and even to Counter Earth, a place that mirrors the Earth itself, only at a 180-degree orbital remove from this Earth. These travels further illustrate not only the impact of the exploitation and injustice that is a legacy of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century imperialism, but also the larger projects of economic liberalism that emerged from this age of Enlightenment and imperialism. Rather than clever anachronisms as a signal of a historical novel exploring contemporary situations, Pynchon introduces the concept of bilocation in *Against the Day*. Literally, bilocation is the ability to be in two places in one time. Pynchon's use of bilocation is less literal. Beginning with a crystal of Iceland spar—a transparent stone that has the ability to split a ray of light and generate a double-refracted image of anything viewed through it—Pynchon develops an extended metaphor for viewing the past as a double-refracted image that demonstrates not only contemporary society, but multiple possible worlds that can construct our future.

This bilocation is illustrated in less humorous ways than the anachronisms in *Mason & Dixon*. For example, the character of Lew Basnight emerges in the novel from

an indistinct past. He is aware of committing some type of horrible act that triggers a scandal familiar to everyone in his life but himself, a scandal so horrible no one will speak of it to Lew because the mere act of describing it would cause them to relive it. So Lew emerges as if from another life, or more specifically, from a life that has been split in two. For the rest of the novel, the reader gets the sense that the Lew about whom they are reading is the second Lew, the double-refracted one, the one who is viewed through Iceland spar. It is as if Lew somehow had the ability to be in two places at once—to bilocate—and the novel follows the second Lew while the original Lew, aware of his scandalous behavior, continues in the world he created.

Bilocation is not limited to characters in the novel. The characters Kit Traverse and Dally Rideout travel to Europe on a cruise ship S.S. *Stupendica*. The ship is the site of their first encounters and their budding love affair. Several hints have been given throughout the novel that Kit and Dally are destined to become a couple. Yet their love affair is torn asunder almost immediately when the *Stupendica* splits into two ships. The second *Stupendica*, a warship in the Austrian navy known as the *Emperor Maximilian*, heads to Africa with Kit involuntarily working in its hull. The original *Stupendica* continues to Trieste with Dally and her family. The split of the *Stupendica* illustrates the split between the leisure products of the capitalist class and the violence at the core of capitalism. The bilocations in the novel—as evidenced by Lew Basnight—are not limited to commentary on capitalism and violence. Nonetheless, the split of the *Stupendica* does illustrate the theme that this essay is most concerned with. I will focus specifically on the bilocation of nineteenth-century economic liberalism[23] and anarchic resistance and its split ray of contemporary neoliberalism and Pynchon's vision of a

better future. Seemingly, these topics could be split even further into the economics of liberalism and neoliberalism and the politics of anarchism and Pynchon's vision of a better future. As I will argue below, even Iceland spar cannot separate economics and politics in a "free" market society. Exploring this bilocation will give form to the project Pynchon has been undergoing since his novel *Vineland*: envisioning a future that wrests wealth and power from the opulent few who steer at the helm of national governments, multinational corporations, and supragovernmental organizations like the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund; a future that moves the contemporary ideology away from the free market/neoliberal utopian ideal of accumulation of wealth; a future that replaces this power system and ideology with a life based upon social relations constructed out of reconstituted family systems and communities. Specifically, I will explore Pynchon's transformative use of fiction as a pathway to this better future.

Against the Day begins with a self-reflexive engagement with fiction. The first characters introduced are the Chums of Chance, five aeronauts who are semi-fictional even within the context of the novel. The Chums of Chance exist as storybook heroes in the novel—at one point later in the novel, one of the "real" characters, Reef Traverse, reads a Chums of Chance novel. Their fictional status is further highlighted by the fact that the Chums seem to age only a few years over the thirty-year course of the novel. The Chums are also part of the reality of the novel. They engage with characters who are taken to be real (that is, not self-reflexively fictional but largely constrained to the rules of a nonfiction world). In the opening scene, they approach the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. The fair is described "as the great national celebration [which] possessed the

exact degree of fictitiousness to permit the boys access and agency. The harsh nonfictional world waited outside the White City's limits" (36). Through the Chums of Chance, Pynchon conflates nonfiction and fiction, the real and the imaginary. He does this perhaps to further his use of the subjunctive in *Mason & Dixon*[24] or perhaps to show that no genuine distinction can be made between fiction and nonfiction in the sense that postmodern ontology develops from the real and imaginary with commensurate seriousness.

The Chums of Chance are an important force in this conflation. The sections of the novel that feature the Chums are a pastiche—perhaps even a parody—of boys'-adventure novels similar to but not limited to Tom Swift novels. The reader of *Against the Day* is dropped into the Chums' fictional world. Other novels in the Chums' series are mentioned. The reader is advised to "see *The Chums of Chance and the Evil Halfwit*" (5). Other adventures, specifically "*The Chums of Chance at Krakatoa*" and "*The Chums of Chance Search for Atlantis*" (6) are referenced. In his essay "Genre as History," Brian McHale observes that Pynchon tends to align his pastiche with the time period he historicizes. For example, *Gravity's Rainbow*—which is set during the years of World War II—employs the elements of forties spy novels; *Mason & Dixon* reconstructs captivity narratives and gothic novels popular during the eighteenth century. *Against the Day* begins with the most popular fiction of 1893: boys'-adventure novels. McHale further explains, "To map an era's genre system is to map its popular *self-representations*. Every popular genre, for all its obvious limitations, distortions, and suppressions, captures the way a historical epoch represented itself *to* itself" (25). In other words, Pynchon's pastiche of popular entertainments from the time period that he

historicizes allows the reader to see culture represented in ways similar to the ways the culture constructed itself. The postmodern technique of pastiche further alerts readers to what was left out in popular entertainments.

While boys'-adventure novels of the late nineteenth century would focus on the hegemonic values of the time period—economic liberalism, patriotism, and patriarchy being chief among them—Pynchon immediately confronts this hegemony. Jeffrey Severs observes that, from nearly the opening pages, "*Against the Day* constantly undermines an abstracted version of capitalism with its material underpinnings—the harsh smells of mining camps, the sounds made by cattle going to slaughter" (224). Severs point is reinforced by the Chums' first view of Chicago: "As they came in low over the Stockyards, the smell found them, the smell and the uproar of flesh learning its mortality—like the dark conjugate of some daylit fiction they had flown here, as appeared increasingly likely, to help promote" (10). This scene not only juxtaposes the utopian liberal vision of a perfect world (that "daylit fiction" the Chums "help promote") with the material effects of capitalism (the sounds and smells of a slaughterhouse), as Severs argues. Pynchon also connects this vision self-reflexively to fiction and ominously to death.

In *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi explores the history of economic liberalism, covering specifically the nineteenth century. Polanyi's primary thesis is that economic liberalism—and specifically its reliance on the gold standard—led to the economic collapse and conditions of injustice that sparked both World War I and World War II. Polanyi's history can also serve as a backdrop to the economic situation that permeates *Against the Day*. Polanyi observes, "While in imagination the nineteenth

century was engaged in constructing the liberal utopia, in reality it was handing over things to a definite number of concrete institutions the mechanisms of which ruled the day" (220). For Polanyi, the vision of economic liberalism is largely a fiction. It resides only in the imaginary. Adam Smith's notion of an invisible hand guiding the markets is a quasi-spiritual notion lacking empirical support. Markets have never regulated themselves. If society ever genuinely attempt to created a self-regulating market, the result would be annihilation[25]. Nonetheless, the ideology of economic liberalism, its utopic imaginary and the concept of freedom that attends its free markets results in real, material suffering. Pynchon illustrates Polanyi's aforementioned statement through the Chums of Chance. The Chums begin the novel with a belief in a vision of economic liberalism's utopia. The first political view any Chum espouses is Lindsey Noseworth's expressed displeasure with anarchy as a virus afflicting the otherwise healthy body of capitalism. Nonetheless, "the concrete institutions … which ruled the day" obscure this vision. The Chums venture into the White City that is the Chicago World's Fair. Before they can view any of the European attractions that advertise this liberal utopia, they must travel through the "signs of cultural darkness and savagery" (22). The "cultural darkness and savagery" is embodied in the exhibits of the colonized nations, the exhibits of the half-hidden populations exploited and oppressed by global economic liberalism: Zulu dancers, Indian swamis, Pygmies, and Brazilian Indians. "To the boys it seemed that they were making their way through a separate, lampless world, out beyond some obscure threshold, with its own economic life, social habits, and codes, aware of itself as having little if anything to do with the official Fair" (22). The outskirts of the Fair rip the Chums out of their comfortable fiction. They can no longer be protected by the

conventions of boys'-adventure novels and all that those conventions ignore. Instead, they are confronted by the material impact of economic liberalism, the cultures torn asunder or wiped away, the economies based upon social relations devastated by one that privileges gain and accumulation over humans. The Chums equate the scene with darkness—that which they cannot see. And there is no way that the Chums would have been able to see this before, trapped as they were in the conventions of a series of popular novels, the purpose of which is to promote a very specific, hegemonic view that ignores the material effects of economic liberalism. Through this passage, Pynchon seems to be asking his readers to follow the same journey as the Chums, to look beyond the cultural fictions of a society sold on (or at least being sold) a free market ideology and instead examine the longstanding effects of this economic system.

In *Against the Day*, which several critics[26] argue is Pynchon's most directly political novel, the political perspective is clear. Before the Chums explore much of the Fair, Pynchon introduces the novel's antagonist, Scarsdale Vibe. Vibe is a robber baron modeled on the tradition of industrialists like John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and J. P. Morgan. Unlike Pynchon's earlier industrialist, Pierce Inverarity from *Crying of Lot 49*, who was known to wake up old lovers in the middle of the night with comic impersonations and who, not incidentally, was killed by a falling bust of robber baron Jay Gould, Vibe is no laughing matter. Before Vibe appears in the pages of *Against the Day*, the narrator[27] describes him and plutocrats of Vibe's ilk as "forces that might be described, with little risk of overstatement, as evil" (30). Vibe's evil is illustrated in his first actual presence in the novel. He walks into an upscale Chicago hotel carrying a silver cane which is also outfitted as an air-gun capable of shooting a small-caliber bullet.

Vibe is confronted by an elderly woman who recognizes him as a robber baron and tells him that his mother should have strangled him in the crib. Vibe responds by shooting the woman in the leg. This is a very telling scene.

First, the fact that the elderly woman accosted Vibe demonstrates the depth of hatred for plutocrats that will permeate the novel. Nearly every character who encounters Vibe wishes, in some way, for his death. Pynchon's decision to make the first person who expresses this wish a woman is significant. Women in particular bear the weight of economic liberalism's oppression in the novel. In a scene that quickly follows Vibe's presence in the novel, the reader witnesses a labor meeting, where the narrator describes:

> Women in surprising numbers, bearing the marks of their trades, scars from the blades of the meatpacking floors, squints from needlework carried past the borderlands of sleep in clockless bad light, women in head-scarves, crocheted fascinators, extravagantly flowered hats, no hats at all, women just looking to put their feet up after too many hours lifting, fetching, walking the jobless avenues, bearing the insults of the day. (49)

Subsequently, the novel explores these characters: women whose labor is exploited, women who have few economic opportunities and almost no possibilities for autonomy, and women who become autonomous, yet must travel a path through Hell to get there[28]. With this in mind, the elderly woman accosting Vibe becomes a gendered representation of discontent with the economic system that the novel historicizes as particularly brutal to women. She becomes, in a sense, an embodiment of what Candace Falk describes as "The Destroying Mothers": anarchists, feminists, suffragettes, and revolutionaries like

Emma Goldman, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Voltairine de Cleyre, and Margaret Sanger who fought against the injustices of economic liberalism (Carswell 52).

Vibe's overreaction to the elderly woman's harangue is equally significant. It not only stands to metaphorically represent plutocracy shooting down nineteenth-century women activists; it also demonstrates Vibe's unequivocal viciousness. He puts a bullet into the body of an unarmed human who poses no physical threat to him. Pynchon gives the reader no reason to view this scene with any complexity. Vibe demonstrates no redeeming characteristics, here or anywhere in the novel. Pynchon bestows him with nothing likeable or even human. He is, with no risk of overstatement, evil. It is odd that Pynchon, who demonstrates the complexity in every situation, who resists notions of purity at every chance, should write a character as purely antagonistic as Vibe. Even the villain in *Vineland*, Brock Vond, was given a past filled with scars that could make his actions, if not justifiable, at least complicated by very human motivations. Vibe has no such complications. Throughout the novel he continues to be the character (perhaps even caricature) presented in this opening scene: a robber baron with a complete disregard for humanity.

Pynchon's two-dimensional portrayal of Vibe in a novel that frequently goes beyond the third-dimension is curious. A reader must ask what purpose is served by this characterization of Vibe. One possible answer to this question has to do with Vibe as a representation of a doxa—a belief or ideology that has become naturalized in a society though it is anything but natural. A contemporary reader of *Against the Day*, most likely living in a neoliberal society, would be indoctrinated with neoliberalism's ideology of accumulation, summarized nicely by Wendy Brown as a belief system in which "all

dimensions of human life are cast in terms of market rationality." Attendant to subsuming all dimensions of life to market rationality is a sense that the wealthy are inherently superior to the masses. In *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, David Harvey outlines exactly how this ideology has become the hegemonic belief in the United States, Europe, Japan, and China. Supposing the reader of *Against the Day* is in one of these regions of the world, she is likely more than simply exposed to this neoliberal ideology; it would be the prevailing view of her culture. Because this belief has become the doxa, questioning this belief becomes difficult. Pynchon would have to de-doxify[29] the reader's inclination to view Scarsdale Vibe as her superior. By characterizing Vibe as evil instead of just bad, as Pynchon characterizes the villain of *Vineland*, Brock Vond, Pynchon dismantles the doxa surrounding his text.

Pynchon's bilocation of nineteenth-century economic liberalism and contemporary neoliberalism help to demonstrate that this neoliberal doxa is a fairly recent phenomena. As Karl Polanyi observes in *The Great Transformation*, "Nineteenth-century civilization alone was economic in a different and distinctive sense, for it chose to base itself on a motive only rarely acknowledged as valid in the history of human societies, and certainly never before raised to the level of a justification of action and behavior in everyday life, namely, gain" (31). While a neoliberal hegemony depicts the desire for accumulation or gain as an inherent human trait, Polanyi's economic history demonstrates that the desire for gain is not inherent. It is, instead, a culturally constructed belief system, and a fairly recent one at that. Further, it is a dubious belief system. An economy or marketplace focused primarily on gain or accumulation is unable to deliver the most basic human needs or desires to most of humanity. By its definition, the market

cannot produce social relations. It does not bring people together in ways that afford emotional connections or deep and loving relationships. It does not promote genuine artistic expression. It does not promote autonomy. It does not provide leisure time that is genuinely free of responsibilities for anyone except a small percentage of extremely wealthy people. It does not provide any of these very basic human desires. In fact, by dismissing social relations in favor of an economy of accumulation, liberalism actively works against those aspects of life that humans have traditionally valued the most. Instead, economic liberalism results in fractured societies and fractured human relations. It then offers to remedy the situation through the sale of commodities that cannot repair the fracture. A society based upon accumulation creates economic and ethnic Others, legions of oppressed, exploited, and starving humans who serve an opulent few. This system is anything but natural. As Polanyi further observes, "The outstanding discovery of recent historical and anthropological research is that man's economy, as a rule, is submerged in his social relationships. He does not act so as to safeguard his individual interest in the possession of material goods; he acts so as to safeguard his social standing, his social claims, his social assets" (48). According to Polanyi, while individual traits varied, human societies traded under the principles of reciprocity, redistribution, householding, or some combination of the three. Polanyi discusses Trobriand Islanders as an example of reciprocity. According to the culture of the islands, each inland village traded with a coastal village to create a symmetry. Each village traded what geography granted them in abundance for that which their geography lacked. In short, a coastal village would trade fish for vegetables grown inland. Reciprocity can also be exemplified in tribes of hunter-gatherers, where the hunters shared the spoils of their

activities with gatherers who did likewise. Redistribution denoted societies in which grains and other consumables were gathered in storehouses and spread among both producers of consumables and the nonproducing parts of the population who accounted for the military and leisure classes. While redistribution did lead to class stratification and exploitation in many cases, Polanyi suggests that, because land and labor were never treated as commodities, that stratification and exploitation were held somewhat in check. Householding societies, like those of ancient Greece, produced cash crops such as cattle and grains for the household first, then sold only the excess of production. In householding societies, "markets and money were mere accessories to an otherwise self-sufficient household" (56).

In relation to Polanyi's view of economic history, a character like Scarsdale Vibe represents a heretofore unknown level of opulence. Because land and labor were not treated as commodities and because social relations took precedence over economies of gain, Vibe's wealth could not have existed. It would have been broken up by some form of reciprocity or redistribution. Classic liberalism, particularly with respect to Adam Smith's argument that, because human societies have always traded and bartered, capitalism has always existed, provides a narrative that normalizes Vibe's opulence. This narrative—when accepted by twenty-first century neoliberals—ignores the specifics of previous human economies. It ignores the evidence presented by Polanyi that, while previous societies did trade and barter, they tended to trade and barter only the excess of their production. They never sacrificed their own necessities to serve the opulence of an "elite" few. Therefore, at least according to Polanyi's historiography of economic liberalism, nineteenth-century industrialists like Vibe who accumulated inordinate wealth

at the expense of so many were not natural. They were the fairly recent product of a European society transitioning into advanced stages of economic liberalism.

Pynchon explores Europe's transition into advanced stages of economic liberalism through the adventures of the Traverses in Venice. Kit Traverse notices the transition first. He has traveled to Venice with his brother Reef. The brothers plan to assassinate Scarsdale Vibe because Vibe hired the killers who assassinated Kit and Reef's father Webb. During the planning stages, Kit sits at a café in Venice and meditates on the city:

> The town was supposed to've been built on trade, but the Basilica San Marco was too insanely everything that trade, in its strenuous irrelevance to dream, could never admit. The numbers of commerce were 'rational'—ratios of profit to loss, rates of exchange—but among the set of real numbers, those that remained in the spaces between—the 'irrationals'—outnumbered those simple quotients overwhelmingly. Something like that was going on here—it even showed up in this strange, patternless subset of Venetian address numbers, which had already got him lost more than once. He felt like a person familiar with only real numbers watching a complex variable converge…. (732)

Of course, Venice has long been an outpost for a form of globalization, dating back centuries to the time when Venice was instrumental in the spice trade from Asia into Europe, and later on to North America. The key difference between the simple trade that existed historically in Venice and the trade that surrounds Kit resides in its scope. As Polanyi contends, prior to economic liberalism becoming hegemonic, trade was not about accumulation. Merchants and producers first took care of their local needs, then sold the

excess. Everything was not a commodity; only the excess was. Nineteenth-century economic liberalism, however, demanded that the marketplace supersede everything.

Obvious examples call into question Polanyi's historicizing of European economic history. For example, it would be difficult to argue that the House of Medici was primarily one of social relations and not of accumulation. However, looking beyond these specific examples and examining general trends, as Polanyi does, supports three points that I accept in my argument. First, when one views the economic history of humanity, the overwhelming trend is one of economies of social relations—be they through the reciprocity of hunter-gatherers or small farming villages; the redistribution of ancient Egyptian, Babylonians, Chinese, and Incans; or the householding of ancient Greeks. Second, that the economy of Europe in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century was increasingly becoming an economy of gain. Third, economies of gain tend to lead to unrest, war, famine, and institutionalized injustice. It is this institutionalized injustice that Pynchon confronts through the Traverses in Venice.

The Venice Kit meditates upon has not fully converted to the ideology of economic liberalism. The town does not privilege "ratios of profit to loss, rates of exchange." It does not share the "strenuous irrelevance to dream" that is liberalism. Instead, the " 'irrationals'—outnumbered those simple quotients overwhelmingly." The people around Kit refuse to buy into the myth that the unregulated marketplace will bring with it freedom and wealth. Or, if not a complete refusal, they at least seem to resist the definitions of freedom and wealth that liberalism employs. Perhaps this is why Kit, who earlier in the novel refused Vibe's offer to make Kit Vibe's principle heir, feels so at home here.

Instead of propagating the myth of a liberal utopia, Venice cultivates its identity in its art history: the architecture and paintings, the human expressions that constitute an organic culture. Vibe's arrival in Venice threatens this. Vibe visits Venice to accumulate some of the art that the city is known for. His purpose winds up tensions within the art and anarchist communities. The first piece that Vibe examines is a fictional painting entitled *The Sack of Rome*. The painting depicts a class war in which the plutocracy are losers. Horses ridden by nobility turn to bite their riders. Peasants urinate on their superiors. "Scarsdale … could see right away without the help of hired expertise that this was what you'd call a true masterpiece, and he'd be very surprised indeed if somebody hadn't already sold reproductions of it to some Italian beer company to use in local saloons over here" (726). Vibe's response to this artwork is telling. He is unable to judge the art as anything but a commodity. The value he recognizes in the painting is entwined with the marketplace. From Vibe's perspective, the painting is a masterpiece precisely because he can envision it as an advertisement. Its worth is connected to its commodification. Vibe further demonstrates his ignorance to the human expression behind the painting. Clearly, the artist wished to illustrate a discontent with class inequality and the market system by metaphorically stringing up merchants and attacking masters. Vibe's ignorance of this message seems to be tied to the root of the word ignorance: to ignore. Vibe willfully strips the art of its humanity—or at least its human expression—as a way of shifting the art into the sphere of commodity.

Vibe's response to this painting, and to artwork in general, is exactly what infuriates his would-be assassin, Andrea Tancredi. Tancredi describes Vibe's invasion of the Venetian art world as "a campaign of extermination against art itself" (738).

Tancredi is not bothered by the act of purchasing art. His views are not that pure. As he further explains, "It's not the price tag … it's what comes after—investment, reselling, killing something born in the living delirium of paint meeting canvas, turning it into a dead object, to be traded, on and on, for whatever the market will bear. A market whose forces are always exerted against creation, in the direction of death" (738). As I mentioned above, part of the problem lies in Vibe's willful ignorance, in his stripping art of its capability to express raw human emotion—killing the art, so to speak—and turning it into a commodity. Tancredi expands beyond this by pointing out that the marketplace leads forever in the direction of death (or, to use Polanyi's term, annihilation). This is a core problem of economic liberalism, as explored by Polanyi and others. For an unregulated marketplace to work, things which are not commodities must act as commodities. Humans and land are not commodities because they are not items produced to be sold, and commodities, by definition, are items produced to be sold. Because humans and land are not commodities, they cannot be expected to act as such. Humans cannot be expected to wait out market fluctuations between supply and demand. We need to eat in the intervening time; we seek a stability that an unregulated marketplace cannot provide. Land, likewise, requires more time to replenish itself than the unregulated marketplace affords. Polanyi provides the example of Spanish sheep pastures that were annihilated when the marketplace insisted on producing more wool than the land could sustain. Overgrazing created a wasteland out of the pastures. The core principle that leads the unregulated marketplace forever toward death can be simplified by the understanding that humans cannot be expected to live on sub-subsistence wages simple because labor's supply outweighs its demand; land cannot be

expected to produce more than is physically possible simply because the demand for its production outweighs its supply. Art, in the Venice of *Against the Day*, becomes the metaphor for this problematic of liberalism expecting that which is not a commodity to act like a commodity.

For Tancredi, art is alive. It is created to express human emotions. More than that, it is a means by which the disenfranchised can gain a voice in larger society. *The Sack of Rome* exemplifies this. The painting is an expression of the injustice that a vision of a liberal utopia ignores. The artist's frustration lives within the painting and is conveyed to someone who views it on a pre-rational level. While art has always been sold, and it is probable that even this painting had been in the marketplace, it has never been just a commodity. Vibe kills it by robbing it of its ability to speak for the disenfranchised, by turning it into a straight commodity, by forcing it into a hegemonic belief that everything must be subject to the laws of the marketplace. Tancredi seeks to rescue art and all it stands for—the Venice of "irrationals;" the spaces between ratios of profit and loss, rates of exchange—by killing economic liberalism's inevitable bastard offspring, the plutocrat.

Because Vibe is willfully ignorant of any worldview beyond his own, he would be unable to understand Tancredi's argument. Vibe is completely invested in the doxa. More than that, his belief system borders on the religious. Karl Polanyi, throughout his history of economic liberalism, continually depicts the belief in unregulated markets as somewhat religious. Liberalism replaces the concept of a benevolent god with that of a benevolent market. Instead of God working in mysterious ways, the Invisible Hand does. This is unequivocally faith-based. Vibe is devout, a convert to this market-based pseudo-

religion. From his perspective, art must be robbed of its expression so it can become a commodity; people and land must be exploited; everything must fall under the logic of the marketplace.

By the time Vibe arrives in Venice, the reader is well aware of Vibe's belief system. Much earlier in the novel, Vibe depicts his own role in economic liberalism as that of a soldier in a class war. Vibe characterizes anyone espousing rights for workers as "abscesses suppurating in the body of our Republic" (332). He casts off any type of negotiation with labor or discussions of a more egalitarian society as "such a cruel farce, cruel to both sides" (333). Vibe paints himself as a crusader at the alter of economic liberalism, hell-bent on satiating "this strange fury I feel in my heart, this desire to kill off every damned socialist and so on leftward, without any more mercy than I'd show a deadly microbe" (332). In his own words, Vibe is a religious soldier fighting a class war against everyone upon whom his wealth is based.

Perhaps because he envisions himself in a class war, he recognizes that people want to kill him. Vibe is constantly protected by his main bodyguard, Foley Walker. He carries the aforementioned walking cane that can double as a small-caliber rifle. He even employs a small army to protect him in Venice. Yet Vibe is too devout to recognize why people want to kill him, to understand that people's homicidal impulses toward him are one logical reaction to the system of gross injustice that he perpetuates. Vibe gains no insight from Tancredi's assassination attempt.

Tancredi approaches Vibe outside an opulent ball in Venice. That much is certain. The narrator presents events in an intentionally vague manner. If Tancredi has a weapon—which the reader assumes he does because Kit and Reef Traverse, witnesses to

the event, assume he does—the reader cannot see it. He may have a gun, though friends of Tancredi's later declare that no gun was found on the scene. He may have a small bomb, though again it is unclear. Nonetheless, Vibe's private army wastes no time descending on Tancredi. When he does not halt his approach, the private army opens fire, first shooting him until he falls into a pool of his own blood, then attacking his corpse. While the private army kicks Tancredi's lifeless body, "Scarsdale Vibe all but danced up and down in delighted approval, loudly offering procedural advice… When his voice was too hoarse to go on, he approached and looked down for a while on the torn corpse in its bath of public light, feeling blessed at having witnessed firsthand this victory over Anarchist terror" (743). Vibe retreats into the solace of the word terror, of classifying this attack as a terrorist act. In the act of naming and classifying, he absolves himself of the responsibility of asking difficult questions. He does not examine what about his life fosters such a hatred in the masses as to necessitate his hiring of a small, private army and to compel the army to act in such an unhesitating and extreme manner to every perceived threat. He cannot imagine that his belief system and subsequent actions are a crime against labor and art, perhaps even against humanity. He does not recognize that he is unique in human history for being the recipient of all the awards that an economy based solely upon gain produces. He does not see the inevitable annihilation assured by a hegemony which values accumulation over social relations. He cannot understand that his opulence comes at the price of the well-being of most of humanity. Most of all, he does not question how natural his doxa really is. When Pynchon sets up the scene in this way, however, with a fully reprehensible character—jumping mad and exempt, pardoned from all of his crimes—the reader must question the doxa.

Beyond the question of doxa, the reader must investigate the motivation behind these assassination attempts. On a surface level, each would-be assassin (or would-be attacker) of Vibe has her own personal reasons. For Kit and Reef Traverse, they wish to kill the man who paid to have their father killed. It is a matter of family vendetta. For Tancredi, it is an attempted assassination of the man killing the art Tancredi holds dear. For the elderly woman who accosted Vibe early in the novel, her attack was in the name of gender equity. When these motivations are added together, the sum becomes what Karl Polanyi describes as a double movement or a countermovement.

Polanyi suggest that, whenever a government approaches laissez-faire or a less regulated market, resistance forms to counter it. It is this spontaneous resistance that defines the double movement or countermovement. Polanyi argues that liberal ideology interprets this resistance as conspiracy or the planned actions of some type of oppositional ideology. Or, in the case of Scarsdale Vibe, the double movement may be characterized as some type of abscess or disease. Polanyi's investigation reveals something different. According to Polanyi, "While laissez-faire economy was the product of deliberate State action, subsequent restrictions on laissez-faire started in a spontaneous way. Laissez-faire was planned; planning was not" (147). He further articulates, "The countermove against economic liberalism and laissez-faire possessed all the unmistakable characteristics of spontaneous reaction" (156). In other words, if there really were an invisible hand guiding the unregulated marketplace, history shows that it would push the marketplace toward regulation and toward resistance movements that oppose the unregulated marketplace. Polanyi understands the motivations behind this resistance, also. He explains, "Indeed, that a community would remain indifferent to the

scourge of unemployment, the shifting of industries and occupations and to the moral and psychological torture accompanying them, merely because economic effects, in the long run, might be negligible, was to assume an absurdity" (224). While Scarsdale may expect labor to act as a commodity—he may even wage war against humans who refuse to act as commodities—the humans who comprise the labor understand the absurdity and they resist spontaneously.

The most salient example of a double movement in *Against the Day* resides in the character of Webb Traverse. Webb is a miner and an anarchist bomber. His exploits with dynamite are turned into legend. He is dubbed by storytellers prone to embellishment as the Kieselguhr Kid. Unlike Scarsdale Vibe, who is a caricature of a plutocrat, Webb's characterization as an anarchist bomber is complex. He is part legend and part fiction, certainly. Yet the majority of his portrayal is speckled with the very material motivations of a father, a husband, and a working man. It is important to notice, too, that before he was an anarchist bomber, he was just a miner who used dynamite in the service of capital. He blew up pieces of Colorado, creating what he viewed as "poisoned mountains" (89) of slag. He turned the dynamite against the mining company not because of any preconceived anarchist belief. Instead, he recognized the injustices against land and labor that the mining company perpetrated and lashed out with the weapon that was in hand. Examining his words throughout the novel, Webb's allegiances were with the miners' union, with workers' rights.

When Webb is first introduced in the novel, he has a conversation with Merle Rideout. Webb's theory, at this point, is largely unarticulated, yet he is well along the path of his career as a dynamite revolutionary. In a discussion on alchemy with Merle,

Webb asks why capital would bother with alchemy. He explains that capital "[h]ad their own magic, doin just fine, thanks, instead of turning lead into gold, they could take poor people's sweat and turn it into greenbacks, and save that lead for enforcement purposes" (79). With this statement, Webb demonstrates his recognition of the exploitation of labor by capital. His presence in Merle's shed, where Webb thinks he smells homemade explosives cooking, suggests Webb's desire for action. Nonetheless, he holds no fully realized theory. Webb even laments his inability to theorize. He thinks:

> If there'd only been the simple luxury of time, maybe to do nothing but put his feet up on some wood porchrail, roll a cigarette, gaze at the hills, let the breezes slide over him—sure—but as it was, he never saw a minute that didn't belong to somebody else. Any discussion of deeper topics such as what to keep hammering at, what to let go, how much he owed who, had to be done on the run, with people he hoped were not going to fink him out. (91)

For Webb—who is the one working class male in the novel who engages in a lifetime of traditional industrial labor; even his assassins have to drag him out of the mine to kill him—there is no time to theorize. He does acquire some theory along the trail, mostly from the sermons of the radical preacher Reverend Moss Gatlin. Among the wisdom Rev. Gatlin passes on is the Marxist notion, "Labor produces all wealth. Wealth belongs to the producer thereof" (93). Webb's dynamite activities—which largely consist of blowing up mine property and railroad bridges—is an example of Mikhail Bakunin's propaganda of the deed. Still, Webb is not scholar of the works of Marx and Bakunin. His actions are the spontaneous reaction to injustice created by economic liberalism, an example of what Polanyi describes as a countermovement—and not the result of any kind

of organized ideology. He is a bomber. Later storytellers (myself included) add the adjective "anarchist."

Expanding on Polanyi's notion of the countermovement is the concept of the *jacquerie* as articulated by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their text *Commonwealth*. Hardt and Negri define a *jacquerie* as "self-organized rebellion based on indignation" (236). According to Hardt and Negri, these *jacqueries* follow oppression worldwide. Like a countermovement, a *jacquerie* rises spontaneously. Unlike a countermovement, a *jacquerie* seems to be necessarily violent in nature. Like Webb, *jacqueries* largely lack a theoretical framework. Unlike Webb, *jacqueries* tend to be mass movements instead of a lone bomber (or a bomber who occasionally works with one or two others) roaming the mountains. Hardt and Negri note, "The central problem, though … is how to translate every moment of insurgency into a moment of government, how to make insurrection lasting and stable, that is, how to make the *jacquerie* effective" (*Commonwealth* 239). In other words, for self-organized, violent rebellion to compel positive change, it must link with other such movements resisting common oppressions. The *jacqueries* must further articulate their goals in order to move toward sustainable change.

One of the advantages of the encyclopedic breadth and intellectual depth of *Against the Day* is its ability to link *jacqueries*. These self-organized, violent rebellions follow the characters throughout the novel. Webb's son Frank experiences *jacqueries* in Mexico while running guns and fighting the various battles that historians have grouped together as the Mexican Revolution. For Frank, the *jacqueries* are unlinked. They move from one leader to another, each victorious leader becoming a mirror image of the tyrant

he replaces. One of Webb's partners in crime, the Finn Veikko, also drifts from one *jacquerie* to another. He links them somewhat. This is demonstrated when the narrator explains, "[Veikko had] never seen much difference between the Tsar's regime and American capitalism. To struggle against one, he figured, was to struggle against the other" (83). Veikko gives the oppression a name: capitalism. Whether it is the aristocratic capitalism of the Tsar or the plutocratic capitalism of the United States, Veikko recognizes common problems. Specifically, he finds the "same wealth without conscience, same poor people in misery, army and police free as wolves to commit cruelties on behalf of the bosses, bosses ready to do anything to protect what they had stolen" (83). In short, he finds the same oppression and exploitation of economic liberalism. Nonetheless, Veikko's propaganda of the deed is over in a flash (please excuse the pun). His actions create no sustainable change. The vagaries of the actions even leave a great deal of room regarding how the propaganda of the deed is interpreted. Finally, Webb's son Reef, his daughter-in-law Yashmeen, and his granddaughter Ljubica must navigate a series of competing *jacqueries* throughout the Balkans much later in the novel. All of these *jacqueries* seem to be pawns in a chess match for various world powers; all are largely ineffective. In fact, Pynchon's choice of Mexico and the Balkans—two regions that remain volatile at the time of *Against the Day*'s publication, two regions that have wallowed under a couple of centuries of liberal, then neoliberal, oppression—invites the reader to investigate the danger of violent revolutions. Graham Benton, in his essay "Daydreams and Dynamite," observes in Pynchon's revolutionary character Ewball Oust "a familiar dilemma in any anarchist program—how to lash out at a corrupt system without capitulating to the very dehumanizing actions with which you

have characterized your enemy" (204). The *jacqueries* in *Against the Day* beg similar questions. Specifically, if a revolutionary is to employ violent tactics, how does he subsequently separate the means of a revolution from the ends of the revolution? The *jacqueries* in *Against the Day* further questions the efficacy—and perhaps the morality—of violent resistance. These questions bear further exploration.

In her essay "The Religious and Political Vision of Pynchon's *Against the Day*," Katherine Hume reads suggestions of support for the implementation of violent resistance from Pynchon. Hume claims, "I too failed to register the seriousness with which Pynchon appears to support political violence because of my hostility to terrorism, but second and third readings persuade me that Pynchon is more aggressive here than in earlier novels, if only out of despair over lack of effective peaceful alternatives" (164). According to Hume, Pynchon's sympathetic portrayal of anarchist bombers, his privileging of the anarchists' arguments and rhetoric, and his juxtaposition of these portrayals with unambiguously negative portrayals of plutocrats all adds up to somewhat of an endorsement of violent intervention. Graham Benton is less convinced. Benton argues, "While I do not believe … that Pynchon is clearly aligned with a call to violence as Hume suggests, I do see him pushing harder on the edges of one kind of anarchist agenda than in any other novel, if only to show more clearly what is at stake" (203). Benton also reads sympathetic portrayals of anarchist bombers, but his exploration of anarchism in the novel does not equate sympathy with endorsement, necessarily. The question of violence as a possible form of resistance emerges in contemporary theory that reflects many of Pynchon's views expressed in *Against the Day*. Hardt and Negri, whose criticisms of neoliberalism and the subsequent formation of a neoliberal Empire aligns

itself closely with Pynchon's criticisms, are not shy about an overt endorsement of violence. Hardt and Negri state:

> Gramsci has nothing in principle against armed struggle—and neither do we. The point is simply that arms are not always the best weapons. What is the best weapon against the ruling powers—guns, peaceful street demonstrations, exodus, media campaigns, labor strikes, transgressing gender norms, silence, irony, or many others—depends on the situation… The first and most obvious criterion is, What weapons and strategy are most likely to be effective and win the struggle? (*Commonwealth* 368)

In other words, Hardt and Negri present no moral objection to violent uprisings. They defend these *jacqueries* as necessary, finding fault only in the difficulty of organizing them, taking them to the next level where sustainable positive change is possible.

Pynchon's view of armed struggle is certainly more convoluted. The bomber Webb Traverse examines some of the complications:

> The tricky patch, it had seemed to Webb for a while now, came in choosing the targets [for his bombing activities]… Lord knew that owners and mine managers deserved to be blown up, except that they had learned to keep extra protection around them—not that going after their property, like factories or mines, was that much better of an idea, for, given the nature of corporate greed, those places would usually be working three shifts, with the folks most likely to end up dying being miners, including children working as nippers and swampers—the same folks who die when the army comes charging in. Not that any owner ever cared rat shit about the lives of workers, of course, except to define them as Innocent

> Victims in whose name uniformed goons could then go out and hunt down the Monsters That Did the Deed. (84-5).

Through this meditation, the parameters Pynchon constructs around violent tactics begins to be established. Webb (if not necessarily Pynchon) is not morally opposed to killing some mine owners and their administration. He does recognize the difficulty in such acts. Specifically, mine owners—and the extremely wealthy in general—are well protected. As Vibe's would-be assassin Andrea Tancredi learns the hard way later in the novel, industrialists protect themselves by surrounding themselves with a private army. Going through a private army to attack a mine owner is dangerous business, possibly even suicidal.

On the other hand, Webb is morally opposed to killing workers. For him, it would exemplify the old problem of engaging in the behavior that he condemns: taking the life of the innocent. Webb also recognizes that he is fighting a rhetorical battle. His actions must be carried out in a manner that the media cannot turn against the workers[30]. The use of violence is further complicated when Webb acknowledges that "some of these explosions, the more deadly of them, in fact, were really set off to begin with not by Anarchists but by the owners themselves" (85). This highlights the absurdity—perhaps even the futility—of Webb's violent resistance. Through his actions of dynamiting rail lines and mine property, Webb is complicit in creating an atmosphere of increased violence against himself. It is one more example that a revolutionary's very tactics can and often will be turned against him.

Pynchon does give a fair amount of lip service to the notion that there are no innocent bourgeoisie. Several anarchist characters express this view in one form or

another. It would be a mistake to read this repetition as an endorsement, however. Pynchon's stance on the question of innocent bourgeoisie becomes clearer much later in the novel. Webb's son Reef sits in a Nice café with a fellow anarchist named Flaco. Flaco notes that the café is a good target for anarchist bombers. Reef responds, "I've got to where I like these cafés, all this to-and-fro of the city life—rather be out here enjoying it than worried all the time about some bomb going off" (850). Reef's response is complex. First, Reef is no member of the bourgeoisie. It is true that he has benefited from the money of the bourgeois Ruperta Chirpington-Groin through many of his travels in the novel. His relationship with her is a complex one, however, which seems predicated on his being sexually available for her, and her only responsibility to him seems to be taking care of his fiscal needs. In short, his time spent with Ruperta could be read more as his time as a sex worker than as a member of the bourgeoisie. Reef is not exactly a member of the proletariat because he does not work an industrial job—or any job, for that matter. He is instead an example of what Pynchon defined as the preterite in *Gravity's Rainbow*. He is a character who exists outside the flow of mainstream society. And if Reef is not a member of the bourgeoisie, neither are several of Pynchon's characters who share a similar social position as Reef and roam in and out of similar cafés throughout the novel. Thus, the café in Nice and others like it in the novel are not exclusively bourgeois sites. When a bomb explodes in the café, it is not only an attack on the bourgeoisie. It is an attack on the café workers, the passersby, and the anarchists Reef and Flaco. To justify this bombing under the notion that there are no innocent bourgeoisie would require a revolutionary to expand the statement to: there are no innocent bourgeoisie or innocent employees of the bourgeoisie or innocent passersby in

the vicinity of the bourgeoisie. Not only is this a far less catchy slogan, it is an extremely difficult argument to justify. Pynchon makes no attempt to justify it.

Pynchon's treatment of the bombing is telling, as well. He employs very graphic imagery to describe the bombing itself. Among the detritus surrounding the explosion is "human blood everywhere, blood arterial, venous and capillary, fragments of bone and cartilage and soft tissue" (850). The specificity in this description—all the internal passageways that carry human blood have been severed so that the blood does not flow or spurt but it actually spills; even the tissue that holds the blood inside has been destroyed—highlights the material effects of the attack. The bomb destroys human lives down to the very blood, bone, and soft tissue. This description imprints the theory onto the act, takes it out of the abstract and into the concrete. Just as, throughout most of his oeuvre, Pynchon dismantles the fictions of liberal and neoliberal beliefs by representing material consequences of the economic system, this description of the bombing in the café in Nice dismantles theoretical revolutionary violence. It lays bare the consequences of the act. It connects the means of revolution with the ends.

To further enunciate this point, Pynchon follows the bomb scene with significant action. Reef and Flaco neither flee the scene of the bomb nor align themselves with the bombers. They certainly do not revel in the destruction the way Scarsdale Vibe did when Tancredi was murdered: flogging the corpses and dancing in celebration of a victory in a class war. Instead, they help the wounded, stop the bleeding when they can, and nurse the wounds it is possible for them to nurse. The combination of the graphic description of the material ends of anarchist bombing and Reef and Flaco's active reminder that any movement for social justice must be first about human well-being suggests that

Pynchon's sympathetic portrayal of bombers does not equal an endorsement for bombs as legitimate tools of resistance.

Beyond the bombing, *Against the Day* explores the issues of armed struggle through a cast of characters densely populated with gunman and action featuring their gunplay. Guns are presented as family heirlooms. The size, shape, and national origins of characters' guns are employed as devices to construct the characters' identities. Nearly every character over the age of four packs a gun and knows how to use it. Reef Traverse, for one, is fascinated with guns throughout the novel. At one point, he purchases an elephant rifle to hunt down Vibe. He does not use the rifle for that purpose, but he does use it to protect his future wife Yashmeen on the night when they first become a couple. Later, while Reef, Yashmeen, and their infant Ljubica struggle to flee the various *jacqueries* in the Balkans, they find themselves trapped between warring factions. They duck and cover during the shooting. Once the battle moves away from them, Reef leaves his wife and child to rush onto a battlefield that may still contain armed combatants to steal a machine gun off a corpse. Yashmeen recognizes this boyish fascination with guns as inherent in his personality. She explains this to her infant daughter.

The fascination expands to the whole generation of Traverses. When Kit is challenged to a duel in Göttingen, he insists on pistols as his weapon of choice. His German opponent—ironically named Günni—is horrified by the brutality of Kit's selection, by the deadly outcome that pistols ensure. Kit is unrelenting. As an American—and specifically an American from the mythical West of the nineteenth century—guns and gunplay form an integral part of his identity.

Likewise, when Kit and Reef's brother Frank Traverse finally meets his nephew (Reef's son) Jesse, the two Traverses bond over a discussion of the guns each are packing. In a strangely tender way, the guns save the two characters from the awkwardness of their first meeting. There is even a logic to both Frank and Jesse packing guns at that point. Earlier in the novel, Frank had reconnected with Jesse's mother and Frank's future wife Stray when she was running guns for Mexican revolutionaries. Part of her role in Ludlow—where Frank and Jesse do finally meet—is to run guns into the mining camp where striking coal miners are using the weapons to fend off the national guard.

The Traverse family's fascination with guns helps to foreground the armed struggle that propels much of the action in the novel. The representation of this armed struggle—because it is in the hands of those who traditional American histories tend to ignore or demonize—self-reflexively highlights the way in which bombs, guns, and their attendant violence permeates American culture at every level. Yet to better understand what Pynchon is doing with all of this gunplay in the novel, it is helpful to return to Brian McHale's notion of genre poaching. Particularly through the character of Frank Traverse, Pynchon sculpts a pastiche of Western dime novels. In a sense, Frank is a prototypical dime novel hero. He wanders throughout Colorado, New Mexico, and Mexico, fighting on the side of the disenfranchised. He wears his guns in plain view. He is quick to shoot. He is motivated at the core by a family vendetta. He is sworn to kill the men who have killed his father. All of these are conventions of traditional westerns. The episodes in which Frank carries out the family vendetta, however, are a drastic deviation from traditional westerns. As McHale observes, "Messy and unsatisfactory,

each episode ends in an anticlimax of one kind or another. These are hardly the sorts of stories that the dime novels conventionally tell about Wild West violence" (23). Indeed, when Frank kills Sloat Fresno (one of the two hired gunmen who killed Webb Traverse), the scene has almost no build up. Two characters do not walk out onto Main Street at high noon. They do not look each other in the eyes and stare each other down. The plot of the novel does not race in an unyielding path toward their showdown. Instead, it happens by accident. Frank simply finds himself in a bar where Sloat Fresno is drinking. Frank does not contemplate his actions. He has, in fact, "no chance to rouse up any of those family emotions, none of that" (395). He simply draws, shoots, and kills Sloat before Sloat even realizes he is in a gunfight. Sloat "maybe never even recognized him" (395). The fact that Frank finds Sloat once Frank has stopped looking, the fact that the scene begins and ends in only a few sentences, and the fact that the showdown is less a fair fight and more a straight killing all combine to demonstrate the pointlessness of this act of vengeance. Nothing is accomplished by killing Sloat Fresno. Frank does not even feel better afterwards. He feels worse, in fact. Even Frank's mother Mayva, who had encouraged all three of her sons to avenge their father's death at the funeral, is ambivalent about the killing of Sloat. She compliments Frank for completing the act, but seems to recognize that nothing has changed in the world now that Sloat is gone.

The futility of this showdown echoes Oakley Hall's Western *Warlock*, which Pynchon famously praised. *Warlock* re-envisions the legendary showdown at the O. K. Corral in Tombstone. The Wyatt Earp character, named Clay Blaisedell in the novel, confronts the rogues who are disrupting the peace in the Tombstone-esque town of Warlock. They have a shootout that is modeled after the gunfight at the O. K. Corral.

Blaisedell kills some of the rogues and chases out the rest. Yet the gunfight occurs early in the novel. Unlike other popular representations of this showdown, Hall presents the gunfight not as the resolution of the problems the town—and, metaphorically, society—faces, but as an ultimately futile attempt to solve problems. Instead, the town is faced with first moving forward in the presence of Blaisedell, who presents additional problems. First, he has proven himself more deadly than anyone else in town. For this reason, townspeople come to fear and loath him. Further, they need his protection as much as they resent his presence. Blaisedell, for his part, gradually comes to realize the trap in which he ensnared himself. The town suffers for their choice to settle their problems through the conventions of a dime novel. For much of the remainder of *Warlock*, the real problem confronting the town is the exploitation of the miners by outside corporate forces. In order to subdue striking miners, Blaisedell is expected to align himself with the very men he had been hired to kill at the beginning of the book. Without going further into *Warlock*, my quick overview demonstrates the lessons Pynchon learned from the novel. He learned to represent the futility of hired gunmen, the messiness of real vendettas, and the exploitation of labor that marks the real issues of unrest in a community. Perhaps, most importantly, he learned to demonstrate how little is accomplished in a retributive killing. This is evidenced in his portrayal of Scarsdale Vibe's assassination.

Frank finally meets Scarsdale in Trinidad, Colorado. The Colorado Coal Wars, which would later be resolved in events known as the Ludlow Massacre, have drawn both Frank and Scarsdale to town. Upon realizing that the man who hired gunmen to kill his father was within reach, Frank plots to murder Scarsdale. He confronts Vibe on the

streets of Trinadad as Vibe is returning from lunch—thus apparently missing high noon by an hour or so. Otherwise, the scene is set up somewhat like a traditional Western dime novel showdown. Frank does call out to Vibe. They both do have time to consider the act that they are about to engage in. They are even on the main street in town, with bystanders watching from a safe distance. The showdown is cut short, however, when Vibe's body guard Foley Walker decides to kill Vibe instead of Frank. The scene ends almost as quickly as it started. Walker unloads his clip into Vibe. Vibe falls in the snow. Frank blends back into the crowd. The antagonist of the novel is killed. Evil is vanquished. It even happens late in the novel, at a point which could be climactic, yet the murder is largely anticlimactic because nothing changes once Vibe is killed. He had been in Trinidad to inspire his fellow plutocrats to violently suppress labor activists in Colorado. Apparently, Vibe need not have bothered. The plutocrat John D. Rockefeller, Jr., seemed perfectly inspired without the fictional Vibe to cheer him on. The Ludlow Massacre went on even in a world without Scarsdale Vibe. Significantly, killing Vibe is an ultimately worthless act.

Pynchon's act of situating the climax of the gunplay around the coal miner's strike in Ludlow in 1913 and 1914 is significant, also. Pynchon's representation of the events in Ludlow are faithful to the historic event. He employs the names of real people who were active in the event. His dates, places, and basic summary of actions all adhere fairly closely to the historical record. In Ludlow, Colorado during what Howard Zinn described as "perhaps the most violent struggle between corporate power and laboring men in American history" ("The Ludlow Massacre," 184), coal miners were forced to engage in violent resistance when hired gunmen operating under the auspices of the

National Guard attacked[31]. Pynchon clearly takes sides in this shootout. When Jesse Traverse and his friend meet the hired gunmen face-to-face, the narrator describes the boys recognizing in the gunmen "a level of evil neither boy had quite suspected in adults till now" (1010). The lieutenant in charge of the hired gunmen is described as a man "with a high forehead, lidless long eyes and mouth in a slit, a lizard's face" (1013). One of the miners declares the lieutenant to be "the devil" (1013). Contrasting these portrayals of the gunmen as villains, Pynchon represents the miners who shot back at the gunmen not only sympathetically, but heroically. Nonetheless, Stray and Jesse, then later Frank, all must flee the scene of the strike when they are outnumbered by the corporate army and without hope of anything resembling a victory. As it is portrayed in the novel, the historic event at Ludlow ended poorly. The strike was called off without the coal miners' union gaining recognition. Several strikers, their wives, and their children were murdered. Neither Rockefeller nor any of his hired gunmen were ever convicted of a crime. The event is known to history—through what little representation it receives in traditional histories—as the Ludlow Massacre. It was a massacre. Pynchon's choice to situate this historic event as the climax for Traverse gunplay reinforces the idea that Pynchon's revolutionaries articulated in *Vineland*: if you cannot match Empire's armies with equitable, regimental strength, then it is best to find another path of resistance.

Howard Zinn's conclusion in his historical essay on Ludlow brings this argument back to the original concept of bilocation. Zinn argues, "If [the Ludlow Massacre] is read as a commentary on a larger questions—the relationship of government to corporate power and of both to movements of social protest—then we are dealing with the present" (201). The history of the Ludlow Massacre can live in both places—it can bilocate[32]—

because it both is and is not commensurate with the present. For example, nineteenth-century liberalism has distinctive differences from twenty-first-century neoliberalism. The economic liberalism that Polanyi describes in *The Great Transformation* is characterized by an almost religious faith in unregulated markets. Contemporary neoliberals do not seem to share this faith. As David Harvey demonstrates, contemporary neoliberals continue to preach this faith in unregulated markets and the "freedom" that accompanies them. In reality, markets are far from unregulated. As Hardt and Negri observe, "Neoliberalism … is not really a regime of unregulated capital but rather a form of state regulation that best facilitates the global movements and profit of capital" (*Multitude* 280). Contemporary neoliberals do not genuinely aspire to strip markets of regulation. Instead, they have created a network of national governments, multinational corporations, and supragovernmental regulation agencies like the World Trade Organization that ensure all regulations should be sculpted to benefit the accumulation of capital at the expense of labor and workers. Harvey defines a neoliberal state as "a state apparatus whose fundamental mission was to facilitate conditions for profitable capital accumulation on the part of both domestic and foreign capital… The freedoms it embodies reflect the interests of private property owners, businesses, multinational corporations, and financial capital" (7). Harvey's description of inextricable state and corporate interests matches both Zinn's reading of the Ludlow Massacre and Pynchon's representation of it.

Further, Wendy Brown argues, "Neo-liberal rationality, while foregrounding the market, is not only or even primarily focused on the economy; rather it involves *extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action*"

(emphasis in original). This assessment seems almost a mirror image of Polanyi's criticism of economic liberalism as subverting all life to the logic of the marketplace. While important distinctions between liberalism and neoliberalism do exist, while the economic situation of the late nineteenth-century does differ in many ways from the contemporary situation—primary among these differences being the stationary, industrial labor predominant in the nineteenth century and fluid, immaterial labor that is increasingly defining the twenty-first century—and while the modes of resistance differ between the nineteenth and twenty-first century, Pynchon's bilocation nonetheless allows contemporary readers to view the two time periods through the same metaphoric piece of Iceland spar. Fredric Jameson states, "The historical novel can no longer set out to represent the historical past; it can only 'represent' our ideas and stereotypes about the past" (25). I would expand this assessment to suggest that the way Pynchon historicizes and readers (myself included) interpret this historiography elucidates more about our current construction of culture than about any attempt we may make to understand the past.

For these reasons, so much of the criticism leveled at economic liberalism in both *Against the Day* and this essay may also be read as a criticism of neoliberalism. Many of the problems presented by the Scarsdale Vibe and the plutocracy he represents can also apply to a growing twenty-first century plutocracy, which, according to David Harvey's study in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, is approaching a commensurate share of the national wealth to that which was accumulated by robber barons of Vibe's ilk. Harvey further observes, "[T]he evidence strongly suggests that the neoliberal turn is in some way and to some degree associated with the restoration or reconstruction of the power of

the economic elites… [It is] a *political* project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of the economic elites" (19). Since the "elites" Harvey describes are defined not only by their wealth but also by the inordinate amount of political power their wealth is used to purchase, plutocracy—by definition a ruling class of the extremely wealthy—is the proper word. This contemporary class of "economic elites" are motivated by politics as much as economics, power as much as gain. Put succinctly, Emma Goldman, in her essay "Anarchism: What It Really Stands For," states, "While all anarchists agree that the main evil today is an economic one, they maintain that the solution of that evil can be brought about only through the consideration of *every phase* of life,—individual, as well as the collective; the internal, as well as the external phases" (50). Goldman recognizes the same problem with economic liberalism as Brown articulates with neoliberalism: the infusion of marketplace logic into "every phase of life." Likewise, a contemporary analysis of *Against the Day*, which historicizes the time period when Goldman lived and the movement of which she was an instrumental part, must recognize how inextricably economics and politics are entwined and how the logic of the marketplace saturates every aspect of contemporary culture.

Just as Karl Polanyi narrowed the primary causes of two world wars and the rise of fascism to the failures inherent in the gold standard, Pynchon's critique in *Against the Day* can be narrowed to the unjust economic and power relations inherent in neoliberal ideology. While his antagonist Scarsdale Vibe may have been—in many ways—the classic nineteenth-century economic liberal who espoused a religious faith in the unregulated marketplace, neoliberalism shares no such genuine faith. David Harvey demonstrates throughout *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* that faith in an unregulated

marketplace is little more than a sales pitch for neoliberalism. The key to this sales pitch lies in the attractive notion of freedom. The pitch sells, essentially, the idea that a free marketplace means more freedom for everyone. Of course, the marketplace is not and cannot be free, and the freedom promised behind this pitch is dubious. Harvey observes, "What is so astonishing about the impoverished condition of contemporary public discourse in the US, as well as elsewhere, is the lack of any serious debate as to which of the several divergent concepts of freedom might be appropriate to our times" (183-4). In other words, freedom has come to mean the freedom of a few extremely wealthy individuals to establish rules ensuring their ability to continue accumulating wealth. This concept of freedom is problematic because it is freedom contingent upon the exploitation of labor and land to serve the purposes of a handful of private hordes of wealth. This concept of freedom is predicated upon the redistribution of wealth and power from the many to the few. Harvey's conclusion is similar to Polanyi's. Polanyi argues, "Clearly, at the root of the dilemma there is the meaning of freedom itself" (266). Like Harvey, Polanyi recognizes the complexity of the term freedom. According to Polanyi, a system of economic liberalism "means the fullness of freedom for those whose income, leisure, and security need no enhancing, and a mere pittance of liberty for the people, who may in vain attempt to make use of their democratic rights to gain shelter from the power of the owners of property" (265). In short, one person's freedom can be another person's bondage. Economic liberalism and neoliberalism ensure that a wealthy few gain the majority of freedom—as well as wealth and power—at the expense of the rest of humanity.

Concepts of freedom are likewise raised throughout *Against the Day*. The assassination of Scarsdale Vibe becomes significant when questioning concepts of freedom. While the act itself is essentially pointless—killing Vibe did nothing to stop the massacre of striking miners in Ludlow—the pointlessness itself suggests that plutocrats themselves do not need to be killed or even attacked. Instead, their neoliberal ideology must be dismantled. Wendy Brown argues, "[T]he Left need[s] to tap the desires—not for wealth or goods but for beauty, love, mental and physical well-being, meaningful work, and peace—manifestly unmet within capitalist order and to appeal to those desires as the basis for rejecting and replacing the order." Pynchon seems to work toward the same goal of replacing a concept of freedom meaning the freedom to accumulate goods with a freedom that creates more meaningful social relations. *Against the Day* builds upon constructions of alternative possible societies that Pynchon began in *Vineland* and *Mason & Dixon*. In particular, *Against the Day* situates a vision for a better society—one that replaces the contemporary neoliberal one—with freedoms based upon the concepts of nomadism, spiritual journeys, immaterial labor, intellectual inquiry, and community. His conclusions should by no means be read as a simple prescription for a new way to live, but instead a project of utilizing fiction to give form to ideas.

Nomadism is perhaps the most salient of Pynchon's concepts of freedoms that reject neoliberal ideology. The first lesson that the second generation of Traverse males (Reef, Frank, and Kit) learn is to sever any bonds that hold them fast to Colorado. They recognize that their father, Webb, had become tied to Colorado, to the mines, and to the exploitation therein. They recognize that the coal companies gain much of their power to exploit worker by tying the workers to the land. Nineteenth-century coal companies in

Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Colorado in particular were notorious for paying their workers not in cash, but in company script which could only be redeemed at company stores and was only paid after a certain amount of their wages were deducted to pay rent on their company housing. Thus, coal miners became wholly dependent upon the coal companies, not only for their wages but for their food, housing, and other consumables. Everything miners earned was returned to the company. Because the companies held this monopoly, they were able to profit off the workers first through low wages and second through inflated prices. While Webb attempted to dynamite himself out of this trap, his sons decided that the only way to avoid it was to refuse to work in the mines. They escape through vaguely criminal activities—gambling for Reef; gunrunning for Frank—or through education—Kit's pursuit of high-level mathematics. Their escape is further predicated upon them completely severing any connection to a single place. Throughout the novel, the three Traverses live up to their name, covering much of North America, Europe, and Asia between them. Their journeys are not simply wandering, however. As Hardt and Negri explain, "Collective capital is increasingly faced with a mobile and flexible multitude. From the perspective of command and exploitation, this can only appear chaotic and disordered. The task facing capital is thus constantly to rebuild borders, reterritorialize the laboring populations, and reconstruct the fixed dimensions of social space." Further, "nomadism itself breaks down borders and threatens the territorial stability of capitalist control" (*Commonwealth* 244). In other words, when workers refuse to engage in the system of exploitation, capital must struggle to create a new system. The Traverses exemplify this concept. Their refusal to work steady jobs keeps them from being ensnared in the web of companies, company stores, and company script.

Their refusal to buy land prevents debts to banks. Their nomadism allows them to live largely outside of capitalist commodity culture. The nature of their movements prevents accumulation, if for no other reason than the fact that people constantly on the move would have a great deal of difficulty moving the items they have accumulated, so they tend to accumulate less. This lack of accumulation represents a rejection of neoliberal ideology, which establishes a person's worth by the quantity and quality of the items they can horde. For Reef, Frank, and Kit Traverse—as well as the wives they chose and the families they form—freedom becomes a state of being unbound to working and earning huge sums that simply lead to a vulnerability to being exploited.

In his essay "Setting Sail Against the Day," Henry Ickstadt reads another level into this nomadism, particularly as it regards the characters of Reef Traverse and his wife, Yashmeen Halfcourt. Ickstadt states, "For Yashmeen and Reef Traverse the nomadic state is an Emersonian way of being *in* the world and yet 'unsettled.' " (41). By evoking this Emersonian ideology, Ickstadt adds a spiritual element to the nomadism in the novel. Emerson famously declared that everyone should "enjoy an original relation to the universe" (35). Kit exemplified this original relation to the universe in the spiritual sense that Emerson suggests. He travels east from Eastern Europe, venturing into Siberia to Lake Baikal, where he experiences an epiphany and envisions his own salvation. He continues from there to seek the Buddhist paradise of Shambala. For Kit, nomadism represents the freedom to seek a personal spirituality, his own unique relationship with a higher power. For Yashmeen and Reef, nomadism is more secular. They seek their own original relation to a world dominated by economics and politics. They have both been victimized, in a sense, by their socioeconomic status at birth. Yashmeen is not only a

nineteenth-century woman and thereby subject to the cruelties of patriarchal society, she was also born a slave and purchased out of slavery by her adoptive father, Auberon Halfcourt. Thus, she was enslaved both figuratively and literally since birth. Reef is a working class male from the industrial tradition of wage slavery and also from a specific branch of that tradition from which company stores and company script indentured workers into a close cousin of chattel slavery. The "freedom" of economic liberalism came from the bondage of people like Yashmeen and Reef. For the characters in the novel, however, freedom resides in the rejection of neoliberal ideology and, as much as possible, the voluntary removal from neoliberal society.

The nomadism in the novel is dependent upon the characters ability to support themselves financially through their immaterial labor. According to Hardt and Negri, "In the final decades of the twentieth century, industrial labor lost its hegemony and in its stead emerged 'immaterial labor,' that is, labor that creates immaterial products, such as knowledge, information, communication, or an emotional response" (*Multitude* 108). Pynchon's bilocation situates this late-twentieth-century phenomena into his historical novel. His characters escape the hegemony of industrial labor through immaterial labor. This happens first through Kit Traverse, who leaves the coal fields of Colorado to pursue a degree in advanced mathematics—focusing specifically on vectors—from Yale University. Likewise, Yashmeen Halfcourt is able to distance herself from her childhood in slavery and gain some autonomy through her study of advanced mathematics, in her case not vectors but instead the Riemann zeta function. Dally Rideout pulls herself up from a life as a homeless adolescent in New York and later in Venice through various forms of immaterial labor, primary among these forms being her work as a stage actress.

Several other characters follow this pattern. They all represent cases of labor shifting from industry to information, from generating commodities to generating ideas and feelings. Perhaps most telling of these explorations into immaterial labor is exemplified in the narrative arc of Dally's father, Merle Rideout.

Early in the novel, Merle Rideout and Webb Traverse bond over a discussion of dynamite and alchemy. Webb emerges from the conversation to continue his career as an anarchist bomber. This career ends in his torture and death. It is not clear if anything is accomplished by his acts of violent resistance. In all likelihood, his acts were futile and his death more sad than tragic. Merle, on the other hand, emerges from the conversation to pursue a career path in which his interests in chemistry, photography, and alchemy are employed in a variety of ways. He lives a nomadic existence, roaming from town to town, plying a variety of trades, each of which affords him the opportunity to nurture his intellectual curiosity. By the end of the novel, his intellectual curiosity leads him to teaming up with fellow nomad and immaterial laborer Roswell Bounce to invent a machine called the Integroscope. The Integroscope can be trained onto a photograph and follow the subject of the photo into her past and future. In Merle's words, the Integroscope "set free the images" (1037) in the photographs, taking them out of a moment frozen in time and allowing them to continue to move through time in whatever direction (past, present, subjunctive) they deem appropriate. For Merle, the invention is about connecting people to one another, understanding people's lives, histories, and directions and how their actions form their identities, and about finding people with whom one has lost contact. The scenes of the Integroscope in action in the novel demonstrate this purpose of Merle's. He uses it to help Lew Basnight find a woman

whose life may be in danger. He also takes a photograph of the wife Lew is separated from at the beginning of the novel and allows Lew to see her again, animate the image, and find some closure thirty years later. For his personal purposes, Merle uses the Integroscope to find Dally once again and to reconnect with her (albeit in an ethereal way). Thus, through Merle's employment of his immaterial labor, he develops a technology that opposes the neoliberal ideology of accumulation. It is not an invention he sells or uses for financial profit. Instead, the technology is used to reconnect people, to solidify social relations.

Pynchon's exploration into immaterial labor is both complex and curious. Pynchon is often regarded as a bit of a Luddite. Many of his attacks have focused on technologies. *Gravity's Rainbow* traces the technology of the rocket and the rocket bomb as a way of suggesting that humans have a near-sexual love of death and are careening toward our own annihilation. *Vineland* lampoons television, fingering it as a major force in destroying sixties rebellion. Pynchon even wrote an essay for the *New York Times* entitled "Is It O.K. to Be a Luddite?" In the essay, Pynchon somewhat clarifies his stance on technology. He describes the original Luddites as resenting machines for two reasons: "One was the concentration of capital that each machine represented, and the other was the ability of each machine to put a certain number of humans out of work" (40). Perhaps, along these lines, one could summarize Pychon's ambivalence toward technology as more a resentment for the neoliberal ideology of accumulation that was born and promulgated through the industrial revolution and for the attack these technologies have represented on working classes. The Integroscope exemplifies this ambivalence. The technology itself—like most technologies—is neither good nor evil.

Merle uses it for positive purpose. It brings people together. Yet Merle also recognizes the negative potential of such a machine. He and Roswell hire Lew Basnight to protect them from nefarious forces that wish to steal the Integroscope and use the invention for purposes of surveillance, harassment, and power. While Merle and Roswell acknowledge the possibility that they are simply being paranoid by imagining others who will abuse the powers of the Integroscope, the context surrounding the invention suggest otherwise. They cite the historical example of Louis Le Prince, who invented the motion picture camera. Le Prince's mysterious disappearance and—at least according to Roswell Bounce—likely murder paved the way for the motion picture industry to profit off Le Prince's invention without sharing the profits with Le Prince. Beyond the possibilities of Merle and Roswell being murdered to allow corporate interests to profit off their technology, Pynchon has built another context surrounding corporate interests and technology. Early in the novel, immediately after Scarsdale Vibe shoots the elderly woman in the hotel lobby, he meets with Yale professor Heino Vanderjuice. Vibe is concerned because Nikola Tesla has expressed his desire to develop a generating system that provides free electrical power to everyone. For Vibe, this desire is sacrilege. The electricity represents a commodity to Vibe. Taking this commodity out of the marketplace, giving it away rather than profiting off it, is antithetical to the economics of gain that define liberalism. Thus, Vibe seeks to counter Tesla's invention by having Professor Vanderjuice invent a method to diffuse this free electrical energy. Bounce's reference to Le Prince coupled with Vibe's intervention on behalf of the marketplace demonstrate the neoliberal perspective toward inventions and technology in general: that it must create commodities, that those commodities must be used for gain and

accumulation, and that any commodities that do not satisfy these criteria must be absconded or sabotaged. Because this perspective not only exists, but exists as the doxa, the liberating possibilities for immaterial labor and the technologies they invent must be approached with a certain amount of care and ambivalence.

Pynchon further explores the difficulties of immaterial labor as a means for rejecting a neoliberal society through his characters who pursue careers in the fields of immaterial labor. Dangers arise not only from corporate interests and neoliberal ideology. It resides in the multitudes who constitute the resistance. As Katherine Hume observes of the protagonists in *Against the Day*, "We find no saints among those characters" (176). Indeed, regardless of the positive portrayal of Professor Vanderjuice throughout the novel, beyond the good he does for Kit while Kit studies at Yale, despite how much the Chums of Chance like and admire Vanderjuice, the fact remains that he takes Vibe's money and works to develop a system to counter Tesla's system of free electrical power for everyone. Similarly, Kit aligns himself with Vibe as a means of pursuing his career in immaterial labor. Vibe pays for Kit's Yale education in advanced mathematics. Kit feels as if he is a class traitor when he aligns himself with Vibe. Yale—as it is presented in the novel—represents so much of the neoliberal ideology that Kit opposes. Still, Kit takes the money and gains the knowledge that Vibe pays for and hopes to exploit. In one sense, the result of Kit's study of advanced mathematics is a form of resistance against Vibe and neoliberalism because Kit's field of study is not immediately exploitable in the short term marketplace, which is the only type of knowledge that Vibe values. Kit produces no knowledge that Vibe can profit from. Subverting all value to the marketplace and systems of profits and losses, Kit represents a

loss for Vibe. Kit's education is unrecoverable money spent by Vibe. When Vibe realizes this, he cuts Kit's funding. In fact, Vibe is so angered by this monetary loss that he sends Foley over to Germany to kill Kit. Luckily for Kit, this assassination attempt is never realized. Nonetheless, Vibe's partnership with Kit is illuminating. Kit's pursuit of advanced mathematics can be viewed as a metaphor for the ambivalence neoliberal ideology has with academics in general: the value of academics must be measured in terms beyond the marketplace. For this reason, his pursuit of knowledge that is not profitable in the short term can be seen as a form of resistance similar to his brothers' nomadism. Yet Pynchon complicates this notion even further later in the novel.

Kit finds himself in Italy during World War I. His study of vectors, which was worthless to Vibe because it could not be exploited in the short term, proves suddenly very profitable in the marketplace. Kit is employed to apply his knowledge of vectors to military aircraft design. Kit's passion for vectors applied to aircraft design modifies a warplane that one character, a pilot named Renzo, uses to dive bomb his enemies. Renzo is a budding fascist. With Kit along for a test ride, he pilots his warplane into a controlled dive that terrorizes strikers at a weapons factory in Torino. At that point, Kit has a sort of epiphany that his immaterial labor, everything connected to it, "was all political" (1071). Further, Renzo's attack on the strikers, which is enabled by Kit's knowledge of vectors applied to a specific aircraft, is "the first and purest expression in northern Italy of a Certain Word that would not quite exist for another year or two" (1071), that Certain Word, of course, being fascism.

Dally Rideout's immaterial labor also provides a flawed example of a vision of a better future. While Dally's performances on the stage promote certain feelings and can

be used as a form of activist theater, they are not employed for that purpose. Instead, she begins her acting career by performing in the role of a tourist who is kidnapped into white slavery in New York's Chinatown. The theater of which she is a part reifies racist notions about New York's Chinese American population. It represents the fear of the Yellow Peril that was so prominent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. One of Dally's main theatrical benefactors is R. Wilshire Vibe, Scarsdale's brother and the author, director, and/or producer of a variety of racist, sexist, and classist plays. Dally's rise to prominence on the London stage later in the novel leads not to any type of activism but instead to her off-stage role as the mistress of weapons dealer and all around neoliberal villain, Clive Crouchmas. Clive is so villainous, in fact, that he attempts to sell Dally into slavery when he feels he has been betrayed by her. Nonetheless, after she is economically autonomous enough to no longer need Clive, after she is married and largely independent, after his attempt to sell her into slavery, Dally has an extramarital affair with Clive. At no point, however, does Dally employ her immaterial labor as a means of resisting Empire. Thus, Pynchon blends human flaws—through Vanderjuice, Kit Traverse, Dally Rideout, and others—with the technological exploitation to complicate the revolutionary potential of immaterial labor and intellectual inquiry. Both immaterial labor and intellectual inquiry can be effective means of resistance; both represent a problematic site to seek a vision for a better future. It is important to bear in mind, however, that Pynchon is not proposing simple solutions to confront Empire. Instead, like the Intergroscope, which has the capacity to free its subjects and allow them to perform in the past, present and subjunctive worlds, Pynchon uses his fiction to explore the past, present, and subjunctive avenues for revolutionary ideas.

The problems that arise when Pynchon allows these revolutionary ideas to perform on their own, when he investigates where these ideas lead when they are set free, should not suggest a worthlessness of these ideas. Instead, Pynchon is substituting a flawed but improved future for a vision of utopia. As Katherine Hume concludes in the passage cited above, "We find no saints among those characters, but enough faith and enough decency to make them a functioning community" (176). Pynchon's clearest visions of a better future lie in his representation of these functioning communities, not only in *Against the Day*, but in the two novels that precede it. *Vineland* ends by bringing together a multitude at the Becker-Traverse family reunion. The guests at the reunion are not necessarily biological family. They are, necessarily, a functioning and flawed community of resistance to Empire as it is constructed in that novel. The very same Jesse Traverse who is an adolescent revolutionary in *Against the Day* becomes the wise elder, quoting Emerson and shaping the meaning of rebellion within the novel. *Mason & Dixon* ends with the reconstituted family of Charles Mason subjunctively envisioning an America that fulfills its promises of democracy by granting enfranchisement to all its residents. Likewise, *Against the Day* resolves with explorations into community and family. One salient example of this exploration is exemplified when Reef, Yashmeen, and the third member of their relationship at this point in the novel, Cyprian Latewood, visit a community called Yz-les-Bains.

The representation of Yz-les-Bains connects Pynchon's views of community with Wendy Brown's suggestion for confronting neoliberal ideology. Brown argues, "What remains for the Left, then, is to challenge emerging neo-liberal governmentality in EuroAtlantic states with an alternative vision of the good… In its barest form, this would

be a vision in which justice would not center upon maximizing individual wealth or rights but developing and enhancing the capacity of citizens to share power and hence, collaboratively govern themselves." The refuge at Yz-les-Bains presents a vision of a community that has removed itself from the neoliberal ideology of accumulation and replaced that with a vision of working together for the mutual benefit of everyone in the community. It is a refuge for anarchists and revolutionaries, a "venerable oasis without charge, though in practice even those against the commoditizing of human shelter were often able to come up with modest sums in a dozen currencies, and leave them with Lucien the concierge' (931). In representing Yz-les-Bains, Pynchon is careful to recognize that material needs exist even in anarchist refuges, that one cannot fully divest oneself of the marketplace. Even on the fringes of neoliberal society, money is necessary to some extent. Pynchon does not appear to oppose currency itself. He seems to oppose the hording of it that is valued by a neoliberal society of accumulation. Hording would be likewise troubling if the act were performed by anarchists at Yz-les-Bains who simply did not want to chip in to cover the common expenses of the community.

The residents of Yz-les-Bains are welcoming of the trio of Yashmeen, Reef, and Cyprian. The trio is engaged in a nontraditional, long-term, sexual relationship with each other. This relationship is a divergence from traditionally observed heterosexual relationships between two partners, yet the residents of Yz-les-Bains make no effort to instill traditional requirements onto the trio. The message is clear: the multitude are welcome at this refuge. Difference is acknowledged, but not used to divide the community. In fact, difference, because it is predicated on the rejection of those values which seek to divide communities and pit one subculture against another as a means of

ensuring the power of the dominant culture, is a driving force for the enfranchisement of the multitude at Yz-les-Bains. The trio find a mirror image of their relationship when they encounter the former spy Ratty McHugh and his two suffragette wives. The wives further articulate the preconditions for community at the refuge: the acceptance of differences must include gender equity. As Jennifer Invert McHugh, one of Ratty's wives and a former classmate of Yashmeen's, explains about Anarchism: "as long as women were not welcome, it never had a chance" (934). Instead, Yz-les-Bains is constructed on principles of differences and equity among the differences. This precondition is in line with Hardt and Negri's definition of the multitude as "singularities that act in common" (*Multitude* 105).

Yz-les-Bains both envisions this multitude and institutes classic Anarchist beliefs. Residents observe no hierarchy. There is no chain of command. Economy exists, but it is an economy of social relations rather than of gain or accumulation. Labor exists, but it is not a commodity. Instead, residents recognize what tasks need to be completed to keep the community operating and they perform those tasks. They work in common to support the community. Unlike Webb, who is labeled an anarchist bomber but does not have a clear understanding of Anarchist theory, the residents at Yz-les-Bains have articulated their resistance. They oppose "tyranny over people to whom the land really belongs, land which, generation after generation, has been absorbing their labor, accepting the corpses this labor produces, along with obscene profits, which is left to other and usually whiter men" (935). In short, they oppose economic liberalism and the neoliberalism that grows from it. They support a construction of the multitude that does not fall under a single, unified belief system or homogenous group that can be accurately labeled "the people,"

but instead is comprised of people who retain their differences yet work in concert against an economy of accumulation. They support a society that replaces the competition of capitalism with the cooperation of anarchism.

At the heart of their resistance is their attempt to prevent the coming World War I. The residents' principle opposition to World War I is that, as Pynchon demonstrates in *Vineland*, warfare benefits national governments and corporate interests and attacks the rights of individuals. Ratty acknowledges that, if war should break out, "Anarchists would be the biggest losers, wouldn't they. Industrial corporations, armies, navies, governments, all would go on as before, if not more powerful. But in a general war among nations, every small victory Anarchism has struggled to win so far would simply turn to dust" (938). Indeed, Ratty's comment—no doubt bolstered by Pynchon's hindsight—is a prescient one. World War I did turn the anarchist movement to dust. Ratty further states, "A general European war, with every striking worker a traitor, flags threatened, the sacred soils of homelands defiled, would be just the ticket to wipe Anarchism off the political map" (938). Ratty's fears came to fruition, at least in the United States. Under Woodrow Wilson's Espionage Act, anarchists were frequently imprisoned for protesting the war. Prominent anarchists like Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were deported for publicly opposing conscription. Major anarchist publications were halted. J. Edgar Hoover attacked various anarchist headquarters. The movement was essentially killed by the war. Wilson, Hoover, and other members of the government used the war and fears of national security as justification for these attacks.

In order to attempt to prevent the coming war, Yashmeen, Reef, and Cyprian leave Yz-les-Bains for the Balkans, where they believe they can disarm a weapons

system that will ensure an escalation of warfare. Obviously, the trio is unsuccessful in their larger attempt to prevent World War I. Nonetheless, their experiences at Yz-les-Bains and the hope it gives them to work for the common good seems to rejuvenate them. Cyprian finds the strength to return to the Balkans where, earlier in the novel, he was nearly assassinated and where he ultimately undergoes a spiritual awakening. Yashmeen is likewise inspired. She leaves the refuge holding "on to a limitless faith that History could be helped to keep its promises, including someday, a commonwealth of the oppressed" (942). While History cannot keep its promise within the novel because that promise has not yet been realized in the world outside the novel, Yashmeen is able to find, within the fiction of the novel, somewhat of a commonwealth through her reconstituted family.

Yashmeen, Reef, and their infant daughter leave Cyprian in the Balkans and travel to Colorado, where they connect with Jesse, Stray, and Frank. The six form a strange family structure in which Jesse calls his uncle Frank "Pa" and his biological father "Reef," in which sexual histories and convoluted connections cause friction, in which jealousies initially simmer below the surface until Yashmeen and Stray realize that no husband swapping will occur. The family structure grows when Yashmeen and Reef have another child. The family grows more complex when Yashmeen and Stray engage in a sexual relationship. Like Hume's assessment of the characters in the novel, this family is imperfect, but there is enough faith and decency among them to form a community. The family rejects neoconservative notions of family values which insist upon heterosexuality and recognize the patriarchal nuclear family as the only option.

Instead, they operate as a community of mutual economic and emotional support, all working in common for mutual benefits.

Eventually, the Traverses' mode of resistance takes the form of removing themselves as far as possible from Empire. They settle in the Kitsap peninsula of Washington state, where their means of financial support is vague and it is implied that their engagement with consumer commodity culture is minimal. Political violence takes a backseat to a project of working together to form a family and community. Webb's legacy as an anarchist bomber is referenced, but in a new context. When Jesse is asked to write an essay on what it means to be an American, Reef reaches for a pencil with "that look on his face, the same look his own father used to get just before heading off for some dynamite-related activities" (1076). In this moment, the pencil replaces dynamite for the Traverses. The violence inherent in attacking humans and property is rejected in favor of a project of using immaterial labor and intellectual inquiry to attack an ideology. Before examining what that pencil produces, it is important to return to the youngest of Webb's children, Kit.

Near the end of the novel, Kit and Dally Rideout get married and form their own type of nontraditional family. They become a couple with no children or extended community in sight. Unlike the residents at Yz-les-Bains or the Traverses in Kitsap, Dally and Kit's reconstituted family is not idyllic, and it is not removed from society. The couple have a much rockier terrain to cross. Their relationship is filled with infidelities, negligence, hurt feelings, and time spent in different cities, countries, sometimes even continents. In their final scene in the novel, they get back together. The narrator concludes their tale in the subjunctive, stating:

> May we imagine for them a vector, passing through the invisible, the "imaginary," the unimaginable, carrying them safely into this postwar Paris where the taxis, battered veterans of the mythic Marne, now carry only lovers and cheerful drinks, and music which cannot be marched to goes on uninterrupted all night, in the bars and *bals musettes* for the dancers who will always be there, and the nights will be dark enough for whatever visions must transpire across them, no longer to be broken into by light displaced from Hell, and the difficulties they find are no more productive of evil than the opening and closing of too many doors, or of too few. A vector through the night into a morning of hosed pavements, birds heard everywhere but unseen, bakery smells, filtered green light, a courtyard still in shade… (1082-3)

This impossibly long (technically never-ending because of Pynchon's ellipses) sentence imagines for Kit and Dally the idyllic future that the reader supposes when the characters first meet. Significantly, even within the context of the novel, the idyllic future is a subjunctive one, one that exists in a Paris that will not go through the worldwide depression that did come along a few years after this scene, a Paris that does not get invaded and occupied by fascist Germany, a world in which the lovers can live without war weighing down their marriage. It is important to note that this idyllic future is not removed from society the way the residents at Yz-les-Bains are, the way the other Traverses are. For Kit and Dally, a vision of a better future is possible within city limits and adjacent to the marketplace that urban centers rely upon. Kit and Dally are still part of the marketplace. They ride in taxis and buy bread at bakeries. And still the narrator bestows upon the scene a sense of optimism that, even as mired in a troubled past as the

couple are, even with their history of mutual injuries inflicted mutually, a better future may exist, one in which they learn to work in common for mutual benefits. This underscores the subtleties of Pynchon's exploration into economic liberalism and neoliberalism. Just as his Luddite views do not attack technology so much as criticize the exploitation that accompanies technology, Pynchon's attack on neoliberalism is not an attack on commerce or even a marketplace. It is instead an attack on an ideology that privileges a marketplace over humans and extends the values of the marketplace to every aspect of society.

It is finally significant that Pynchon ends Kit and Dally's story in the subjunctive, asking the reader to read the imagined as true. In a self-reflexive manner, *Against the Day* asks its readers to perform a similar task: to use fiction as a way of understanding in what ways neoliberalism grew from economic liberalism, what resistance movements have done to effectively confront it, what methods have failed, and what the real, material consequences have been. David Harvey concludes his *Brief History* by arguing, "The more neoliberalism is recognized as a failed utopian rhetoric masking a successful project for the restoration of ruling-class power, the more the basis is laid for a resurgence of mass movements voicing egalitarian political demands and seeking economic justice, fair trade, and greater economic security" (203-4). *Against the Day* performs this task. By bilocating liberalism and neoliberalism, anarchism and visions of a better future, it represents societies constructed from an ideology of the "freedom" of an unregulated market as failed utopia. The failure is tied to the exploitation of workers, the dehumanization of most of humanity, and the opulence of accumulation inherent in the economic system. Pynchon carefully dismantles the doxa of neoliberalism through the

novel. The final stick of dynamite in the novel is tossed by young Jesse Traverse. The stick is not literal. It is instead his essay "What It Means To Be an American," Jesse writes, "It means do what they tell you and take what they give you and don't go on strike or their soldiers will shoot you down" (1076). This sentence is Jesse's entire essay. Pynchon, however, needs over a thousand pages of fiction to give this idea form, to take it from a sound bite to a meaningful call for rebellion.

CHAPTER 5:

AN *INHERENT VICE* GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE

Upon its release in 2009, several reviewers of Thomas Pynchon's *Inherent Vice* noted the similarities between the novel and both Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe novels and the Coen brothers' film *The Big Lebowski*[33]. Some reviewers commended Pynchon for creating a pastiche of Chandler's work or for taking *The Big Lebowski* further. Other reviewers argued that Pynchon's blending of postmodern fiction and the tropes of a detective novel was a failed experiment. Louis Menand, writing for the *New Yorker* took the opportunity to both commend and condemn this pastiche. The mere fact that so many reviewers—so many whom are scholars as well—began the discussion of the novel with Pynchon's pastiche encourages me to begin my discussion of the novel here, also. I certainly agree that it is significant to note the similarities between Pynchon's novel and the works that he seems to be in dialogue with. Though the reviewers do not take the next step—their reviews being reviews, after all, and not scholarship—it is equally significant to note the differences between *Inherent Vice* and the works it rewrites. Authors tend to reveal a great deal in what they choose to change from their source material. And while Pynchon's pastiche did elicit several negative criticisms—Tom LeClair called it "intellectually thin" (25), Richard Lacayo dubbed it "second-tier Pynchon" (60), and Mark Kamine ended his attack on the pastiche by simply stating, "I give up" (30)—the criticisms were more a matter of taste than an actual analysis of the novel. A deeper examination of Pynchon's interplay with the tropes of detective fiction and his meandering away from the form's conventions afford a deeper

understanding of not only the novel but of the novel's place in Pynchon's construction of contemporary resistance. Protagonist Larry "Doc" Sportello follows a business model with his private investigation company that suggests an alternative economic system from contemporary corporate consumer culture. Using Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Commonwealth* as a guide, it becomes clear that Doc is drifting away from notions of public and private property and into a living example of an economic system based upon the commons. Further, while Hardt and Negri explore the abstract of love's political capabilities, and while previous discussions of Pynchon's other novels have investigated family as a site for redemption[34], *Inherent Vice* takes the abstracts of love and family beyond politics and redemption and into a revolutionary alternative.

The first step in understanding deeper levels of the novel lies in an exploration into not only pastiche but the specific form of pastiche that Christian Moraru dubbed "rewriting." Discussions of postmodern pastiche typically refer to Frederic Jameson's definition of pastiche in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Jameson writes:

> Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. (17)

Several notions in this definition are key to understanding the stylistic significance of Pynchon's novel. First, true to Jameson's definition, Pynchon does, to some extent, wear

the linguistic mask of Raymond Chandler. Pynchon maintains his comfortable third-person distance from the characters in the novel while Chandler chooses the more intimate first-person for Philip Marlowe, yet Pynchon's third-person narrators are so dynamic and intrusive that the narrator himself seems to be a character in the novels. *Inherent Vice* continues this stylistic trend, albeit in a new manner. While the narrator of *Mason & Dixon* borrowed the style of eighteenth-century British novels, the narrator of *Against the Day* employed colloquialisms unique to post-World War I novels, and the narrator of *Vineland* seemed to be an old hippie explaining sixties rebellion to a generation born into Nixonian repression, the narrator of *Inherent Vice* borrows so much of both the journalistic style and noir flair of Chandler that he could be, well, not Chandler himself but a fairly convincing impersonation. Further, while the novel is quite humorous and thus not "devoid of laughter" as Jameson describes pastiche, *Inherent Vice* does not seek Chandler as the source of its humor. Pynchon makes no jokes at Chandler's expense. Just as the narrator of *Gravity's Rainbow* reveled in building on the prose of Sax Rohmer's spy novels, the narrator of *Inherent Vice* seems to settle comfortably into his Raymond Chandler mask. He never breaks character or linguistically winks at the reader.

In fact, Pynchon's pastiche of Raymond Chandler is so complete that it can be read as a rewriting of, specifically, Chandler's *The Long Goodbye*. Christian Moraru, in his book *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, observes, "There are highly canonical, widely popular fictions that capture, even give birth to key myths of certain communities. At the same time, they acquire in the long run a communally 'mythic' weight through successive editing, teaching, reading, and related

institutionalizing acts" (3). While *The Long Goodbye* may not be the most canonical text in university literature courses, the text is instrumental in giving birth to the myth of the rugged, individualistic American male who is guided by nothing more than his own moral compass. Chandler's novel has been edited and rewritten in numerous and diverse ways, from Haruki Murakami's re-imagining of the novel in *A Wild Sheep Chase* to Robert Altman's adaptation of *The Long Goodbye* (which places the novel in a time machine and ships it to the 1970s) to Pynchon's *Crying of Lot 49*. One of the most well-known rewritings of *The Long Goodbye* is the Coen Brothers' film *The Big Lebowski*. Placing *Inherent Vice* in conversation with *The Long Goodbye* and *The Big Lebowski* helps to elucidate the ways in which Pynchon incorporates pastiche and postmodern rewriting to approach revolutionary alternatives.

The Long Goodbye is perhaps Chandler's most powerful novel. It was the last original novel he wrote, and it was written at a time of both personal crisis (his wife was dying as he wrote it) and artistic crisis (he struggled to wrest his conception of the character of Philip Marlowe back from Humphrey Bogart's portrayal of him). *The Long Goodbye* became Chandler's attempt at the modernist "novel of the world." While it certainly fell short of Joyce's *Ulysses* and Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* in both scope and richness of detail, *The Long Goodbye* quickly digresses from a murder mystery and drifts into larger investigations of the mass media, organized crime, big business, the justice system, and the legacy of World War II. Several representatives from each of these groups are given room to declaim in Chandler's novel. Detectives, lawyers, pulp authors, journalists, and even the media mogul Harlan Potter are all given space for their recitations examining how their society got to be in the mess that it was in. In this sense,

Chandler realized the potential of the detective novel as a platform for cultural critique. He created, in a sense, a new kind of crime novel, one in which the detective may be able to use logic and deduction to solve the mystery at hand, but logic, deduction, observation, and the collection of a wealth of information are not enough to dig below the surface of any of life's significant mysteries.

In his essay "The Synoptic Chandler," Frederic Jameson tells a story about film director Howard Hawks and actor Humphrey Bogart drinking at a bar, arguing about the fate of a character from Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. They could not agree whether the character's death had been a murder, suicide, or some third thing. They called Chandler to ask him, and he could not remember, either. Jameson tells this story to suggest that, in a Raymond Chandler novel, the solution to the mystery is less compelling than the characters and episodes leading up to it. The Coen Brothers utilize a similar resolution in *The Big Lebowski*. When the protagonist, the Dude, finally solves the mystery of the kidnapped girl, he calls his friend Walter to help him confront the criminal. The Dude explains his solution and, unlike the dramatic, finger-pointing scenes from Hercules Poirot novels, Walter acknowledges that the Dude has, in fact, solved the mystery, then asks, "But how does all this add up to an emergency?" Further, once Walter and the Dude confront the criminal, he shrugs them off, saying, "You have your story. I have mine." In both cases, the anticlimactic nature of the solution is highlighted. Likewise, a reader of *Inherent Vice* can very easily forget that Doc is investigating the murder of Glen Charlock. She can forget who killed Charlock. She can even feel satisfied in her continued reading when Mickey Wolfmann, the character whose disappearance catalyzed the events of the novel, is found more than a hundred pages prior to the ending of the

novel. In all three cases, Chandler, the Coen Brothers, and Pynchon poignantly suggest that the solution of a single crime is never really the point. What exactly is the point is discussed below.

Further comparisons of *The Long Goodbye* and *The Big Lebowski* help to clarify what Pynchon is doing with his pastiche in *Inherent Vice*. In *The Long Goodbye*, Philip Marlow represents an idealized or mythologized concept of masculinity for the time when it was written. Almost immediately, Marlowe finds himself in over his head, swept up in the currents of the wealthy and corrupt. The events of the novel are set in motion by dissolution of a marriage coupled with the disappearance of a kept or trophy spouse. As Marlowe investigates the case, he stands rigorously by his own self-created morality. Marlowe further refuses payment for his investigations and has no visible means of financial support. The city of Los Angeles figures so prominently in the novel that it goes beyond a mere setting and becomes almost a character. As the events unfold, Marlowe confronts the real puppet master of the novel, the man who holds the power and controls the bulk of the events Marlowe is swept up in: media mogul Harlan Potter. The man discovered to be the criminal in the end uses Marlowe's own morality against him, duping Marlowe into becoming an unwilling and unwitting accomplice. Finally, Marlowe is left a little worse off at the end of the novel than he was at the beginning.

In his book *The Big Lebowski: The Making of the Coen Brothers Film*, William Preston Robertson quotes Joel Coen as saying, "*The Big Lebowski* is just kind of informed by Chandler around the edges" (43). These edges that inform *The Big Lebowski* are large. Like Marlowe, the Dude is a prototypical American male. The film's narrator describes him as "the man for his time and place. He fits right in there."

The Dude is literally in over his head in one of the opening scenes when he is forced head-first into a toilet bowl. He is figuratively in over his head when he is swept up in the current of wealthy and corrupt characters like Maude Lebowski, Jeffrey Lebowski, and Jackie Treehorn. The events of the novel are catalyzed by the disappearance of Jeffrey Lebowski's trophy wife, Bunny. The Dude stands rigorously by his own self-created morality through the novel. He does not refuse payment for his services, but no one pays him (even so much as what they promise to pay him) and he has no visible means of support. Once again, the city of Los Angeles features so prominently it feels like a character. Robertson quotes Ethan Coen stating, "You wouldn't see [characters like the Dude and Walter] in New York. I mean, you would, but they'd be different in New York" (41). In other words, like Marlowe and Doc Sportello, the Dude seems to be a construct of Los Angeles culture. The Dude confronts Jeffrey Lebowski, who is the real puppet master of the novel, in Pasadena, in nearly the same geographical location where Marlowe confronts Potter. Like Marlowe, the Dude sleeps with the puppet master's daughter. The man discovered to be the criminal in the end uses the Dude's own morality against him (the Dude's rejection of mainstream culture makes him "somebody the square community won't give a shit about," the exact quality that Jeffrey Lebowski exploits), duping him into becoming an unwilling and unwitting accomplice. Finally, the Dude is left a little worse off in the end.

Comparing the novel and the movie side by side, it becomes clear that *The Big Lebowski* shares too many key plot elements of *The Long Goodbye* to be merely "informed by Chandler around the edges"[35]. The film, instead, can be viewed as a rewriting of the novel. In both cases, the writers confront images of masculinity.

Through Marlowe, Chandler constructs a mythological American male, one who is able to journey into the darkest recesses of society, confront crime, corruption, violence, and temptation, and emerge from it all unscathed. Marlowe represents the man that so many soldiers returning from World War II hoped to become: a man able to shake off the horrors of the world and end up clean (and perhaps sleep with a gorgeous woman, to boot). The Coen Brothers rewriting of the novel allows them to rewrite this image of masculinity for the 1990s. The Dude sallies forth into a world of corruption and violence with a sense of humor. He is able to recognize that the world he lives in is at times absurd and vacuous, beset on all sides by pop culture, pornography, and a cruel scramble for diminishing resources. This recognition leads him to search for a way to simply abide. Rather than solving the mystery presented at the beginning of the novel (who really killed Sylvia Lennox) and the film (who kidnapped Bunny Lebowski), the overriding point of both works is to illustrate a man who, in the words of Raymond Chandler in his essay "The Simple Art of Murder," is "the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world" (18). Consistently for Chandler and typically for the Coen Brothers, artistic explorations focus on character development primarily.

Inherent Vice mirrors many of these conventions. Doc is swept up in the currents of the wealthy and corrupt. Events are catalyzed by a disappearing spouse. Doc stands rigorously by his self-created morality. He has no visible means of support. Los Angeles figures so prominently in the novel that it becomes almost a character. Doc confronts a puppet master (from Palos Verdes, not Pasadena, though the move seems to be one more of geographical convenience than salient difference). Pynchon's use of these conventions, coupled with his longhaired, perpetually stoned, Dude-like protagonist,

invites questions regarding the author's choice to meander away from certain conventions. For example, if Marlowe is a representation of idealized forties masculinity and the Dude is a representation of compromised nineties masculinity, what is Doc? In what ways is Pynchon playing with the construction of gender, particularly masculinity, with Doc? And what time period is he supposed to represent? Is he a sixties (or, more specifically, March of 1970) masculinity? Is that masculinity idealized, compromised, or something else? Or, building from Linda Hutcheon's notion in *The Politics of Postmodernism* that "we can likely only know the past through our present" (73), is Doc some form of twenty-first century masculinity? And why does Doc, who makes frequent mention and frequent use of his frequent erections, not follow Marlowe and the Dude's example and sleep with the puppet master's daughter? Further, is Doc worse off at the end of the novel? While characters like Bigfoot Bjornsen and Crocker Fenway manipulate Doc's morality, is he really an unwilling or unwitting accomplice, or does his awareness of his own complicity (an awareness that Marlowe and the Dude do not share) place him in a different situation? If he is aware of his complicity, how is his relationship with money different than Marlowe's and the Dude's? Pynchon's deviations from the formula established by Chandler, specifically with relation to masculinity, complicity, money, and love, invite an exploration into the revolutionary potential of the novel.

The construction of masculinity raises compelling issues. Clearly, this construction is a key element of Raymond Chandler's work. In "The Simple Art of Murder," Chandler claims, "the gradual elucidation of character… is all the detective story has any right to be about" (17). Chandler expands upon this notion by focusing on one overriding characteristic that he seeks to elucidate: masculinity. For Chandler, the

detective novel is about investigating what it means to be a man. When he uses the term "man" in "The Simple Art of Murder," he is clearly discussing men, not using an awkward, outdated metonym for humans. After stating that the hero of detective fiction "must be the best man in his world and a good enough man for any world," (18) Chandler defines this best man in typically masculine terms. The best man is the type to "seduce a duchess" but not "spoil a virgin." He is neither "eunuch" nor "satyr." He is a "man of honor… in all things." He "talks as a man of his age talks—that is, with rude wit, a lively sense of the grotesque, a disgust for sham, and a contempt for pettiness." In other words, he is "a man fit for adventure" (18). Philip Marlowe is just this sort of man. These characteristics make him a masculine icon in America. In his rewriting of *The Long Goodbye*, Robert Altman has one character repeatedly and intentionally conflate "Marlowe" and "Marlboro" as a way of highlighting Philip Marlowe and the Marlboro Man's shared role as an icon for a ruggedly individual, hyper-masculine man Chandler describes as "the best man in his world" (18).

The Big Lebowski is equally concerned with the construction of masculinity. In one pivotal scene, the two characters named Jeffrey Lebowski (the Big Lebowski and the Dude) meet to discuss Bunny Lebowski's kidnapping. The Big Lebowski asks the Dude, "What makes a man?" The Dude does not answer[36], and the Big Lebowski describes the characteristics of a man, much as Chandler does. According to the Big Lebowski, a man is constructed out of a series of "challenges met" and "competitors bested." He is a veteran of active combat, perhaps wounded (or, in the Big Lebowski's case, partially paralyzed) in warfare but nonetheless able to "achieve." A man is, above all, able "to do the right thing, whatever the cost." A strong man may cry, as the Big Lebowski does, but

the permission to cry comes from a lifetime of satisfying the criteria of masculinity, and it must be done in a dignified way (a few reluctant tears glimmering in the light of a fireplace in the west wing of a Pasadena mansion). The Dude rejects many of the values presented by the Big Lebowski. Much of the remainder of the movie traces the Dude's negotiation of his own constructed masculinity.

Perhaps Louis Menand is the first to observe the construction of masculinity in *Inherent Vice*. Menand titles his *New Yorker* review of the book "Soft-Boiled," suggesting a deflated masculinity for Doc Sportello. Menand further claims, "Philip Marlowe or Mike Hammer would have eaten [Doc Sportello] for breakfast" (75). I will dismiss comparisons between Doc and Mike Hammer, first because Pynchon does not seem to be rewriting a Mickey Spillane novel or constructing a pastiche out of Spillane's linguistic tropes, and second because Mike Hammer represents an archaic, misogynistic construction of masculinity that has outlived its relevance. Comparing Doc to Marlowe, though, is significant, particularly with respect to Menand's comment. A closer examination of Marlowe in *The Long Goodbye* reveals a character who typically takes a punch without throwing a punch in return, who guzzles a bottle of whiskey to make himself pass out so that he can resist the temptation of the *femme fatale* in the upstairs bedroom, and who is tossed about in a storm created by people more wealthy, powerful, and corrupt than him. One of the ways Chandler reclaimed Philip Marlowe from Humphrey Bogart's portrayal of him in *The Big Sleep* was to show a Marlowe in *The Long Goodbye* whose strength comes from his ability to be tough and withstand a great deal of physical and emotional pain, yet be the bigger man and reject the aggression. He is not the type to eat men for breakfast.

Doc Sportello, on the other hand, engages in acts of aggression that overpower anything Marlowe does in *The Long Goodbye*. While Marlowe's unwitting complicity in that novel does directly lead to Roger Wade's murder and Eileen Wade's suicide, Marlowe himself kills no one. Doc, however, kills two men. When confronted with Puck Beaverton—a murderer and a hitman's bodyguard; a brutal man who has just confessed to beating his wife to the point of her hospitalization; a neo Nazi with a swastika tattooed onto the side of his head; an all-around bad dude—Doc beats him to death by brutally slamming the swastika-tattooed head onto a concrete floor, then standing over Puck's dying body, cooking up a fatal amount of heroin, loading a needle, and jabbing it into Puck's neck. After essentially killing Puck twice, Doc rushes into a shootout with Adrian Prussia. Prussia is both the hitman who the LAPD send out to eliminate particularly dangerous characters and the most violent man in a violent novel. Doc demonstrates no fear as he confronts and kills Adrian. When I consider these actions of Doc's, it becomes difficult for me to see him as lunch meat that Philip Marlowe would feast on. Doc is instead a man to be reckoned with.

I do not wish to suggest that Doc's double homicide makes him more masculine, however. Twenty-first constructions of masculinity need to move beyond viewing violence as a chief characteristic. Pynchon himself rejects this notion, first in *Vineland*, where he demonstrates the futility of violent resistance to the Empire, and second in *Against the Day*, where he complicates images of bomb-wielding and arms-selling revolutionaries and ultimately dismisses them in hopes of a new type of resistance. The double homicide is Doc's lowest point in the novel, the moment in which he becomes

inextricably tangled up in the web of Empire. It saves his life, but also stands as an act he must seek redemption for.

Nonetheless, Menand's summarization of Doc as a fairly goofy, frequently-stoned deviation from the tough-guy private eye is, overall, fairly accurate. While Doc demonstrates only a healthy amount of fear for his personal safety, he also has the courage to confront difficult and dangerous situations. But, for Doc, the question seems to be less one of how masculinity should be (or is) constructed and more about how to become a human in the twenty-first century. Just as both Marlowe and the Dude were rooted in a specific time period—Marlowe seeking to elucidate the character of a man in post-World War II America and the Dude as a man who "fits right in there" in the early nineties—Doc seems rooted in a time and place. The place, of course, is Los Angeles. The time is more debatable. Again, considering Linda Hutcheon's notion that postmodern historiographic metafiction views the past through the lens of the present, the time period that Pynchon comments upon seems to be the time when he is writing rather than the time when the novel is set. This is nothing new for Pynchon. He tends to enjoy the creative use of anachronisms to remind his readers that they are reading a constructed history. In *Mason & Dixon*, he sends the mid-eighteenth-century characters to coffee houses that could exist around the corner from the reader's late-twentieth-century home. He makes a joke of President Bill Clinton's awkward denial of his marijuana use—that he did not inhale—through the narration of *Mason & Dixon*'s Rev. Wicks Cherricoke, as well as through the actions of *Inherent Vice*'s Bigfoot Bjornsen (whose smoking of a cigarette without inhaling aggravates Doc to the point of insisting Bigfoot stop) and Puck Beaverton (who lights a PCP-laced joint, fakes inhaling, and passes it to Doc). Pynchon

also self-reflexively mentions the surf spot Mavericks, which was first surfed a decade and a half after the events of the novel, and Cortes Bank, which was thought to be unsurfable until more than three decades after the time period of *Inherent Vice*. The mention of these two spots, however, affords Pynchon the opportunity to blend the optimism and naivety of sixties activism with a twenty-first century, New Age spirituality through the character of St. Flip and his secret surf spot, which proves to be the undoing of the boat *The Golden Fang.* Pynchon's seemingly intentional anachronisms are perhaps most salient in his description of the space where the character Sparky explores the nascent internet:

> The computer room was hopping. All the tape reels were spinning back and forth, and there were now twice as many computer screens as Doc remembered, all lit up, plus at least a dozen TV sets on, each tuned to a different channel. A sound system that must have been looted from a movie theater was playing "Help Me, Rhonda," and the beat up old percolator in the corner had been replaced with some gigantic Italian coffee machine covered with pipes and valve handles and gauges and enough chrome that you could drive it slowly along any boulevard in East L.A. (364)

This description, with its information overload, its focus on multitasking, and its very contemporary cappuccino maker, all seem ripped out of the end of the twenty-first century's first decade. Of course, the tape reels exist to remind the reader that, while the present serves as a lens for understanding the novel, the past still lives in that present and is still frequently the object of the present's gaze.

So, if Doc fits into the twenty-first century's zero years more than the sixties or early seventies of the novel, what does Doc demonstrate to readers about living in this time? To begin to answer this question, it is helpful to return to Linda Hutcheon's notion that, "less oppositional and less idealistic than the culture of the (formative) 1960s, the postmodern we know has to acknowledge its own complicity with the very values upon which it seeks to comment" (10). As a modernist novel preceding both the 1960s and postmodernism, *The Long Goodbye* largely ignores this issue of complicity. This ignorance is a problem for a contemporary reader. While several leaders of society are given the room to critique their contemporary culture in *The Long Goodbye*, all of these characters fail to reflect upon their own role in creating or fostering this broken society. Everyone blames someone else without recognizing his own role. The novel ends at the moment when Marlowe's complicity is revealed, yet nothing in the narrative suggests that Marlowe is aware of his complicity. Further, if he does gain some awareness, the reader is deprived of the opportunity to see what Marlowe does with this awareness.

Doc is different. At one key point in the novel, his ex-girlfriend Shasta explains to Doc how he is complicit in the system he seeks to critique. She tells him that he and the federal snitch Coy Harlingen are "peas in a pod… Both of you, cops who never wanted to be cops. Rather be surfing or smoking or fucking or anything but what you're doing. You guys must've thought you'd be chasing criminals, and instead here you're both working for them" (313-4). Doc responds to this accusation of Shasta's by mentally cataloging his paying customers and recognizing that he has been working for the elements of society he views as most nefarious. His catalog reads like a description of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's concept of Empire. They are all members of the

multinational corporations, governments, or supragovernmental agencies that comprise a new sovereignty. Doc wonders, "Forget who—*what* was he working for anymore?" (314).

Doc need not analyze for whom he is working. He is already poignantly, sometimes painfully, aware. Unlike the unwitting Marlowe or Dude, Doc recognizes that he is being manipulated. He observes that Bigfoot is "hustling" him (274) and that he is "some dumb-ass sucker of a civilian PI who'll keep nosing on into the case" (284). Despite this recognition, Doc continues on. From a narrative standpoint, he need not. By the time Doc is genuinely manipulated by Bigfoot and the Golden Fang, the initial mysteries of the book have been solved. Glen Charlock's murderer has been (more or less) identified. Mickey Wolfmann has returned and his kidnappers have been identified. Even Shasta has returned home safely. The forces of the plot that propel the novel have been resolved. So why must Doc continue?

The answer to this question seems to lie in Hardt and Negri's assertion, "[W]e have to recognize that, regardless of how brilliantly and trenchantly we critique it, we are destined to live in *this* world, not only subject to its powers of domination but also contaminated by its corruptions" (vii). It is not enough to end *Inherent Vice* with a protagonist on the verge of realizing that he helps to create and is corrupted by the very world he criticizes (as Chandler ends *The Long Goodbye*). Instead, Doc must learn how to live in this contaminated world. He must find something to work for.

Part of understanding what Doc is working for requires another examination of the relationship the protagonists of *The Long Goodbye, The Big Lebowski*, and *Inherent Vice* have with money. In "The Simple Art of Murder," Chandler states his detective

"will take no man's money dishonestly" (18). True to this form, Marlowe accepts no dishonest money from his work in *The Long Goodbye*. Chandler suggests that the five thousand dollar bill that Terry Lennox sent Marlowe or the money that Eileen Wade offered Marlowe was tainted. Marlowe would have thus become tainted by accepting this money. Nonetheless, Marlowe acts exactly as Terry Lennox and the other wealthy, corrupt characters manipulate him to act. Marlowe is left with nothing at the end. His refusal to accept the money does not protect him from the corruption. He is still tainted for his complicity in the crimes. He is left without his friendship to Terry, which motivated him through much of the caper. Even his pride is in shambles.

The Dude's situation is far less complex in *The Big Lebowski*. He is willing to take money, sometimes even dishonestly. He plots to steal the ransom money from the Big Lebowski. He tries to charge both Maude Lebowski and Jackie Treehorn for the return of the ransom money, even though he does not have it or really know where it is. He even steals a rug from the Big Lebowski. At one point in the movie, the Dude claims he "is not greedy. All the Dude ever wanted was his rug back." Yet he is greedy. He is willing to risk the life of a possibly (though improbably) kidnapped woman so he can pocket money that was stolen from a scholarship fund and earmarked for inner city youth. If all he were genuinely concerned with were his rug, he could have simply washed the urine stain out with soap and water.

Doc eschews payment for different reasons. Unlike Marlowe, Doc has no delusions about his complicity. He knows he is complicit. Unlike the Dude, Doc does have the means of getting his hands on dishonest money, yet he rejects the payment. His

rejection exemplifies the revolutionary potential of Doc's life and therefore warrants a closer example.

Doc's rejection of payment comes in his confrontation with a representative of the Golden Fang, Crocker Fenway. In the novel, the Golden Fang is many things to many people. It is a boat. It is an international heroin ring. It is a tax dodge for dentists. It is a psychiatric hospital. It is an arms dealer. It is an organization more powerful than the Mob and the police, with the ability to mobilize the FBI. It is, in short, Empire as described by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. As in his previous three novels, Pynchon brings Empire down to human terms in *Inherent Vice*. Hardt and Negri argue, "The primary form of power that really confronts us today, however, is not so dramatic or demonic but rather earthly and mundane. We need to stop confusing politics with theology" (*Commonwealth* 5). Pynchon makes Golden Fang— which is metonymically Empire and what Hardt and Negri refer to when they discuss the "power that really confronts us today"—human. They are a network of businessmen who work in concert or at odds with each other in order to, as Crocker Fenway describes it, be "in place" (347). The amusingly named Crocker Fenway (a given name that calls to mind Betty Crocker, a surname that is mindful of Fenway Park) is the human face of Empire, the representative of Golden Fang, and the earthly and mundane man whom Doc confronts in the end. Their conversation is ostensibly about negotiating a handoff of the large amount of Golden Fang heroin that Doc unwittingly came into possession of. Crocker offers Doc money for the heroin. Doc says, "Suppose [the payment] didn't have to be in the form of, like, money?" (346) He negotiates instead for payment in the form of protection, the specific nature of which I discuss below. The resulting conversation moves to issues of

property. Property is, of course, the chief concern of Crocker. He traffics in property. It is also a major theme in the novel. Pynchon repeatedly alludes to the "[l]ong, sad history of L.A. land use… Mexican families bounced out of Chavez Ravine to build Dodger Stadium, American Indians swept out of Bunker Hill for the Music Center, Tariq's neighborhood bulldozed aside for Channel View Estates" (17). Likewise, the event that catalyzes the novel—the disappearance of developer Mickey Wolfmann—is essentially a matter of land use. Mickey is kidnapped because he has entered into a moment of personal crisis. Mickey articulates this crisis: "I feel as if I've awakened from a dream of a crime for which I can never atone, an act I can never go back and choose not to commit. I can't believe I spent my whole life making people pay for shelter, when it ought to've been free. It's just so obvious" (244). The result of this epiphany of Mickey's is a project he calls "Arrepentimiento. Spanish for 'sorry about that'" (248). Arrepentimiento is a housing development where anyone can go and live for free. If a person has the means to get to the house, she can live there. It would be, in a sense, an example of the Marxist common. Mickey's embrace of the common threatens to undermine the core value upon which Empire is constructed[37]. For this reason, Golden Fang views Mickey's actions as a crime, and they remove him from society.

To understand why providing free housing would be a crime, it is helpful to return to Hardt and Negri's claim that "the concept of property and the defense of property remain the foundation of every modern political constitution" (*Commonwealth* 15). Hardt and Negri further argue that contemporary discussions of "fascism" focus on authoritarianism, yet "what is eclipsed or mystified, instead, is the daily functioning of constitutional, legal processes and the constant pressure of profit and property"

(*Commonwealth* 4). In other words, they argue that every modern republic is built upon the premise of protecting private property and that this premise, more than mid-twentieth century authoritarianism or repressive dictatorships, represents the primary barrier twenty-first century democracy needs to overcome.

Inherent Vice expands the shift in Pynchon's oeuvre that began with *Vineland* and examines possibilities for resistance against the Empire by moving the discussion from authoritarianism (as represented by Brock Vond in *Vineland* and Scarsdale Vibe in *Against the Day*) and toward the repressive aspects of property. Pynchon's exchanges regarding land use in *Inherent Vice* suggest that, in a republic built upon John Locke's notions of the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property, property eclipses all. In his essay "On the Pacific Edge of Catastrophe, or Redemption: California Dreaming in Thomas Pynchon's *Inherent Vice*," Rob Wilson observes, "All forces, from the LAPD to the Beach Boys, work on supporting Southland development, greed, excess, in suburban consensus" (221). Wilson calls this the "neoliberal counterconversion" in *Inherent Vice*, the rejection of ideas of life and liberty, of democracy, of people acting in concert to support the common good, all in favor of accumulating property in a privatized, corporate, consumer culture.

This notion is most salient in Doc and Crocker's conversation regarding property, not only the in words spoken, but in the act of the conversation itself. When one takes a step back and considers Crocker's decision to meet with Doc, it becomes clear that Crocker did not have to meet with Doc at all. Crocker is part of Golden Fang, an organization with an incredible amount of resources at its disposal. Already in the novel, Golden Fang has mobilized a militia known as Vigilant California to kill Glen Charlock.

They have also mobilized the FBI to kidnap Mickey Wolfmann. They could have acted like *Vineland*'s Brock Vond and sent the troops in to neutralize Doc. If their goal had been one of authoritarian control, violent means would have been used to subdue Doc and recover the heroin. Instead, their focus is on property. Power is not as important for Crocker Fenway as "being in place" (347) is. Being in place, for Crocker, means ownership of "[r]eal estate, water rights, oil, cheap labor" (347), the key elements that support global trade. Being in place means maintaining a system in which the global trade of multinational corporations works in concert with governmental and supragovernmental agencies to maintain the possession of property, regardless of the means by which that property was obtained. In this light, Doc's rejection of money as a form of payment from Golden Fang goes far beyond Marlowe's notion of rejecting money as a way of denying complicity. Doc's refusal of monetary payment is a rejection of a property-based economic system. His alternate request for payment is a move toward the common.

Hardt and Negri define the common as:

> first of all, the common wealth of the material world—the air, the water, the fruits of the soil, and all nature's bounty—which in classic European political texts is often claimed to be the inheritance of humanity as a whole, to be shared together. We consider the common also and more significantly those results of social production that are necessary for social interaction and further production, such as knowledges, languages, codes, information, affects, and so forth. (*Commonwealth* vii)

Doc, in particular, demonstrates a world based on both the rejection of privatized land use and the embrace of shared land, language, knowledge, and information. His business model exemplifies this. The characters of Shasta Fay Hepworth, Hope Harlingen, Talik Khalil, Clancy Charlock, and Coy Harlingen all hire Doc with no retainer and no real implication that they have any intention of paying him money for his services. Further, Doc makes no real effort to collect from them. His attitude is best expressed when Coy tells Doc he cannot pay upon the receipt of information and Doc responds, "Whenever. Unless maybe you're one of these folks who believe information is money" (87). This is an interesting and telling statement by Doc. As a private detective, he traffics in information. Just as Crocker has a vested interest in protecting the value of his property, Doc—according to the logic of late capitalism—has a vested interest in protecting the value of information. Yet he questions the notion of turning information into money. Instead, Doc trades information in a way that does not result in the accumulation of property for him. His bartering of information does increase the overall wealth of his community in the sense that all of the aforementioned clients lead richer lives based upon the open exchange of information perpetuated by Doc. As Hardt and Negri observe, "Science would come to a standstill if our great accumulations of knowledge, information, and methods of study were not common" (*Multitude* 188). They further assert, "innovation requires common resources, open access, and free interaction" (*Multitude* 338). Doc recognizes that, just as scientific innovations and the expansion of knowledge in multiple fields depends on openly sharing and contributing to the common knowledge, his role as a detective best serves the community when his accumulation of information is donated to the common. He personally benefits from other characters who

share in this belief. He hires his lawyer, Sauncho, with no retainer and no monetary payment, yet Sauncho continues to represent Doc. Tito, a limousine driver and Doc's friend, gives Doc a fair amount of free rides. While Doc never pays Tito money for this, Tito is able to keep the lion's share of the money they stumble onto at a casino. Doc also obtains a great deal of free information from the nascent internet enthusiast Fritz. When Doc claims he owes Fritz for this information, Fritz waves off payment (195). Instead, Doc, his clients, his lawyer, and his friends all contribute to a common wealth of information that benefits them commonly, if not exactly equally. Doc's refusal of monetary payment from Crocker Fenway pulls Crocker into this system of the common.

Before exploring exactly how the common wealth is beneficial, it is important to recognize that Doc did receive a significant monetary sum at the end of the novel. While he is in Las Vegas helping his client Trillium Fortnight find her lover, Puck Beaverton[38], Doc bets the Mickey Wolfmann book, braving one-hundred-to-one odds to bet that Mickey was, in fact kidnapped. Doc stakes a hundred dollars and wins. His receipt of the winning check leaves Doc in a fairly financially stable place at the end of the novel. Doc is able to use the money to pay down all his debts. Since he spends so little money and appears to be living rent-free in an apartment owned by his Aunt Reet, the money leftover could conceivably last Doc for several months. The money also demonstrates that, through Doc, Pynchon suggests an incremental move toward the common. Doc's recognition of his complicity carries with it the recognition that he does live in this world, which, for better or worse, requires a certain amount of money. He is not rejecting money entirely. Nor is he rejecting property entirely (which is highlighted by his love for his car). Instead, he is pushing for a world where the unquestioning faith in money and

property is questioned, where labor benefits the common first and the individual second. The fact that Doc made his money by betting the long shot is increasingly significant when one considers the nature of the bet. The odds-on money bet that Mickey Wolfmann kidnapped himself, that his philanthropy was a moment of weakness and the kidnapping was a way of reneging his gift at Arrepentimiento. Doc, on the other hand, bet that even a real estate developer like Mickey Wolfmann could recognize the crime his life had been, reject that crime, and seek redemption. Further, Doc bet that it not only would, but it did take federal intervention supported by a network of international businessmen to make Mickey renege. In short, Doc's big payout came from his willingness to bet on the revolutionary potential of one of the Empire's most entrenched businessmen.

Doc's ability to bet on Mickey, coupled with his ability to trust Crocker Fenway (which is discussed below), demonstrate the revolutionary potential of love as it is argued for by Hardt and Negri in *Commonwealth*. Hardt and Negri state, "Bringing together these two faces of love—the constitution of the common and the composition of singularities—is a central challenge for understanding love as a material, political act" (184). I have discussed love in the constitution of the common, particularly with respect to Doc's business practices, above. The second notion to unpack in the understanding of the revolutionary potential of love is the composition of singularities "which compose new assemblages" (*Commonwealth* 186). Hardt and Negri reject what they refer to as corrupt love, or love that forms units that isolate certain members from the rest of the society. They cite, specifically, the corrupted love of nations through patriotism, or familial love when it leads to an isolated family unit. Instead, Hardt and Negri promote more politically powerful forms of inclusive love, of interpreting the notion to love thy

neighbor as loving not only those whom are close to us but those whom we view as the other. Doc's inclusive love can be viewed first in his relationship with Bigfoot Bjornsen. From Doc's perspective, Bigfoot should be a nemesis. Bigfoot takes every opportunity he finds to frame, hassle, or manipulate Doc. Even so, Doc fosters a genuine affection for Bigfoot. Doc is considerate of Bigfoot's feelings and frequently does thoughtful, loving things for Bigfoot. Bigfoot does not seem to share in Doc's affection (as demonstrated by Bigfoot repeatedly thrusting Doc into life-threatening situations), yet the fact that it is unrequited only makes Doc's love of the other more poignant. Of course, Doc's love spans well beyond Bigfoot.

When Doc negotiates with Crocker Fenway, he first asks for the release of Coy Harlingen so that Coy can be reunited with his family. This could be read as Doc negotiating for what Hardt and Negri refer to as a corrupted form of love because the release of Coy leads to the restoration of Coy to his traditional family structure, complete with a husband, wife, and baby living in a suburban tract home. The Harlingens, with their history of heroin abuse and Coy's status as a rock star, are not exactly the traditional family. Hope Harlingen's phone call to Doc, in which she both thanks him and invites him to share time with this reunited family, coupled with Doc's first encounter with Hope, which was characterized by "kindness without a price tag" (39), all suggest that the Harlingens will not be an isolated family unit, but rather part of the common that Doc works for.

Doc also negotiates with Crocker for a more general protection. As Doc tells his friend Denis, "I'm getting their word they won't hurt anybody. My friends, my family—me, you, a couple others" (349). This negotiation is significant for two reasons. First,

once again Pynchon expands the definition of family to include reconstructed families. When Doc speaks of family, he is speaking of his close relationship with his mother, father, aunt, and cousin, but he also expands that to include his ex-girlfriend Shasta (just as family relations in *Vineland* included a litany of exes), his friends and neighbors down at Gordita Beach, and potentially even his nemesis Bigfoot.

Herein lies the revolutionary potential of *Inherent Vice*. Hardt and Negri observe, "The real wealth, which is an end in itself, resides in the common; it is the sum of the pleasures, desires, capacities, and needs we all share" (*Multitude* 149). The wealth Doc works for in the end is the common. Nowhere is this exemplified more poignantly than in the final scene, when Doc drives down a Los Angeles freeway in a fog too thick to afford any real visibility. He and his fellow drivers learn that they must ban together if any of them are to survive. The competition that defines their lives, the quest for property and the nearly theological drive to maintain that property, is worthless. The hostile, cutthroat driving practices so familiar to drivers on Los Angeles freeways must be abandoned. Instead they must depend on the sight of people they cannot see, they must depend on their shared contributions, to make it through this alive. Doc sees hope for redemption in this moment. He fantasizes that it may last forever, that he may forever sustain this night of fog where property is worthless and the love of the other for the common good prevails.

CHAPTER 6:

AN ‘UKULELE GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE

In one of the few biographical sources that exists about Thomas Pynchon, author Jules Siegel details his friendship with Pynchon. Throughout the piece, Siegel presents himself as an unreliable narrator. He narrates events for which he had no firsthand knowledge. For example, he describes the type of sex Pynchon and Siegel’s wife had while she was cheating on Siegel. He frequently has difficulties remembering what exactly happened. He blames his own selfishness and his heavy drug use for these lapses in memory. In the end, he presents a wonderful bit of memoir that paints a vivid portrait of Jules Siegel and keeps Pynchon shrouded in his veil of mystery. These are the exact reasons why I appreciate Siegel’s piece. It is a fun story. There is no reason for me to take it too seriously. It provides an entertaining fiction regarding Pynchon, and allows me to keep biographical criticism largely out of my study. Siegel also provides one specific description that is very useful to me in concluding this study of Pynchon’s four most recent novels. Siegel describes Pynchon as someone who “could carry a tune well and made up ribald parodies of popular songs, which I seem to remember—surely I am imagining this—were accompanied on a ukulele” (122). With this statement, Siegel not only puts an ‘ukulele in Pynchon’s hands; he gives Pynchon a subjunctive ‘ukulele, an ‘ukulele that may be imagined, but is taken as real.[39] This subjunctive ‘ukulele works as a metaphor for the global impact of the Empire Pynchon confronts and for the multitude that works in concert to resist this Empire. An examination of Pynchon’s multiple ‘ukulele references in his five most recent novels provides both an image for and

soundtrack to Pynchon's counternarrative against Empire and its attendant neoliberal ideology.

Before exploring the ways in which Pynchon uses the 'ukulele as a metaphor, it is important to understand this enigmatic little instrument better. According to John King and Jim Tranquada, whose "A New History of the Origins and Development of the 'Ukulele, 1838-1915" stands as one of the few academic studies investigating the 'ukulele, "much of the information in print about the 'ukulele is unreliable or incorrect" (1). King and Tranquada trace the origins of the 'ukulele back to the Portuguese colony of Madeira, where, for a few centuries, locals had played a small treble guitar called a machete[40]. They observe that the majority of contemporary accounts tracing the 'ukulele's origins back to either the Portuguese *braguinha* or *cavaquinho* are not wrong so much as inaccurate. According to King and Tranquada, the term *braguinha* is a twentieth-century term, first appearing in print several years after the term 'ukulele. This distinction is important for King and Tranquada because the machete—not the slightly different *braguinha* or *cavaquinho*—was culturally significant to Madeirans. It factored heavily in their celebrations and festivals. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers to the island of Madeira frequently reported hearing the machete at parties and other festive occasions. King and Tranquada note, "The machete also traveled with emigrants to other parts of the Madeiran diaspora in the 19th century" (3). As food shortages and political instability drove several residents of Madeira to various parts of the United States, Europe, South America, and Hawaii, the machete followed. Perhaps for this reason, there may be truth to the legend that, upon the landing of the Madeiran ship *Ravenscrag* in Honolulu, passenger Joao Fernandes celebrated by erupting into song, accompanied by a

borrowed machete, thereby officially planting the seed of the ‘ukulele in Hawaii. King and Tranquada site several newspaper accounts of Madeiran immigrants playing machetes around Hawaii.

The machete took many forms before becoming the ‘ukulele. King and Tranquada describe various small, treble guitars that went by the name of taro patch fiddle, machete, rajao, and braga, among others. The instruments varied in size, scale, and tunings. They had, variously, four, five, six, and eight strings. Before they earned the name ‘ukulele, the small instruments could be grouped together, in the terms of one of the original ‘ukulele luthiers Jose do Espirito Santo, as “guitars of all sizes” (qtd. in King and Tranquada 9). Over the course of a generation, from the time between the landing of the *Ravenscrag* (which brought the three Madeiran cabinet makers credited with making he first ‘ukuleles, Augusto Dias, Manuel Nunes, and Jose do Espirito Santo) and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco (which led to the first wave of the ‘ukulele’s widespread popularity in the mainland United States), the instrument that evolved from the machete came to represent indigenous Hawaiian culture.

The ‘ukulele—specifically, the four-stringed treble guitar characterized by re-entrant tuning—became an image of Hawaiian culture for a number of reasons. Hawaii’s last king, David Kalakaua, embraced the instrument. He frequently entertained foreign dignitaries with a group of musicians known as “The King’s Singing Boys,” who sang traditional Hawaiian songs in the Hawaiian language, accompanied by the ‘ukulele. The last monarch of Hawaii, Queen Lili’uokalani, famously wrote the bittersweet “Aloha Oe” to be accompanied by the ‘ukulele. Because of the ‘ukulele’s portability and (relatively) low price, it became popular as both a tourist souvenir and as a working class instrument

for Hawaiian locals living and working on the various plantations on Oahu. Perhaps most significant in the evolution of the ‘ukulele from Madeiran machete to a signifier of Hawaiian culture is the incorporation of local hardwoods, specifically koa, for the soundboard of the instrument. The koa soundboard, as opposed to more common machete soundboards made of spruce or pine, gives the ‘ukulele its distinctive sound. As King and Tranquada observe, “Given that the machete was introduced during a period of political turmoil that ultimately led to the loss of Hawaiian independence, the purchase of a koa ‘ukulele may have been seen in the same light as the purchase of koa furniture: an expression of pride in Hawai’i and of love of the land” (12). Thus, the koa separates the ‘ukulele from its European roots, tying it to Hawaii and to its indigenous culture both through the distinctive sound it produces and through the indigenous pride represented in this wood that can be found only on the island of Hawaii.

This distinctive history connects to Pynchon’s politics in a variety of ways. Much of the site of resistance for Pynchon lies in reclaiming culture and identity from Empire. This reclaimed culture and identity is neither perfect nor pure. As critic Katherine Hume observes, “We must quest within the world we have inherited” (“The Religious and Political Vision of Pynchon’s *Against the Day*” 180). The sites of resistance must exist within Empire, because Empire’s expanse is so broad that there is almost no room outside of it. The ‘ukulele serves as a metaphor for this. Hawaiians were faced with the violent overthrow of their islands by a network of corporate and government interests from within the United States. They could not combat this network’s overpowering military presence, so they sought resistance in other ways. Specifically, they sought to maintain and validate their culture. The ‘ukulele became the symbol for this Hawaiian culture. It

does not matter that the ‘ukulele had been born of a Madeiran instrument or that the ‘ukulele had been in Hawaii for less than a generation before it became a cultural symbol. Hawaiians reclaimed the machete. They made it distinctly Hawaiian. They absorbed the horrors of colonization, the annihilation of global markets, and the hostilities of a military takeover of their island, and came out of it with an ‘ukulele. Obviously, this was not an equitable trade. On a literal level, the US conquest of Hawaii is one more dark spot in the history of US militarization. On a metaphoric level, there is something hopeful in this little guitar and its evolution to a symbol of indigenous culture. It exemplifies Pynchon’s site of resistance, because this is the challenge that Pynchon confronts: how do we survive Empire’s colonization of our homeland, the annihilation of its markets, its militarization, its attack on our democracy, its privatization of our social safety net? And this is the answer Pynchon presents: we fight on an ideological battlefield, we construct a culture that reclaims the artifacts of global commodity culture and repurposes them, we answer the selfishness of economies of gain and accumulation with the mutual benefits of an economy of social relations. An examination of the ‘ukulele in Pynchon’s novels reveals this and serves as a convenient conclusion to this study.

The first notable example of the ‘ukulele in Pynchon’s novels appears in *Gravity’s Rainbow*. Pynchon introduces the novel’s protagonist, Tyrone Slothrop, through the character’s workspace. British secret agent Teddy Bloat photographs Slothrop’s cubicle. The reader gets a sense of who Slothrop is through the stuff gathered around his desk. Among the flotsam gathered there are “the scribbled ukulele chords to a dozen songs including ‘Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland’ (‘He does have some rather snappy arrangements,’ Tantivy reports, ‘he’s a sort of American George Formby, if

you can imagine such a thing,' but Bloat's decided he'd rather not)" (18). The 'ukulele chords and songs they represent are telling. First, the portability of the 'ukulele is highlighted. The instrument is something that an American working with British military intelligence in London can carry with him. It can be a symbol of home for Slothrop. He can be an "American George Formby." The allusion to George Formby—the first among a few in Pynchon's novels—further characterizes Slothrop. Formby was a former vaudevillian who rose to the height of his popularity during World War II. He became one of the highest-paid film stars in England in the forties. His films typically featured Formby playing comical songs on his banjolele. The banjolele is a hybrid instrument with neck, scale, and tuning of an 'ukulele (typically but not exclusively a soprano 'ukulele) and the body of a banjo. Formby used the banjolele to craft songs that were frequently silly, but, as evidenced by the economic injustice in "Why Don't Women Want Me?" and the opposition to hierarchy in "Our Sergeant Major," demonstrated real concern with class inequity. Teddy Bloat groans at the Formby reference (as, later, Doc Sportello of *Inherent Vice* will). Nonetheless, Pynchon, who himself is a popular cultural force concerned with class inequity and wont to break out into goofy songs, cannot be too dismissive of George Formby.

Slothrop is further characterized by the 'ukulele when Bloat also finds on Slothrop's desk "a busted corkscrewing ukulele string" (18), which suggests that Slothrop plays the 'ukulele with enough verve to break a string (perhaps even while performing Formby's signature split stroke), and he does so at the office. This information introduces another significant aspect of Pynchon's use of the 'ukulele in his novels: it is supposed to be fun. Even the most talented ukulelists know that the instrument is not to

be taken too seriously. There are serious aspects to the instrument. It is born of colonialism, global markets, and militarization (just as *Gravity's Rainbow* and Pynchon's other novels are), but it is also born of celebration, community, and cultural identity. It is an instrument further symbolic of times when one takes a break from the seriousness of life. By characterizing Slothrop as an American Formby, a guy who—though he works in military intelligence during a world war, in a city that is actively being firebombed—brings his 'ukulele to his office and plays goofy songs, Pynchon gives the reader an outline of what is becoming his distinctive style of fiction. Critics like Fredric Jameson refer to this as a postmodern blending of high and low culture. The terms high and low, however, present a troubling hierarchy. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to describe Pynchon's style as a mixture of the serious and the silly, the deadly and the absurd.

The deadly and the absurd blend in two later references to 'ukuleles in *Gravity's Rainbow*. First, Slothrop is vacationing on the Riviera when he witnesses Katje Borgesius in the clutches of an octopus, screaming for help. Slothrop races to the rescue. He is unable to disentangle Katje from the octopus's grip, and he fears that the last thing Katje will see will be his Hawaiian shirt, with its "vulgar-faced hula girls, ukuleles, and surfriders all in comic-book colors" (186). This representation of an 'ukulele—bastardized, reduced to an image on a gaudy tourist shirt—seems suddenly absurd to Slothrop. The 'ukulele is overshadowed by the other events in this scene, during which Slothrop is set up by a group of spies (with whom he thought he was working) and a well-trained octopus. But its absurdity, at least in Slothrop's mind, does not end here. Much later in the novel, when Slothrop sweats out a fever in occupied Berlin and feels as if he may just die, he also wallows in self-deprecation. He tells himself, "And you are no

knightly hero. The best you can compare with is Tannhauser, the Singing Nincompoop—you've been under one mountain at Nordhausen, been known to sing a song or two with uke accompaniment" (364). At what Slothrop feels is his lowest point, he constructs his identity with "uke accompaniment." By this point, Slothrop has traded his 'ukulele for the even more portable harmonica, yet the 'ukulele remains a part of his identity. It is the silly to counterbalance the seriousness which surrounds him, here in the heart of the wreckage at the end of a world war. There is a sense of hopelessness that accompanies this 'ukulele, begging the question of where one finds any sense of celebration or hope among the annihilation of World War II.

The 'ukulele's final appearances in *Gravity's Rainbow* once again finds that site for celebration, for silliness that is not absurd. In one specific scene, American soldiers and sailors, American women attached to the military, local German women, and an assembly of other displaced characters celebrate the end of the war. According to Steven Weisenburger, author of *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion*, "In this episode the circular dancing of the gathered preterite forms a symbolic counterpoint to the mushroom cloud that will form eight thousand miles to the east" (255). In other words, while Empire accelerates its project of annihilation in the form of an atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, the multitude provides a counternarrative to this annihilation. They form together in a celebration of the multitude. Pynchon describes the scene: "Ukuleles, kazoos, harmonicas, and any number of makeshift metal noisemakers accompany the song, which is an innocent salute to Postwar, a hope that the end of shortages, the end of Austerity, is near" (593). The presence of 'ukuleles in Cuxhaven, Germany, at the end of the World War II seems odd. It is not impossible that the locals along the North Sea had

‘ukuleles, or that American servicemen brought them from home. However, the ‘ukuleles seem more subjunctive, a fictional device that the reader accepts to allow Pynchon to insert all the ‘ukulele represents into this scene. What, specifically, the ‘ukulele represents in Slothrop’s identity and in Postwar celebrations remains unclear in the context of *Gravity’s Rainbow*. Pynchon’s use of the ‘ukulele as a metaphor evolves through his later novels, however. Beginning with *Vineland*, the ‘ukulele becomes somewhat transformative. It becomes both a talisman to ward off Empire and a shield to protect the multitude.

The first actual ‘ukulele in *Vineland* appears in a flashback about Zoyd Wheeler’s time as the in-flight musician on Kahuna Airlines. The airline is described as a nebulous enterprise, notorious for mid-air interceptions by ill-defined, nefarious kidnappers. Zoyd’s main responsibility as keyboardist on the flights is to distract passengers from the real and dangerous possibility that they will be kidnapped. On one particular flight, intruders enter the aircraft. They have “elite-unit grace” (64), automatic rifles, and a purpose that, while it is not clear to the reader nor to the occupants of the flight, is clear to the pursuers. The passengers react to the intrusion by drinking heavily. Zoyd continues to play his keyboard. He is accompanied by a strange man “holding a banjo-ukulele of between-the-wars vintage” (65). The strange man accompanies Zoyd, performing the Pynchon original “Wacky Coconuts.”

As it is later revealed, the strange man with the banjolele is one of the main characters of the novel, Takeshi Fumimoto. Takeshi’s accompaniment on “Wacky Coconuts” successfully disguises him from his pursuers, who leave the aircraft without their man. This scene is layered with significance. First, the banjolele serves as an

appropriate representation of Pynchon's global perspective in the novel. It is an instrument born from a Madeiran machete, which evolved into a Hawaiian 'ukulele, yet with the body of an instrument created by enslaved Africans in the southern United States. The instrument was popularized by a British entertainer and is now in the use of a Japanese man. Pynchon's preterite—the disenfranchised people surviving in global commodity culture—are represented in every stage of the banjolele's evolution from Madeira to the Kahuna Airlines flight. Further, this global instrument serves as a shield to the elite-unit grace and advanced technology and weaponry of Empire. Takeshi is able to fend off a superior force with his silly and serious instrument and his silly song.

Takeshi wields his 'ukulele with comparable effectiveness a second time in the novel. After martial artist Daryl Louise Chastain, or DL,—who will become Takeshi's lifelong partner but begins as his would-be assassin—accidentally performs the ninja technique of the death touch, which will result in Takeshi's death in one year if it is not counteracted, on Takeshi, he tracks her down at the Retreat of the Sisterhood of Kunoichi Attentives. Takeshi senses that he will not be able to walk unarmed into the Retreat, so he arms himself with an 'ukulele purchased in San Francisco. He travels to the Retreat and finds himself, "there in the perilous open, regarded no doubt over the sights of Uzis set on full automatic" (162). Takeshi responds to this armed confrontation by pulling out his 'ukulele and singing a goofy song called "Just Like William Powell." The song endears him to the Sisterhood. The weapons are dropped. He finds a way to work with the Sisterhood to counteract the effects of the death touch and to enter, with DL, into the business of karmic readjustment.

The final instance of the ‘ukulele in *Vineland* occurs in the hands of Hub Gates. Hub is the father of Frenesi Gates, the character for whom most of the characters in the novel are searching. He is the grandfather of the novel’s protagonist, Prairie Wheeler. He is also the husband of Sasha Gates, who is a direct descendent of the Traverses from *Against the Day*. As a nuclear family, Hub, Sasha, and Frenesi do not quite work out. Hub and Sasha divorce, unable to withstand the residual pressure of their blacklisting during the years of the House Unamerican Activities Committee. Frenesi rebelled against both parents, aligning herself with the fascists whom Sasha and her family had fought against for generations. Yet, the narrator describes one halcyon moment between the three, “driving down to Hollywood, Sasha at the wheel, Hub with a uke from Hawaii singing ‘Down Among the Sheltering Palms’ to Frenesi the baby between them” (290). Before the pressures of Empire overcome and divide this family, there is a moment of a hope, when the young couple and their baby daughter move into what they believe will be a better life. This moment is accompanied by Hub on the ‘ukulele. This scene, coupled with Takeshi’s ‘ukuleles, demonstrate the *Vineland* use of the instrument: it is a weapon of peace, an instrument of transformation, a symbol of hope.

The ‘ukulele plays a much smaller role in *Mason & Dixon*. One could assume that Pynchon avoids placing an ‘ukulele into the narrative because the bulk of events in the novel occur a century prior to the legendary moment when Joao Fernandes disembarked from the *Ravenscrag* and erupted into what very well may have been the first performance of the ‘ukulele in Honolulu. Pynchon, however, has never been an author to submit to the tyranny of chronology. He instead revels in anachronisms. For example, Mason and Dixon discuss a miraculous watch Dixon had received from his

mentor, William Emerson. The watch seems to run on perpetual motion. Mason scoffs at this idea. He states, "Had I tuppence for ev'ry approach made to Bradley upon the Topick of Perpetual-Motion, I should be elsewhere than this,— recumbent I imagine upon some sand beach of the Friendly Isles, strumming my *Eukalely*, and attended by local Maidens, whom I may even sometimes allow to strum it for me" (319). Mason imagines an 'ukulele (or "*Eukalely*") more than a hundred and thirty years before the term was first used in print. He imagines himself in Hawaii more than a decade before Captain James Cook arrived there and renamed them the Sandwich Isles. He also seems to make a joke that alludes to George Formby. Formby wrote a song titled "With My Little Ukulele in My Hand," which uses the term 'ukulele as a double entendre for a penis[41]. As with the 'ukulele itself, one must not take Pynchon's chronology too seriously. As I mention above, Pynchon revels in anachronisms and they serve the purpose of bilocating his narratives both in the historical past and the present lens through which we, as readers, view the past. This reference to the 'ukulele further places the instrument into the subjunctive realm of an imagined world outside the grasp of Empire.

The other reference to the 'ukulele occurs earlier in the novel. Mason and Dixon sit on a front porch with their South African hosts, the Vrooms. A young man comes along to serenade the three adolescent Vroom girls. He plays a "diminutive three-string'd Lute" (80) that he describes as a "Fiji Islander's Guitar, first introduc'd there two hundred years ago by Portuguese Jesuits" (81). The actual instrument the young man plays could be any of a number of stringed instruments. Read in the light of Pynchon's repeated representations of the 'ukulele throughout his oeuvre, one could view this three-stringed Lute born of the Madeiran diaspora as an early stage in the evolution of the

‘ukulele. The instrument, after all, is forever changing and adapting to local cultures and tastes. The three strings of the instrument become more significant when considered in light of a specific passage in *Against the Day*.

Miles Blundell, one of the Chums of Chance in *Against the Day*, articulates one of the many meanings one can invest in the ‘ukulele. His meditation upon the ‘ukulele serves as the most direct address regarding the ‘ukulele as a metaphor in any Pynchon novel. Miles discusses:

> the widespread contempt in which ukulele players are held—traceable, we concluded, to the uke’s all-but-exclusive employment as a producer of chords—single, timeless events apprehended all at once instead of serially. Notes of a linear melody, up and down a staff, being a record of pitch versus time, to play a melody is to introduce the element of time, and hence of mortality. Our perceived reluctance to leave the timelessness of the struck chord has earned ukulele players our reputation as feckless, clownlike children who will not grow up. (552).

Miles’s meditation is loaded with meaning. First, he discusses the timelessness of a chord. A chord is created on a stringed instrument when a musician combines the first, third, and fifth note of a scale. For example, I will discuss the key of G, which was Takeshi’s preferred ‘ukulele key in *Vineland*. When Takeshi formed a G chord on his banjolele, he played a succession of the notes (starting from the top string) G, D, G, B in one strum[42]. The notes combine to make the G chord. Only one of the G notes is necessary to form the chord, but since the ‘ukulele has four strings, one note is repeated. This means that the young man in *Mason & Dixon*, with his diminutive three-string guitar from the Fiji Islands but of Portuguese descent, had all the strings necessary to play

‘ukulele chords and therefore may have had one of the mutations in the evolution of the ‘ukulele.

There is also the element of timelessness in the chord. Obviously, time does exist when one strums a chord on any stringed instrument. The sound created by the chord does blend at least three moments in time into one, creating an illusion of timelessness. This can be interpreted several different ways. Among them, one can explore Pynchon’s relationship with time’s relativity in both *Mason & Dixon* and *Against the Day*. Through his repeated discussion of clocks and watches in the former novel and his explorations into fourth dimensional mathematics in the latter novel, Pynchon rejects the tyranny of time ticking away in an orderly fashion. Instead, Pynchon constructs a more complex view of time, one that is more relative, with moments expanding and contracting in irregular fashion. The past becomes something that does not exist as an objective moment in rational time but instead a fiction created by memory, the perspective of the present, and the saturation of the imagination. The future races to meet characters in some instances and remains forever out of their reach in others. Like Billy Pilgrim, Kurt Vonnegut’s protagonist in *Slaughterhouse 5*, Pynchon’s readers become unstuck in time, yo-yoing between the past, present, future, and subjunctive. The novels themselves, the fictional worlds they create, seem to exist forever in the present tense. As a scholar, I refer to the novels as forever unstuck in time, residing in an ever changing present tense. They become as seemingly timeless as an ‘ukulele chord.

Another way of interpreting Miles’s meditation on the ukulele chord resides in Hardt and Negri’s description of a multitude: “singularities that act in common” (*Multitude* 105). When Takeshi strikes a G chord, the D note remains a D, the B remains

a B, yet these singularities work together to form a chord. In a sense, the D and B do become a G in that particular chord, but the D never loses its essence. It can be used again in a D chord, in a B chord, and in a number of other chords. In a metaphoric way, the fretboard of the ‘ukulele works much like Pynchon’s idealized site of the multitude in *Against the Day*, the anarchist retreat at Yz-les-Bains, where the characters recognize what needs to be done and do it. The notes on a fretboard are joined by whatever is needed to make a chord, then released with no loss of their singularity. If one were to accept this interpretation as that which Miles is attempting to communicate in his meditation of ‘ukulele chords, than his subsequent encounter with the nefarious Transgressor Ryder Thorn becomes more meaningful. Ryder brags to Miles that he has “learned a ‘snappy’ new arrangement of a Chopin nocturne” (552). In order to play this arrangement, Ryder would have to play a succession of individual notes—a melody—instead of chords. This melody would be a violation of the timelessness and multitude apparent in Miles’s meditation on chords. As a plot device, this could signal to Miles that he must beware of Ryder. Ryder seeks to break the multitude and subject Miles once again to the tyranny of clock time (which, not incidentally, Ryder does seek to do and Miles does resist). Of course, there are multiple problems with this metaphor of a chord. They are not literally timeless. They are played in a succession of rhythmic strums, which would once again introduce time into a song. A melody, while it is a succession of notes, could also be argued as singularities working in common, not to make a chord but to make a song. And so on. I warn against taking this meditation of Miles’s too seriously. It is an ‘ukulele, after all. It is supposed to be fun. It is not perfect, nor is it pure. It never was. Yet, like the ‘ukulele itself, there is a serious undertone to consider.

In this case, whether the discussion of the chord can be taken literally or not, the reader can recognize that Pynchon is breaking with the doxa both in his discussion of time and his discussion of notions of individuality. As with all of Pynchon's 'ukulele references, the usefulness lies not in the literal example presented but in the metaphor that is being constructed.

Pynchon's subsequent references to the 'ukulele in *Against the Day* and *Inherent Vice* follow the pattern established in *Gravity's Rainbow*, *Vineland*, and *Mason & Dixon*. As in the Cuxhaven scene in *Gravity's Rainbow*, the 'ukulele once again brings together the preterite in celebration in *Against the Day*. It does so for Kit Traverse while he is in Belgium, for Lew Basnight in London, and for picnickers at Candlebrow University in Ohio. As in *Vineland*, the 'ukulele accompanies scenes of hope, particularly for Miles Blundell, who carries his 'ukulele into the Chicago World's Fair, aspiring to join the presenters at the Hawaii exhibit in authentic Hawaiian music. As in *Vineland*, that hope is dashed by Empire's influence. The music at the Hawaiian exhibit is not authentic. It is a spectacle created as a commodity. Nonetheless, the 'ukulele itself remains that symbol of hope. As in *Mason & Dixon*, Pynchon presents the 'ukulele anachronistically. Professor Vanderjuice plays "a ukulele of some dark exotic wood trimmed with tortoiseshell" (324). The dark exotic wood would likely be mahogany, which is the common 'ukulele soundboard wood that is darker than koa. The mahogany combined with the tortoiseshell binding that characterizes early Martin 'ukuleles would suggest that Vanderjuice owns an 'ukulele made by the Martin company of Pennsylvania a few years prior to Martin actually making these 'ukuleles. This anachronism should be no problem for a veteran of the time travel conferences at Candlebrow University and a

mathematician schooled in the fourth dimension as Vanderjuice is. Finally, as in the ‘ukulele’s first appearance in *Gravity’s Rainbow*, the instrument is referenced again in *Inherent Vice* to create another groan about George Formby. In the latter case, protagonist Doc Sportello’s friend Jade describes the fictional band Spotted Dick by saying, “You know the English ukulele player named George Formby?” Doc responds, “Sure, Herman’s Hermits covered one of his.” Jade says, “Well, these guys [Spotted Dick] have covered everything else. I mean, try to be cool with it” (130). The song that Doc knows is “Leaning on a Lamppost.” It is one of George Formby’s hit songs, but it differed from the rest of Formby’s oeuvre. Instead of a comical song that relied on humor to carry it, “Leaning on a Lamppost” is a tender love song. Spotted Dick, on the other hand, cover only the goofy songs. Since Formby recorded over a hundred songs, Spotted Dick have a near obsession with the goofy. Perhaps this is why Jade warns Doc away from their music.

This warning, as the final instance of an ‘ukulele in a Pynchon novel, serves as a fitting caveat to Pynchon’s use of the ‘ukulele as a metaphor. Clearly, Pynchon celebrates the ‘ukulele. Clearly he has no objections to comical songs, bawdy jokes, and working class undertones, all of which characterize Formby’s recordings. Clearly, when Jade warns, “Try to be cool with it,” Pynchon has found a way to be cool with it. Nonetheless, Pynchon avoids absolutes. His representations of the ‘ukulele, as well as his site for resistance residing in the multitude, are not dogmas. They are metaphors constructed to counter the neoliberal ideology of accumulation. There are problems with the metaphor. Pynchon seems to trust his readers to have the ability to confront these problems on their own and in their own way.

One of the problems of the ‘ukulele, for example, is how easily it can be co-opted. According to King and Tranquada, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915 “launched a national craze for Hawaiian music and the ‘ukulele” (22) in the United States. The Exposition opened in February of 1915. King and Tranquada report, “As early as September 1915 … Hawaiian manufacturers were complaining that mainland companies were fraudulently passing off their ‘ukuleles as island-made” (25). The speed with which mainland companies misrepresented their products to associate them with the image of Hawaii demonstrates how quickly Empire is able to co-opt any aspect of reclaimed culture, re-brand that reclamation, and sell it back as a commodity. This pattern continues into the present. The ‘ukulele experienced a resurgence during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Much of this resurgence was fueled by the internet, which expanded the availability of Hawaiian ‘ukuleles and of ‘ukulele instruction. The web site You Tube allowed ukulelists to post videos of ‘ukulele instruction and aspiring musicians to learn from them. Message boards on various web sites also paved the way for numerous ‘ukulele groups to form and strum together. In a sense, it became a microcosm of Hardt and Negri’s vision of commonwealth. Communities gathered for purposes that existed outside the marketplace. They made music together. They shared information of how to make music. They did it all without charging a fee. Almost immediately, this craze triggered the accelerated production of ‘ukuleles of dubious quality constructed in Chinese factories, where, at least one ‘ukulele company boasts, “[W]ork forces, at least for now, appear to be similar to western countries a hundred years ago, back when people appreciated just having a job… [T]hey knew nothing of paid vacations, sick leave, workman’s compensation, health insurance,

temporary disability insurance, and whatever other incentives are now available to western workers." For this reason, the Chinese company can pay the workers "thirty times" less that comparable American workers ("Pono Frequently Asked Questions").

Further, King and Tranquada cite the Hawaiian Promotion Committee's lament that mainland business practices harm the music from the islands. A contemporary example resides in Israel Kamakawiwo'ole's version of "Over the Rainbow." Kamakawiwo'ole is rumored to have recorded the song to honor a friend of his who had recently died. Kamakawiwo'ole passed away before experiencing the phenomena that his recording would create. The song did seem to strike a nerve among mainland Americans. It became a posthumous hit for Kamakawiwo'ole. It also became a sensation for corporate America. Ben Sisario reports in a recent *New York Times* article, "The recording has been licensed more than 100 times to sell food, software, paint, bank services, lottery tickets and plenty else, and it shows no sign of slowing down." One of the reasons the song has been so popular in advertising campaigns resides in the humble, charming sound of the 'ukulele accompaniment. Because the 'ukulele is high pitched, because the re-entrant tuning produces such a distinctive sound, because it conjures orientalized images of an exotic island for mainland Americans, the instrument creates a soothing and trustworthy accompaniment to commodities that are environmentally hazardous (like paint) or ethically questionable (lottery tickets). The music can soften the edges around the industry responsible for triggering the Great Recession (bank services). The 'ukulele can even put a friendly face on contemporary plutocrats. Sally Ann Lasson, writing for the *Independent*, recently discussed her feelings about industrialist Warren Buffet playing the 'ukulele. According to Lasson, "It shows he's human. No other

instrument could possibly convey this egalitarian message as succinctly as a uke." Herein lies the danger in the 'ukulele as a metaphor. As soon as a newspaper reporter views her life and billionaire Warren Buffet's as "egalitarian," the 'ukulele is serving the interests of Empire.

These problems mirror Hardt and Negri's criticism of postmodernism in *Empire*. Hardt and Negri claim that Empire has co-opted postmodernism as an ideology that promotes the exploitation of Empire. Hardt and Negri claim that postmodernism's "politics of difference, fluidity, and hybridity in order to challenge the binaries and essentialism of modern sovereignty have been outflanked by the strategies of power" (138). In other words, Empire exploits the concepts of difference and hybridity to justify global commodity trade and the free exchange of markets. As I argue above, postmodernism has not become the ideology of Empire. Empire continues to remain firmly entrenched in a neoliberal ideology that subjugates all aspects of human life to the logic of the marketplace. They have simply saturated postmodernism with the logic of the marketplace.

These co-optations—both with respect to the 'ukulele and postmodernism—are familiar to Pynchon. Thus, it is important that the context of Pynchon's sites of resistance remain surrounding his basic concepts. For example, much of Pynchon's resistance lies in community and family, and both of these concepts have been co-opted by Empire. *Vineland*, which ends with Pynchon's vision of a reconstituted family and community system built up of non-traditional relationships and assemblages of disparate but comparably disenfranchised individuals serves to counter the narrow concept of "family values" promoted by George H. W. Bush in his presidential campaign. While

Bush's views of family values had been reduced to the patriarchal values of the nuclear family, Pynchon expands his reconstituted families and communities to include the preterite, the multitude. Another example lies in the definitions of freedom. As I argue in the *Against the Day* chapter above, Pynchon is a great proponent of freedom, but he confronts the neoliberal definition of freedom, which is the freedom of markets, the freedom of the wealthy few to exploit the land and labor of most of humanity. Pynchon instead promotes a vision of freedom that is contingent upon cooperation, upon individuals working together for the mutual benefit of all. Thus, when I discuss Pynchon's site of resistance lying with family, community, and freedom, I must do so within the context of what these terms denote for Pynchon, and with the knowledge of how quickly and persistently these concepts are co-opted and redefined by governments and multinational corporations.

The best example of the necessity of welding the context to the concept lies in the end of *Against the Day*, when the character Jess Traverse summarizes what it means to be an American as, "[D]o what they tell you and take what they give you and don't go on strike or their soldiers will shoot you down" (1076). While this works as a clever sound bite, for the statement itself to have full significance, the reader must be reminded of Pynchon's entire historiography of late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century economic liberalism, how the ideology was infused globally, the material affects it had on both land and labor, the devastation it imposed on millions of individual human lives, the ways in which it ravaged the globe from Mexico to the Balkans to tiny islands in the middle of the vast Indian Ocean, and how that ideology created the neoliberal ideology that has become hegemony in contemporary society. Finally, the 'ukulele, when it is tied to the

context of Pynchon's novels and the hope he presents, becomes equally meaningful. It brings together communities in positive ways: to celebrate the end of a war (in *Gravity's Rainbow*) and hopefully the end of Empire's perpetual warfare (as discussed in *Vineland*); to aid intellectual inquiry (in *Against the Day*); to catalyze healthy, loving relationships (in *Mason & Dixon* and *Vineland*); to foster the construction of an identity as a fun, happy person willing to lend a hand, even to a spy being attacked by a trained octopus (in the case of Tyrone Slothrop); and, perhaps most importantly, to challenge every doxa, right down to the tyranny of clock time itself (in the case of Miles Blundell's meditation).

In his essay "The Sensibility of Postmodern Whiteness in *V.*," David Witzling summarizes Pynchon's initial creed through the words of the character McClintic Sphere: "Keep cool, but care" (381). This can be viewed as a starting point for Pynchon's oeuvre: the jazz saxophonist issuing a declaration for a generation coming out of the fifties, preparing for the madness, paranoia, and apocalyptic vision of the sixties that Pynchon presents in his first three novels. I suggest that the creed for Pynchon's next four novels lies in the character of Bigfoot Bjornsen's description of *Inherent Vice* protagonist Doc Sportello, someone who can "appreciate the distinction between child*like* and child*ish*" (213). Pynchon's vision of a better future lies in this characterization of Doc Sportello: someone who can take care of himself among the madness of contemporary society, but never gives up that childlike sense of hope and wonder, never gives up that imaginative, subjunctive world that still can exist. A world that, like 'ukulele, begins with the flawed situation Empire has placed us in, a situation that our own flawed complicity helps to perpetuate, yet is still a world where the

multitude can create a culture of reclamation. It is a world where we replace the neoliberal ideology of accumulation with a counternarrative that has an ‘ukulele as its metaphor. The counternarrative that tells us to have fun, sing goofy songs, join together in whatever family or communities work as long as they work for the mutual benefit of everyone, understand the context of contemporary society with all its flaws and all our flawed complicities, never sacrifice social relations for accumulation, and use any moments of respite to provide a counterbalance to the power of Empire.

Endnotes

[1] Pynchon is obviously conscious of this irony. For a more complicated view of this, see Pynchon's introduction to the 50th anniversary edition of Orwell's *1984*.

[2] In *A People's History of the United States 1492-Present*, Howard Zinn describes several of these free speech protests that occurred from 1909-1912 in cities like Spokane, Fresno, Aberdeen, and San Diego (324-5).

[3] I argue elsewhere, specifically in my below chapter covering Pynchon's *Against the Day*, that Pynchon does not seem to be arguing for a complete withdrawal from consumables or a marketplace. He argues instead for an economy that prioritizes social relations over the marketplace (which stands in stark opposition to neoliberalism, which subverts all aspects of life to the marketplace). As Pynchon shows in *Against the Day*, he does not wish to blow up the café—in fact, he wants to get his coffee there—he just rejects an ideology that privileges the café over humans.

[4] The Sonics sing, "She's my Skinny Minnie. She ain't skinny. She's tall, that's all."

[5] Captain John Yossarian, the protagonist in *Catch-22*, is haunted by the awkward diction the military uses with regards to his friend Dunbar. Dunbar did not disappear. He was disappeared, suggesting that some outside force led to Dunbar's disappearance. Likewise, Minoru seems to have been disappeared, i.e., some force of Empire seems to have taken Minoru out of the equation.

[6] Most of Thomas Pynchon's novels are presented with a narrative voice that is intrusive enough to be almost a character in the work. This narrative voice can address

the audience directly (as in the case of *Against the Day*), recommend books for further reading (the narrator of *Gravity's Rainbow* encourages the reader to seek out the works of Ishmael Reed), or simply be a presence, as in the case of *Vineland.* The narrator in *Vineland* floats through the minds of various characters in the text. He explains their actions through loving phrases or condemning passages. He tells jokes about worms playing pinochle on your snout. He blends the tone of spy novels, monster movies, and television shows. He otherwise manipulates the reader's interpretation. Nonetheless, I think it would be a mistake to confuse Pynchon with this narrative voice. So much of Pynchon's work is dependent upon the freedom to allow theories and ideas to take form through fiction. This freedom is contingent upon Pynchon establishing a narrative level between himself as a person and a narrator who is experimenting with forms and ideas.

[7] It is important to qualify this notion of a "failed" movement. I do not wish to imply that all sixties student activism failed. I disagree with that notion. As exemplified below with the quotation from Ralph Waldo Emerson, sixties student activism performed important work in balancing injustices in our society. I use the term "failed" simply to denote the failure of the violent wing of the student movement.

[8] While students at Cornell University, Thomas Pynchon and Kirkpatrick Sale collaborated on a musical titled *Minstral Island*. The manuscript for the musical is housed in the archives at the University of Texas.

[9] In *Against the Day*, a young Jess Traverse takes up arms against the Colorado National Guard at Ludlow.

[10] A further problem of violent resistance to Empire that *Vineland* does not explore, though it is important to acknowledge, is the impossibility of separating violent means from violent ends. Pynchon saves this exploration for *Against the Day*. Reading the two novels as a conversation with each other regarding methods of resistance allows for a more complete view of Pynchon's arguments. However, for the purpose of this essay, that exploration is premature.

[11] The gender implications of Pynchon situating his site of resistance with a sisterhood should not be ignored. However, a deeper analysis of this would only serve to mirror the main arguments presented by Molly Hite in "Feminist Theory and the Politics of *Vineland*."

[12] To verify historical dates and occurrences, I have relied largely on Charles Mason's journal and Edwin Danson's book, *Drawing the Line*. I also consulted Louis C. Kleber's "The Mason-Dixon Line" and Charles Clerc's *Mason & Dixon & Pynchon*.

[13] Like Benjamin's storyteller, Cherrycoke "combine[s] the lore of faraway places, such as a much-traveled man brings home, with the lore of the past, as it best reveals itself to natives of the place" (85). Cherrycoke becomes the *postmodern* storyteller by rejecting the role Benjamin places onto the storyteller—that of someone giving counsel. In fact, one of the difficulties scholars have with *Mason & Dixon* is the lack of direct counsel, or the depth of ambiguity within the book. Also unlike Benjamin's storyteller, who disappears because of the rise of the novel's popularity, Cherrycoke self-reflexively embraces the novel and several of the various possibilities

the form affords. He even lets the fictional novel *The Ghastly Fop* tell his story for a couple of chapters.

[14] I am borrowing David Cowart's definition of the subjunctive: "the imagined as true" (344).

[15] Edwin Danson's *Drawing the Line* also mentions this incident in Dixon's life. According to Danson, at least the Dixon family believed the incident to be based in fact.

[16] By no means is Lewis alone in this interpretation. Brian Thill surveys several critics with whom Lewis's reading is in agreement.

[17] It is not clear which revolutionary. Pynchon writes the conversation as quick exchanges of dialog. Most statements do not feature dialog tags, so it is not always clear to the reader whom is speaking. I assume that Captain Volcanoe says this, but I cannot be certain of that assumption.

[18] Adam Lifshey, Tony Tanner, and Christy L. Burns, among others.

[19] See, for example, Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*, which argues that the notion of a self-regulating marketplace is an impossibility because it is dependent upon labor, land, and money acting as commodities, though labor, land, and money are by definition not commodities and never act as such. Polanyi additionally portrays the belief in this self-regulating marketplace as an almost spiritual faith.

[20] My source for Channing's call for a uniquely American literature as well as much of the discussion of *Hobomok* is Carolyn L. Karcher's *The First Woman in the Republic*.

[21] Though, I have to add, that I do not read Hobomok's disappearance at the end in this way.

[22] Or perhaps bisexual. Pynchon does not clarify.

[23] I use the term economic liberalism to describe an ideology based upon the belief that a self-regulating free market society can and should exist. While it may be a bit confusing because liberal and liberalism can often denote a political view drifting toward the Left in American society, I am not using the term liberal with that connotation in this essay. Many use the term capitalism to express economic liberalism. Because the term capitalism is so emotive and carries so many different connotations, I will attempt to avoid using it when I mean liberalism or neoliberalism. I use the specific term economic liberalism because much of this chapter relies upon Karl Polanyi's analysis of economic liberalism in his book *The Great Transformation*. A more familiar term that denotes essentially the same concept would be "classical liberalism," referring to the ideology propogated by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century economists like Adam Smith and David Ricardo.

[24] See my above chapter on *Mason & Dixon*.

[25] Polanyi uses this term: "[L]eaving the fate of soil and people to the market would be tantamount to annihilating them" (137).

[26] The Hume and Severs essays I cite here, among others.

[27] As with many of Pynchon's novels, a strong narrative voice permeates *Against the Day*, at times addressing the reader directly and demonstrating a unique personality to the point where the narrator becomes a character in the novel. The narrator in *Against the*

Day is more self-reflexively present than some previous narrative voices in Pynchon. Particularly in the Chums of Chance chapters, the narrator mimics the narrative voice of Tom Swift-style boys'-adventure novels. At times, he even refers to himself in the first person and comments on his series. The narrative voice expands beyond those sections. During one awkward scene between the character Reef Traverse and a dog, the narrator addresses his audience directly, stating, "Reader, she [the dog] bit him" (666). While the views expressed by the narrator mirror many views expressed by Pynchon in Pynchon's essays (specifically, "Is It Okay To Be a Luddite?" and "A Journey into the Mind of Watts"), it is probably a mistake to conflate the narrative voice with Pynchon himself. Thus, I will treat any intrusions into the narration as narrative intrusions and not authorial ones.

[28] See, specifically, Jeffrey Severs " 'The abstractions she was instructed to embody': Women, Capitalism, and Artistic Representation in *Against the Day*," in which Severs traces Dally Rideout's journey through Hell and toward some form of autonomy.

[29] To borrow Linda Hutcheon's term.

[30] This assumes, of course, that the media disproportionately represents the views of the wealthy. This is certainly the case in the early twenty-first century, when a handful of extremely wealthy corporations control more than ninety percent of the media in the United States. It was likely the case in Colorado in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This is evidenced by a letter that Howard Zinn unearthed while researching the Ludlow Massacre of 1914. In the letter, a vice president of Colorado Fuel and Iron—John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s corporation and the coal company that was

actively waging war against its workers—assures Rockefeller, "Another mighty power has been rounded up on behalf of the operators by the getting together of fourteen of the editors of the most important newspapers in the state" ("The Ludlow Massacre," 192). Rockefeller's VP in Colorado was not unjustified in believing that he had the press in his pocket. Zinn's survey of newspapers as far away from Colorado as *The New York Times* demonstrates that the press had almost no sympathy for the strikers.

[31] Zinn demonstrates that the majority of the "National Guardsmen" involved in the Ludlow battles were not, strictly speaking, National Guardsmen but employees of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency and various other strongmen hired by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s Colorado Fuel and Iron and enlisted in the service of the National Guard solely for the purpose of subjugating the striking miners.

[32] Perhaps, I would be more accurate to claim that it lives in three place, it trilocates, so to speak, because Zinn's essay was written in and addressing 1970. I choose not to make that detailed of a distinction, mostly because I do not see the relevance in doing so.

[33] See McLauglin, Lacayo, Flusfeder, Menand, Kirn, and Sheffield, among others.

[34] See N. Katherine Hayles's essay "'Who Was Saved?': Families, Snitches, and Recuperation in Pynchon's *Vineland.*"

[35] Indeed, the film directly adapts scenes at times. This is most prominent in the scene in which Marlowe (in *The Long Goodbye*) and the Dude (in *The Big Lebowski*) are interrogated by the Malibu sheriff. In both the novel and film, the sheriff becomes so frustrated with his prisoner that he throws a coffee mug him.

[36] The Dude does not respond initially. Midway through the Big Lebowski's discussion of what makes a man, the Dude supplies the smart aleck rejoinder, "That and a pair of testicles."

[37] Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that Crocker Fenway agrees, in principle, with Mickey's belief that land ownership is dishonest. Crocker tells Doc, "People like you lose all claim to respect the first time they pay anybody rent" (346), which suggests that Crocker understands that the ownership of land is dubious as best and he cannot respect anyone whose actions would suggest a complicity in this dubious system.

[38] Trillium is another non-paying client. However, Doc's contribution to the common does not really help Trillium.

While she is reunited with her lover, he beats her to the point of hospitalization.

[39] The proper traditional pronunciation of the first syllable of 'ukulele sounds like "oo." The apostrophe preceding the first "u" signifies that traditional pronunciation, phonetically "oo-koo-lay-lay." When using that pronunciation, it is an 'ukulele. A more common and colloquial pronunciation adds a phonetic "y" to the first syllable, making it sound like "you" or "you-koo-lay-lay." When using the colloquial pronunciation, it is a ukulele. While writing this chapter, I use the traditional pronunciation. When citing others, I use whichever pronunciation the author used.

[40] According to King and Tranquada, the term machete is used in both Portuguese and English-language accounts.

[41] The song concludes with the birth of the narrator's son. The narrator sings, "I knew it was a boy for he had a ukulele in his hand."

[42] The full scale is G A B C D E F#. G is the first note in the scale, A the second, etc. Thus, the G would be first, B the third, and D the fifth.

Works Cited

Altman, Robert, dir. *The Long Goodbye*. United Artists, 1973. DVD.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. New York: Shocken, 1969. Print.

Benton, Graham. "Daydreams and Dynamite: Anarchist Strategies of Resistance and Paths for Transformation in *Against the Day*." *Pynchon's* Against the Day*: A Corrupted Pilgrim's Guide*. Eds. Jeffrey Severs and Christopher Leise. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2011. 191-213. Print.

Bleecker, Ann Eliza. "The History of Maria Kittle." *Women's Early American Historical Narratives*. Ed. Sharon M. Harris. New York: Penguin, 2003.

Boler, Megan. *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Brown, Wendy. "Neo-Liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy." *Theory & Event* 7.1 (2003): n. pag. Web. 5 May 2011.

Burns, Christy L. "Postmodern Historiography: Politics and Parallactic Method in Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*." *Postmodern Culture: An Electronic Journal of Interdisciplinary Criticism* (14:1), 2003. *Project Muse*. Web. 9 June 2010.

Carswell, Sean. "Destroying Mothers: The Emma Goldman Papers Project." *Clamor*. Mar./Apr. 2003: 50-3. Print.

Chandler, Raymond. *The Long Goodbye*. 1953. New York: Vintage, 1992. Print.

———. *The Simple Art of Murder*. 1950. New York: Vintage, 1988. Print.

Child, Lydia Maria. *Hobomok and Other Writings on Indians.* 1824. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1986. Print.

Clerc, Charles. *Mason & Dixon & Pynchon.* University Press of America, 2000. Print.

Coen, Joel, dir. *The Big Lebowski*. Prod. Ethan Coen. Universal Studios, 1998. DVD.

Cowart, David. "Attenuated Postmodernism: Pynchon's *Vineland.*" Greene 3-13. Print.

———. "The Luddite Vision: *Mason & Dixon*." *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography* (71:2), 1999 June, 341-63. *Project Muse*. Web. 9 June 2010.

Cunningham, David. *There's Something Happening Here: The New Left, the Klan, and FBI Counterintelligence*. Berkeley, U of California P, 2004. Print.

Danson, Edwin. *Drawing the Line: How Mason and Dixon Surveyed the Most Famous Border in America.* Wiley, 2000. Print.

Downing, David B. "World Bank University: The War on Terror and the Battles for the Global Commons." Author's private collection, ms.

Ebert, Teresa L. *The Task of Cultural Critique*. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2009. Print.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature and Selected Essays.* 1836. Ed. Larzer Ziff. New York, Penguin: 1982. Print.

Flusfeder, David. "Chandler in Flares." *New Statesman* 3 Aug. 2009:42-3. Print.

Formby, George. *George Formby: England's Famed Clown Prince of Song*. JSP, 2004. CD

Foxx, Redd. *In a Nutshell*. King, 1975. Record.

Franklin, Benjamin. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. 1784. New York: Penguin, 2003. Print.

Goldman, Emma. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. 1917. New York: Dover, 1969. Print. "Anarchism"

Greene, Geoffrey. *The Vineland Papers: Critical Takes on Pynchon's Novel*. Elmwood, IL: The Dalkey Archive Press, 1994. Print.

Hall, Oakley. *Warlock.* 1958. New York: New York Review of Books, 2006. Print.

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2009. Print.

———. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2001. Print.

———. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Print.

———. "The Fight for 'Real Democracy' at the Heart of Occupy Wall Street." *Foreign Affairs.* Foreign Affairs, 11 Oct. 2011. Web. 26 Jan. 2012.

Harvey, David, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri. "Commonwealth: An Exchange." *Artforum* 48:3 (Nov 2009): 210-21. *Korotonomedya*. Web. 14 June 2010.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.

Hayles, N. Katherine. "'Who Was Saved?': Families, Snitches, and Recuperation in Pynchon's *Vineland.*" Greene 14-30. Print.

Heller, Joseph. *Catch 22.* 1961. New York: Dell, 1990. Print.

Hite, Molly. "Feminist Theory and the Politics of *Vineland.*" Greene 135-153. Print.

Hughlett, Mason A. ed. *The Journal of Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon*. American Philosophical Society, 1969. Print.

Hume, Katherine. "The Religious and Political Vision of Pynchon's *Against the Day*." *Philological Quarterly* 86.1/2 (2007): 163-187. Print.

Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge, 1989. Print.

Ickstadt, Heinz. “Setting Sail Against the Day: The Narrative World of Thomas Pynchon.” *Against the Grain: Reading Pynchon’s Counternarratives*. Ed. Sascha Pöhlmann. Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V., 2010. Print.

Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1991. Print.

———. “The Synoptic Chandler.” *Shades of Noir: A Reader*. Ed. Joan Copjec. New York: Verso, 1993. 33-56. Print.

Jhally, Sut, dir. *Advertising & the End of the World*. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 1998. DVD.

Kamine, Mark. “Pynchon Up Close.” *The New Leader* May/June-July/Aug 2009: 29-30. Print.

Karcher, Carolyn L. *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994. Print.

King, John, and Jim Tranquada. “A New History of the Origins and Development of the ‘Ukulele, 1838-1915.” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 37 (2003): 1-32. Print.

Kirn, Walter. “Drugs to Do, Cases to Solve.” *New York Times Book Review* 23 Aug. 2009: 9. Print.

Kleber, Louis. “The Mason Dixon Line.” *History Today* 18.2 (1968): 117-23. Print.

Lacayo, Richard. “Magical Mystery Tour.” *Time* 17 Aug. 2009: 60. Print.

Lasson, Sally Ann. “Duke of Uke: Why Is One of London’s Quaintest Ukulele Shops Facing Closure?” *Independent.co.uk*. The Independent, 9 July 2011. Web. 19 July 2011.

LeClair, Tom. “For a Good Time, Read Tom.” *American Book Review* Mar./Apr. 2010: 25. Print.

Lewis, Barry. “Teaching Pynchon’s *Mason & Dixon*.” *Explicator* (67:3), 2009 Spring, 154-157. Print.

Lifshey, Adam. “Bordering the Subjunctive in Thomas Pynchon’s Mason & Dixon” *Journal x: A Journal in Culture and Criticism* (9:1), 2004 Autumn, 1-15. Print.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. 1979. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984. Print.

Mattesisich, Stefan. *Lines of Flight: Discursive Time and Countercultural Desire in the Work of Thomas Pynchon*. Duke UP. 2002. Print.

McHale, Brain. “Genre as History: Pynchon’s Genre Poaching.” *Pynchon’s* Against the Day*: A Corrupted Pilgrim’s Guide*. Eds. Jeffrey Severs and Christopher Leise. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2011. 15-28. Print.

———. *Constructing Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge, 1993. Print.

McLaughlin, Robert L. “Book Review.” *Review of Contemporary Fiction* Annual No. 3: 163-4. Print.

Menand, Louis. “Soft-Boiled.” *New Yorker*, (85.23), 2009: 74-75. Print.

Moraru, Christian. *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2001. Print.

Olster, Stacey. “The Way We Were(n’t): Origins and Empire in Thomas Pynchon’s *Mason & Dixon.*” *American Fiction of the 1990s: Reflections of History and Culture*. Ed. Jay Prosser. London: Routledge, 2008. 107-199. Print.

Palmeri, Frank. “General Wolfe and the Weavers: Re-envisioning History in Pynchon’s *Mason & Dixon.*” *The Multiple Worlds of Pynchon’s* Mason & Dixon. Ed. Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005. 185-198. Print.

Pöhlmann, Sascha. “Introduction: The Complex Text.” *Against the Grain: Reading Pynchon’s Counternarratives*. Ed. Sascha Pöhlmann. Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V., 2010. Print.

Polanyi, Karl. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. 1944. Boston: Beacon, 2001. Print.

“Pono Frequently Asked Questions.” *Koolauukulele.com.* Ko’olau Guitar and Ukulele Company, n.d. Web 19 July 2011.

Pynchon, Thomas. “A Journey into the Mind of Watts.” *The New York Times Magazine*, 12 June 1966, pp. 34-35, 78, 80-82, 84. Print.

———. *Against the Day*. New York: Penguin, 2006. Print.

———. *Crying of Lot 49.* 1966. New York: Harper, 2006. Print.

———. *Gravity’s Rainbow.* 1973. New York: Viking, 1987. Print.

———. *Inherent Vice.* New York: Penguin, 2009. Print.

———. “Is It Okay To Be a Luddite?” *New York Times*. Oct 28, 1984. p. BR1. Print.

———. *Mason & Dixon.* New York, NY: Holt, 1997. Print.

———. “Mortality and Mercy in Vienna.” *Epoch*. Spring 1959, Vol IX, No. 4. Print.

———. “Nearer My Couch to Thee.” *New York Times.* Jun 6, 1993. p. BR3. Print.

———. *Slow Learner*. New York: Holt, 1984. Print.

———. “The Heart’s Eternal Vow” *New York Times.* Apr 10, 1988. Print.

———. *V.* 1964. New York: Harper, 1999. Print.

———. *Vineland.* 1991. New York: Penguin, 1997. Print.

Robertson, William Preston. *The Big Lebowski: The Making of the Coen Brothers Film.* New York: Norton, 1998. Print.

Rushdie, Salman. "Still Crazy After All These Years." *New York Times*. Jan. 14, 1990. p. BR1, 36-7. Print.

Sale, Kirkpatrick. *SDS*. New York: Random House, 1973. Print.

Sedgwick, Catherine Maria. *Hope Leslie, or, Early Times in the Massachusetts*. 1827. New York: Penguin, 1998.

Severs, Jeffrey. " 'The abstractions she was instructed to embody': Women, Capitalism, and Artistic Representation in *Against the Day*." *Pynchon's* Against the Day*: A Corrupted Pilgrim's Guide*. Eds. Jeffrey Severs and Christopher Leise. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2011. 215-238. Print.

Sheffield, Rob. "The Bigger Lebowski." *Rolling Stone* 6 Aug. 2009: 38-39. Print.

Siegel, Jules. "Who Is Thomas Pynchon and Why Did He Take Off with My Wife?" *Playboy* Mar. 1977: 97, 122, 168-70, 172, 174. Print.

Sisario, Ben. "Ukulele Crazy." *New York Times.* New York Times, 17 Apr. 2011. Web. 19 July 2011.

Smith, Shawn. *Pynchon and History: Metahistorical Rhetoric and Postmodern Narrative Form in the Novels of Thomas Pynchon.* Routledge, 2005. Print.

Solomon, Eric. "Argument by Anachronism: The Presence of the 1930s in *Vineland.*" Greene 161-6. Print.

Sonics, The. "Skinny Minnie." Rec. 1966. *Boom*. Norton, 1999. CD.

Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back. Dir. George Lucas. Perf. Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, and Carrie Fisher. Lucasfilm, 1980. Film.

Sterne, Laurence. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. 1759. Ed. Melvin New, et al. New York: Penguin, 2003. Print.

Swift, Jonathan. *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*. 1704. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Print.

T. Coraghessan, Boyle. "The Great Divide." *New York Times Book Review* (1997): 9. *Academic Search Premier*. EBSCO. Web. 1 June 2011.

Tanner, Tony. *The American Mystery: American Literature from Emerson to DeLillo*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.

The Yes Men. Dir. Chris Smith. Los Angeles: MGM Home Entertainment, 2005. DVD.

Thill, Brian. "The Sweetness of Immorality: *Mason & Dixon* and the American Sins of Consumption." *The Multiple Worlds of Pynchon's* Mason & Dixon. Ed. Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005. 49-75. Print.

Thoreen, David. "The Fourth Amendment and Other Modern Inconveniences: Undeclared War, Organized Labor, and the Abrogation of Civil Rights in *Vineland*." *Thomas Pynchon: Reading from the Margins*. Ed. Niran Abbas. Madison, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson UP, 2003. Print.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse 5*. 1969. New York: Dial, 2005. Print.

Weisenburger, Steven. *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion: Sources and Contexts for Pynchon's Novel*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1988. Print.

Williams, Raymond. "Advertising: The Magic System." *Cultural Studies Reader*. Ed. Simon During. New York: Routledge, 1999. 410-23. Print.

Wilson, Rob. “On the Pacific Edge of Catastrophe, or Redemption: California Dreaming in Thomas Pynchon’s *Inherent Vice*.” *boundary 2* 37.2 (2010): 217-225. Print.

Witzling, David. “The Sensibility of Postmodern Whiteness in *V.*, or Thomas Pynchon’s Identity Problem.” *Contemporary Literature* 47.3 (2006):381-414. Print.

Zinn, Howard. *A People’s History of the United States, 1492-Present: Revised and Updated.* New York: Harper Perennial, 1995. Print.

———. “The Ludlow Massacre.” *The Zinn Reader*. Ed. Howard Zinn. New York: Seven Stories, 1997. Print.