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Principles Of Thomas Pynchon's Literary Realities

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PRINCIPLES OF THOMAS PYNCHON'S LITERARY REALITIES

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PRINCIPALS OF THOMAS PYNCHON'S LITERARY REALITIES

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT:

Thomas Pynchon's literature is unique in subject and style. Postmodern by definition, Pynchon illustrates physics as a societal metaphor; Guy Debord's text *The Society of the Spectacle* suggests that these societal, literary, metaphors constitute and/or lead to a Spectacle. Through the analysis of an unpublished text: *Minstrel Island*, an early written short story: "Entropy," and a short novel: *The Crying of Lot 49* the reader is capable of seeing a developing theme of physics as metaphor constituting multiple Spectacles. The narrative devices offered by Thomas Pynchon become Spectacular in nature and reflect the characteristics and environment of the tumultuous 1960s American culture. Although, Pynchon does not make any comment about the 60s counter-culture which surrounded him, elements of that time are evident and, within socio-historical contexts, influence the subject matter of the text. The thread which runs through all three texts uniquely defines Pynchon's literature as Postmodern with the parameters of natural law—using Entropy, the heteroglossic narratives become Spectacle. This thread also explores the possibility of "The Condition of the More Probable" and a Postmodern heat-death. For the characters of Pynchon's texts, as well for the reader, those who experience a metaphorical heat-death, those characters and individuals, then, experience a literary Postmodern condition.

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FOREWORD:

The motif of a positive Postmodern text had become evident upon a visit to the Harry Ransom Center (HRC.) There, among the world's greatest manuscripts from the greatest minds to have ever existed, at the special collections center exists a file of Thomas Pynchon's manuscripts, handwritten and available. After several days of studying Pynchon's handwriting and reading the entire collection HRC holds, his overriding motif has become clear although *Minstrel Island* (crucial textual evidence which remains unpublished) is a play, the Postmodern narrative gives way to an enlightened discovery of a unitary thread which runs through all texts, early or not -- Entropy. Entropy gives way to *enuui* after the reader finishes a Pynchon text; however, through the application of contemporary Postmodern theory it is evident that the physical nature and momentum of entropy leads the way to a redemption of individuality and character and ultimately reveals what is human.

Visiting the Harry Ransom Center and discovering the unpublished play does prove for the necessity for maintaining and preserving archives of all types of manuscripts. The *key* to this thesis was stacked away in a dark archive, only handled and have been viewed by five previous people, it is important to study the classics, but it is equally as important to read the author's handwriting, notations, and edited manuscripts in order to better understand the psychopathy of the author. In order to diversify the analysis of Thomas Pynchon's works it would be appropriate to provide the play, *Minstrel Island* to show the depth of the great American author's capacities. The rare text also symbolizes the necessity to preserve the manuscripts of other authors for a more in depth analysis of their works. Although, the rare texts is a utility and a

significant agent in the analysis of Thomas Pynchon's works there is a necessity to critically concentrate upon its efforts. The necessity of constructive critical analysis necessitates the availability for texts that would greatly aid in the preservation and creation of a new American literary culture.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It was a desire so immoderate ... nothing this somewhat unworldly go-between had ever witnesses before, nothing many people in the world had, the desire for a single weapon able to annihilate the world

T. Pynchon

I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive.

H. Miller

Critics and readers, alike, have struggled with Thomas Pynchon's literature, and the texts do not provide for an easy read. Thomas Pynchon, throughout his literary career, has carried out a vocation in the Postmodern genre, and, by virtue of his Postmodern literary tendencies his texts seem to be esoteric to the point where the texts are difficult to read (some novels ranging over a thousand pages.) For the purposes of this analysis the early short works of Thomas Pynchon will be discussed in order to establish the foundation for Thomas Pynchon's later literary tomes. This analysis of the three Pynchon texts, "Entropy," *Minstrel Island*, and *The Crying of Lot 49*, discussed in this paper will reveal positive literary tropes which do not typically stereotype that which may be considered Postmodernism. Throughout these texts, there is an evident evolution of his particular Postmodern theory, which is unique and particular to Thomas Pynchon as an author.

What may be considered as real within Thomas Pynchon's literature may not be real, rather misleading to both the characters and the readers. That which makes the realities of his literature are based on Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*, and physical metaphors which are imbedded within Pynchon's literature. The objective and intention of Pynchon's literature is to explore empiricism and social theory in fiction;

the result of such an experiment contributes to the greater cannon of American literature. By implementing empirical metaphors and social theory, Pynchon is capable of conveying his fictional realities which epitomize Postmodernism and the socio-historical context of the society which the author was surrounded by while he wrote.

The purpose of pursuing Thomas Pynchon's earlier works as literature is that he reflects the American culture in a tumultuous point in its history. He mirrors positive aspects of a chaotic Postmodern, almost apocalyptic narrative, also reflecting the attitudes and behaviors of those who lived through America in the 1960s. Nevertheless, Pynchon's early prose transcends the 1960s with a philosophy contrived from that of Natural Law and Science that provides parameters for each of the texts discussed.

The prosperity of literature is founded on the backbone of literary criticism. From Richard Wright's essays pertaining to racial tolerance to Kathy Acker's essays pertaining to sexuality, literature has always been the form for expression of radical, or not commonly through, perspectives of thought across the world. Pynchon is no different, he too is made of the same ilk other historical authors have been composed of; he does not write traditional American prose, yet he incorporates the traditional American into his prose.

Pynchon began to write in a tumultuous time in American history, and, when society looked for the "why" behind the Vietnam War and the Beat-Hippie counter-culture, there were many justifications for what is considered by some to be a senseless conflict, both war and counter-cultures. Pynchon creates, through his fiction, the reflection of the radicalism which surrounded the environment of the 60s; his fiction is

not a commentary on the society of the times, rather a reflection of them, left up to the interpretation of the reader. The 1960s offers fodder for Pynchon's Postmodernist narration; in this environment, Pynchon is capable of using society to fit his own unique narrative design. The environment which surrounded each of Pynchon's characters, written in reflection of the 1960s, the texts which are to be analyzed are unique to the 1960s counter-culture in America; the settings Pynchon chooses to use are an apocalyptic carnival, a lease-ending party, and elements of American culture.

Many critics have addressed Pynchon's works in many different interpretations; throughout this text, for the sake of analysis, there will be a need to survey several of these theorists in order to understand the parameters by which we understand Pynchon as Postmodern and Pynchon's literature itself. Thomas Pynchon's short works "Entropy", *Minstrel Island*, and *The Crying of Lot 49*, with the contribution to Postmodern theory, can be applied and perceived through one critical theory outlined in Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*. Through this lens, the Spectacleⁱ provides a focus into the chaotic, heteroglossic, prose of Pynchon. Pynchon's use of entropy as a consistent literary metaphor adds to his narrative flow; this takes place in a socio-historical context of the 1960s. By narrative structure, Pynchon's works are significantly political, Postmodern. According to scholar Jeffrey Ebbesen the

Reconfiguration of the literary social sphere constitutes the stage for [Postmodern] conflict insofar as it defines Postmodern literature largely according to formal experimentation, radical flexibility, and other related narrative techniques of content. These features reflect poststructuralisms radical interpretation of 'authorship,' text, and 'reader'. This refigurations follows from

the epistemological—linguistic premises noted above and results, again, in an apouetic rejection of truth and grounded politics (3)

Postmodern works of literature emulate the political strife unique to the 1960s counter-culture. Postmodernism, according to the canonical theorist Jean Francois Lyotard, seems to occur around tumultuous points in a nation's culture: such as David Foster Wallace occurring around the first Gulf War, or Kurt Vonnegut occurring around the Vietnam conflict. Pynchon epitomizes these Postmodern conditions, and through Debord's Spectacle can the reader interpret a genre of prose which is commonly considered as confusing. As the Spectacle moves with autonomy, and concerning Postmodernism as an essence of reflection, Pynchon is capable of portraying a counter-culture—emulating through each character—without utterly investing in the counter movements. M.M. Bahktin, literary theorist, also contributes to the foundation of Postmodernism implored in Pynchon's literature. The multitude of characters, some novels ranging in the hundreds, offers Pynchon's readers counter-perspectives in a dialectical analysis; this narrative device is what Bahktin refers to as heteroglossiaⁱⁱ. Accordingly, Bahktin states that

For the writer of artistic prose ... the object reveals first of all precisely the socially heteroglot multiplicity of its names, definitions and value judgments. Instead of the virginal fullness and inexhaustibility of the object itself, the prose writer confronts a multitude of routes, roads and paths that have been laid down in the object by social consciousness ... For the prose writer, the object is a focal point for heteroglot voices among which his own voice must also sound; these voices

create the background necessary for his own voice, outside of which his artistic prose nuances cannot be perceived, and without which they 'do not sound' (278)

Indeed, it is this “heteroglot” which allows for Pynchon’s voice to be heard among the white noise of other characters, images, and sounds. Each text discussed embodies its own unique form of heteroglossia from “Entropy’s” use of diverse characters to *Minstrel Island’s* multiplicity within names and places. *The Crying of Lot 49* seems to be the culmination of Thomas Pynchon’s early heteroglossic applications, melding all of which Bahktin refers to as heteroglot, or multiplicity into a pinnacle Postmodern text.

Postmodernism (Kurt Vonnegut, Don DeLillo, and many others) represent a small faction of the Postmodern cannon; the representation of 1960s Postmodern literature is lacking, mostly, in direct criticism of the works. The reason behind the unexplored critique of Postmodernism is due to the theorizing of critics who keep blurring the lines between Modernism, Postmodernism, structuralism and Deconstructionist theory. A constant power struggle, under which society operates, provides for the proliferation of these Postmodern ideas. Even though Debord (associated with the Situationist) is referring to the Spectacle, he is referring to what Foucault might interpret as a “web of power”, also, further outlining the dialectic of social order in *The Order of Thing*.

Guy Debord’s “Spectacle” and Michel Foucault’s “Web of Power” are similar to what Pynchon effectively uses as the Entropic Spectacle. The Spectacle is self sustaining interpretations of what may be “real” relayed by signs and symbols; it is the belief

system which engages a character to his or her specific Spectacle. What is Truth becomes a relative truth; in “Truth and Power” Foucault remarks

The truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (1668)

What Foucault counts as true is a part of a Maas Spectacle significant to an individual. A culmination of what a character may find is true begins to constitute the reality of that character. Truth transfers to realities through a lexicological progression of meanings associated with signs and symbols, and those which may be simply ambiguous signifiers.

Foucault provides a framework which illuminates the use of signs in Thomas Pynchon's literature. Their function in Postmodern prose is not intended to be confusing, rather a pattern which manifests as an image in some form. Foucault

addresses the arrangement of signs into a type of lexicological order in the *Order of Things*, he writes:

Meaning cannot be anything more than the totality of the signs arranged in their progression; it will be given in the complete *table* of signs. But, on the other hand, the complete network of signs is linked together and articulated according to patterns proper to meaning the table of signs will be the *image* of things.

Through the meaning itself is entirely on the side of the sign, its functioning is entirely on the side of that which is signified (66)

Those which are signified are patterns of truth emerging as image; this becomes a part of a character, or a reader's, reality. It is the tendency of the human condition to make some semblance out of his or her set and setting; a series of rationalizations through the relevance of varying signs leading to the belief of some truth—this is what constitutes “the real” for a character. When reality is believed to be real, then the aspects of that reality are constituted of what Foucault may suggest and Debord signify for that individual, as real.

The heteroglossic nature, by which the Spectacle contributes, offers a possibility for empiricism, and mathematical formulas, as metaphorical devises. In order to understand reality, the human condition searches for some semblance of reality, as do the characters of Pynchon's literature. A social comment made by Pynchon's literature suggests a polarity of extreme poles, the protagonist on the primary textual quest walk a grey area and experience reality between these polar extremes.

Pynchon's literature encompasses the parameters of physical science (a justification of the world occurring around the characters) consisting of binaries, or polarities. In his short story "Entropy," Pynchon shows the reader the empirical implications of entropy as energy (not only Calorie); entropy as empiricism, is a metaphorical statement for the society reflected in the setting of Pynchon's text. A multitude of characters represent aspects of American culture culminating in one isolated area. Here, again, there is heteroglossia at work, contributing to culminating entropy, by including many different characters; these characters constitute energy or entities for which to apply the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The narrative progresses as such; however, the philosophy behind a paradox which alludes to the natural, organic, entropic flow of the narrative is a significant aspect within Pynchon's prose. The dialectic play between the empiricism and the texts themselves offers a positive light for humanity and the resilience of humanity, contra to the desperation, eunni, and apocalyptic setting and theme. Pynchon's works of literature exemplify attributes of both a Postmodern author and the human condition which exists in multitudes, all roads leading to Debord's Spectacle.

Political commentary in Postmodern theory and Postcolonial theory mesh in *Minstrel Island*, Pynchon's short unpublished play. What the British have coined as colonization, there is a "technological" colonization taking place within the play; British colonization has been a literary motif historically represented across several hundred years and colonization has a new contemporary application, excluding the British as colonizers and implementing technology, namely IBM, as the new colonizers. Colonial and Postcolonial theory offered extensively by Edward Said illuminates the play as a

work of art which mirrors British colonialism and the colonization of technology, where technology may not be welcome. From this work, the Spectacle is established as a narrative device and an appropriate perspective for which to view the play.

These aspects of Debord's Spectacle—involving media, technology, symbolism, and politics—are moved to the forefront of the reader's attention. Oedipa, the protagonist of *The Crying of Lot 49* and the reader walk about in what Jean Baudillard, social theorist who refers specifically to the works of Debord and the Spectacle in particular, refers to as grey matter, a blurred area between two poles. Thomas Pynchon uses these poles not as a moral compass for the action of a character, but a compass nonetheless for truth pertaining to the character. Although, not entirely ignorant, Oedipa, identifies patterns which seem to lead to some truth, as literary critic Thomas Schaub suggests what the reader is later to find out the search was for a red herring. This is the ambiguity which leaves the reader of Pynchon's literature befuddled—unable to decipher what may be real or not; this is what Baudillard refers to as the “murder of the real.” In the quest for the real and the true, Jaques Derrida, social and critical theorists who is responsible for the foundations and precipitations of theories constantly used within Postmodern literature in respect to “the real.” In *Aporias*, Derrida reveals the similar experience which Oedipa has:

It had to be a matter of [*il devait y aller du*] the nonpassage, paralyzing us in this separation in a way that is not necessarily negative: before a door, a threshold, a border, a line or simply the edge or the approach of the other as such. It should be a matter of [*devrait y aller du*] what, in sum, appears to block our way or to separate us in the very place where *it would no longer be possible*

to constitute a problem, a project, or a projection, that is, at the point where the very project or the problematic task becomes impossible and where we are exposed, absolutely without protection, without problem and without prosthesis, without possible substitution, singularly exposed in our absolute and absolutely naked uniqueness, that is to say, disarmed, delivered to the other, incapable even of sheltering ourselves behind what could still protect the interiority of a secret. There, in sum, in this place of aporia, *there is no longer any problem* (Derrida 12)

However, in respect to Oedipa's pursuit of truth, Derrida also remarks, "as soon as truth is limit or has limits, its own and assuming that it knows some limits as the expression goes, truth would be a certain relation to what terminates or determines it" (1-2). In the instance of truth, limitations of perception are narrowly focused, setting parameters which are finite. It is fiction which allows for the infinite, and gives the narration the possibility to be able to defy the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

What Oedipa finds, through entropic design and Spectacle, is possibility—the infinite—rather than desperation, or the finite. However, social structures, are allegorical to those self imposed social structures developing by the ideologies of the 1960s, provides dynamics, including heteroglossia, the possibility for optimism among the clouds of ones and zeroes. Edward Mendelson, a literary scholar whose dedication to the works of Thomas Pynchon have not only contributed to the criticism, but have edified the concepts from which Pynchon's literature may be discussed. The analysis of *The Crying of Lot 49* in contexts to communication theory, Mendelson comments:

(Pynchon always provides the possibility that the Trystero is ‘only’ Oedipa’s fantasy, or that the whole system is a hoax written into Inverarity’s will): ‘For it was not like walking among matrices of a great digital computer, the zeroes and ones twinned above (27)

This theory which is developed from the application of heteroglossia—not extending to humanity, or character, but information—venerates through energy by the characters of the narratives. Communication theory is always an aspect of Pynchon’s early fiction, however, *The Crying of Lot 49* has taken communication theory—much like energy—and applies it entropically. From this development of communication theory and the introduction of its application in *The Crying of Lot 49*, the Spectacle becomes a form of power, where the works of Foucault become appropriate. Foucault’s short essay “Truth and Power” and his text *The Order of Things* brings Pynchon’s texts to life, motivating the direction for the narrative and, ultimately, entropy as a narrative design itself.

Pynchon’s works are not empirical in the literal sense, but rather in a metaphorical sense; through literature, Pynchon is attempting to apply practical physics to the motion of prose. These physical, empirical, implications do not hinder, but rather help the focus among the milieu of characters. Society creates, or provides, the fodder to ideologies, radical to liberal, and the literature which reflects these social influences; the fiction lies in the assumption, or the vain attempt to isolate one system or another.

Critics who focus too much on a rhythmic interpretation of Thomas Pynchon are blind to the beauty of the quest for the experience of truth. In Schaub’s text *Pynchon: The Voice of Ambiguity*, he claims that ambiguity adds to the Postmodern chaos, or an overabundance of all and any sort of sign—convoluting the author’s characters and the

reader of that text. Notably, confusing texts are manifest by Pynchon: he brings to the reader the experience—may it be pleasant or disdainful of the ideologies pertaining to the human condition and in the socio-historical context of the 1960s. With incessant references to the counter-culture and politics—moving not in any particular direction—Thomas Pynchon not only reflects the ambience of the times, but puts the set and setting into a narrative itself (a bigger, metaphysical, picture). This type of “new omnipotence” can only, within the confines of the written word, be interpreted as an undependable narrator (not to be confused with any ontological system build upon “the first mover.”)

The author, by virtue of the Spectacle, does not play the role of God in the third person omniscient, rather Pynchon relies on certain parameters which seem to occur like a phenomena—Cultural Entropy leading to a narrative of “new omnipotence.” Where there was once a suspension of spirituality, ontology in specific, Pynchon dissolves these justifications for God into the base elements of existence, or physical law, not eliminating God, but establishing a type of *Deus Ex Machina*. According to entropy as a narrative device, the omniscience of the narrative comes with its own natural parameters, limitations of the physical world which the reader may relate. When faced with a God, or omnipotent author, humanity in literature is at a disadvantage; this gives Pynchon’s works a reputation for apocalyptic desolation. On the contrary, it is in spite of imposing societal and physical structures of environment that the human condition is starkly revealed to the reader. Again, ambiguity lies in the gambit of options from which the American culture has been taken; opportunity with the best of intentions in America dissolves into the dust of the American dream, due to entropy—an autonomous

Spectacle with the influence of persuasion. As the American citizen is socialized in the 1960s, that person brings with them the energy capable of manifesting entropic order, always with the potential of chaos, ultimately developing into a plastic reality—dissolving and the reproduction of art and life—an inevitable heat-deathⁱⁱⁱ.

The realities in Thomas Pynchon's literature are theories which are developmental, founding upon one another, as he introduces empiricism as metaphor. With each work, he builds upon one concept to another with a unique association with physics and the physical world. Each Pynchonesque character experiences these physical applications in one form or another; each character's realities are threads of existences and when viewed heteroglossically—with a multitude of realities—Pynchon's works form into what Debord refers to as Spectacle. The trajectory of each reality begins with an entropic design^{iv}—the tendency for each character to believe in what may be true, or move in the direction of “the More Probable” (energy gathering to produce and persuade the character to believe in what all the evidence seems to point to). The more energy which gathers (heteroglossia applied, oscillating realities causally colliding) a heat-death will occur. The gathering of energy devalues each reality as character's realities is homogenized and, in turn, hegemonized; each individual reality becomes fractured and devalued in the spatial proximity to other multiple realities offered within Pynchon's literature. A character which experiences a heat-death experiences it through the context of the society wherein that character resides. Through the ennui^{vi} and desolation of the Postmodern character, the character is torn down and exposed (a heat-death) resulting in the possibility for rebirth—the only way is up—from this “Postmodern condition.” The “Postmodern condition” is auxiliary and symptomatic of

the Spectacle. The heteroglossic culmination which manifests a cultural heat-death epitomizes Debord's Spectacle by creating realities which may or may not be real. In these Postmodern literatures the ambiguity of the real is associated and essential to an autonomous, all consuming, form which persuades the character and the reader to believe in the truth or the real of what is "More Probable."

There are few characters in Thomas Pynchon's literature which ride the border of what may or may not be real. These are the despotic characters who are torn between the polarity of two extremes: a perceived real, which may not necessarily be real, but for that character, it is a manner of coping with the overwhelming information provided by Postmodernism and the Spectacle therein. The characters of ambiguity, Baurdlliard's grey area, seek the "real" and falling victim to a heat-death sooner or later; they resist the onslaught of a heat-death, however, the characters persuaded to the condition of "the More Probable" are already engaged in a cultural heat-death, as cogs turning in the Spectacle's mechanisms, unaware of their attachment to anything real.

As these theories build upon one another, from the Second Law of Thermodynamics (entropy as application), to the introduction of a new metaphysical set of parameters, to communication theory applying to energy, and, alluding to a Foucaultian power structure, the prose of Thomas Pynchon develops within the significance of its tumultuous context. All of these theories are related one way or another to Debord's Spectacle. The environment surrounding these developing theories of criticism have developed as a result of social and political unrest; the new omniscience Pynchon implores is evidence enough that he and other authors were breaking through the conventional structure of the American novel. From Vonnegut to

Pynchon, the environment, society, and country has consistently changed; through Postmodernism and the Spectacle, Pynchon attempts to convey America where perception was not just political, but intersubjective.

The Postmodern character is prescribed to the role of the other by virtue of ambiguity, Aubade from “Entropy” and Oedipa from *The Crying of Lot 49*, illustrate the alienation of the Postmodern flood of information. There are various imperative characters (only significant to the plot when these characters entropically cross paths), and the auxiliary characters are isolated from their identity; in Pynchon’s literature each character has a cultural and spiritual quest which is entropically driven. The Postmodern character is ostracized from their own community; the counter-culture seed is planted and is likened to the Postmodern character. A Maas Diaspora of disinherited –lost –flower children and freaks alike, migrated across the nation in search of their subjective dreams: a right to live and practice, what have you, without prejudice. In the effort to suppress the counter-culture emerging in America, the literature pertaining to this movement in United States history has become scarce.

Despite the difficulties of the 1960s Postmodern author, Thomas Pynchon continues to produce books, novels, which incorporate further metaphorical, mathematical, formulaic applications, constantly redefining the parameters of the conventional Postmodern novel. As Postmodernism includes the metaphysical, Pynchon sets the parameters through natural law (namely physics); Postmodernism, as a genre, is redefined by Pynchon by incorporating his knowledge of technology and his passion for writing. Some might consider this type of association interdisciplinarily; and, it is. However, interdisciplinarity barely scratches the surface of the intellectual depth

involved in the symbolism and metaphors Pynchon heteroglossically applies in his works. Schaub exclaims that Thomas Pynchon's works are cerebral due to the ambiguity of each character, no matter the situation. In the Foucaultian web of power, no character is minuscule, nor do they have a cause and effect; however, the characters are key as uniquely individual, with their own freak, which sets the entropic narrative in motion. As stated before, all these theories provide foundations for one another, with the exception of the "new omniscience," and fosters the empirical development in the socio-historical contexts of the 1960s seeming like a natural, organic, progression of natural law fictionalized and fueled by the energy of the human condition.

1.1 Pynchon's Narratology:

A principal concern in the structure of Pynchon's literature is entropy; When entropy is applied, molecules gather in one chamber, between two isolated chambers, concentrating more energy in the occupied system as opposed to the unoccupied system. These molecules are literarily referred to by Thomas Pynchon as elements of what characters believe what constitutes what is real; it is what is real that drives the actions of the characters they move toward the condition of their More Probable. Entropy, metaphorically, is the accumulation of energy moving one character or one character's beliefs to become actualized within the context of what is real within a system; however, there are several factors which contribute to the application of entropy as a narrative device. First of all, there needs to be societal structures which function, primarily, as closed systems which are subject to analysis and/or interpretation. These societal structures are unique to the time period in which Postmodernism and the literature of Thomas Pynchon exists, including the political unrest under which America was

undergoing in the 1960s: suffrage, civil rights, political radicalism, religious enlightenment, western religious enlightenment, rock and roll, folk, the war in Vietnam, and others such factors which contributed to the rise of a “counter” culture. The counter-culture is a direct reaction to these political situations; it also influenced a vast amount of literature, including the works of Thomas Pynchon. Early works such as “Entropy” and *The Crying of Lot 49* illustrate the polarity of the radical idealisms floating about the 1960s counter-culture.

A motif, commonly employed in Pynchon’s work, is a technique which M. M. Bakhtin identifies as heteroglossia:

The linguistic center of verbal-ideological life of the nation and the epoch, but was a heteroglossia consciously opposed to this literary language. It is parodic, and aimed sharply and polemically against the official languages of its given time [the language of counter-culture] it is heteroglossia that had been dialogized
(273)

The way in which Pynchon applies this method (heteroglossia) is through a flooding of characters, images, and sensations. Thomas Pynchon’s short story “Entropy” offers a setting which heteroglossia may proliferate. Since the setting is a lease-ending party, going on three days now, the possibility of multiplicity of characters is not only probable, but effective to the plot. Heteroglossia contributes to the plot by introducing a motley array of characters, ranging from the stoned to the military. As literature seems to reflect the ideologies and essences of the socio-historical context in which they are written, Pynchon’s short story “Entropy” stands as a reflection of the 1960s counter-

culture. The characters first introduced in the story, five people in just the first paragraph, sit around listening to records, drinking champagne, smoking “funny-looking cigarettes,” and taking Benzedrine pills, which was all very common activity in what mythically has defined the counter-culture.

Slightly deconstructing the first paragraph of “Entropy”—establishing setting in correlation to socio-historical contexts—will enlighten the reader to view Pynchon’s literature as Postmodern and a product of the counter-culture. The piece was written in 1960, published in the *Kenyon Review* and illustrated much of what was to culminate and be publicized, broadcasted nationally over many media, peaking in the summer of love in 1968, and dwindling with the deaths of cultural icons pertinent to the survival of this counter-culture (which may have been too much for a society to bear). The “beautiful” people which epitomize the counter-culture were the “other;” they were a type of lost generation. Pynchon opens the short story with a quote from Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer*; Literary critic Thomas Schaub writes:

‘Entropy’ begins with a quotation often cited as evidence of Pynchon’s blackness [...] but these words from Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* are followed a few sentences later by this paradox: ‘I have no money, no resources, no hopes. I am the happiest man alive’ the fact of decline and eventual death is hardly arguable, but the human response to this fact is that issue in both Miller and Pynchon, it is key to Pynchon’s writing, for nothing less that the relation between what we call ‘live’ and larger process of which it is a part (Schaub 5-6)

Schaub offers readers insight into the larger process by the heteroglossic nature of Pynchon's narratives; by referring to a larger process at work, Schaub is referring to an empirical mode which provides parameters for Pynchon's characters and the plot. This empirical methodology, by which Pynchon uses heteroglossia, drives a metaphorical heat-engine which stands as the parameters of the reality of his fiction. Each character Pynchon introduces into the story offers its own set of parameters; each character, as an entity, reacts differently to one another depending on the character and the circumstance the character finds itself. With this in mind, Pynchon also adds the empirical parameters of entropy; by using the lease party to create a closed system, Pynchon sets in motion, narratively, entropy as design. It is necessary, in order for entropy, under the Second Law of Thermodynamics, to occur, that a closed system must be established before entropy may take place. The party acts as a good metaphor for entropy; however, it is the characters which provide the energy which drives this metaphorical heat-engine.

Entropy, as a narrative design, offers a grim perspective of Postmodernism and the ideologies illustrated in those times. As dismal as entropy may naturally occur, creating what Callisto refers to as a cultural heat-death, the reality of Pynchon's fiction may be misinterpreted as apocalyptic. By virtue of using Henry Miller, and excluding the next lines of the quote, he chooses to use the human condition as not destitute, but enlightened to the effect that one has the capacity to be and do anything; this happens to be the myth of the American Dream. The American Dream is a culmination of what the character believes is real; this happens through a gathering of energy, entropically, leading a character to believe in what is possible for that character.

These aspects of what are real may not necessarily be *real* across all characters, however, how people construct reality through belief is through what Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle* discusses as Spectacle. These Spectacles are unique to each individual in the novel and are separate, intersubjective, threads of narration. A myth is perpetuated through multiple Spectacles feeding off what may be real, attainable dream.

This myth is an illusion which constitutes a convolution of what may be interpreted as real and attainable. Jean Baudrillard mentions in *The Vital Illusion* illuminations into entropy as a narrative device, Baudrillard states:

that is our real world, this restrictive materiality, obeys precise physical laws, is not enough to make it true, since this relative coherence is only the paradoxical consequence of this 'ontological' simplification. Besides, this matter without antimatter becomes the field of the whole process of entropy and involution, according to the Second Law of Thermodynamics (73)

By dissolving the real and convoluting what is true, reality, in this facet, is only illusion. A culmination of these illusions is what constitutes the Spectacle. Baudrillard also states:

If the Real is disappearing, it is not because of a lack of it—on the contrary, there is too much of it. It is the excess of reality that puts an end to reality just as the excess of information of communication puts an end to communication. We are no longer dealing with a problematic of lack and alienation, where the referent of the self and the dialectic between subject and object were always to be found, supporting strong and active philosophical positions, the last and most radical

analysis of this problematic was achieved by Guy Debord and the Situationists, with their concept of Spectacle and spectacular alienation. For Debord there was still a chance of disalienation, into a state of radical deprivation of the Other, or indeed of any otherness, alterity or negativity. We move into a world where everything that exists only as idea, dream, fantasy, utopia will be eradicated, because it will immediately be realized, operationalized. Nothing will survive as an idea or a concept (65-66)

The significance of Baudrillard's criticism of Debord is that the Spectacle is exposed as an illusion of the real; Pynchon uses the illusion of the real in most of his literature. Baudrillard refers to this illusion as antimatter which exists between two polar extremes—a middle ground which is not defined and viewed in light of literature as the “other.” The best illustration of antimatter as a narrative device within closed systems of entropy is *The Crying of Lot 49*.

Ambiguity becomes the focus of the central character, Oedipa, as she chases clues of images; she is a character who does not fit in either polar realities which Pynchon offers. Most of the characters introduced into the novel ranges from one radical extreme to another. For the most part, Oedipa is kept in the dark by the Spectacle of Pierce Inverarity; it is only until his death that she is made privy to an alternate reality in which Inverarity has created. Oedipa, as a middle character, has its benefits in the contexts of Pynchon's short novel; these radical extremes constitute one entropic Spectacle. Due to the nature of entropy, physical law, the radical characters build throughout the novel becoming more radical, marginalizing Oedipa to another chamber within the isolated

system of society where she is alone to ponder not only the quest for the truth behind the Tristero, but for the quest of her own personal context within society.

However, Oedipa's ambiguity does aid in the Spectacle of the Tristero; she like other characters is chasing threads of images, slowly unspooling reality. As Baurillard states: it is the over culmination of what is real that shields any light on any truth. Thomas Pynchon reveals reality in no certain light, yet it is toward the more probable that the narrative moves to a reality which one begins to believe in.

Ambiguity begins to offer, through heteroglossia, perspectives to view the Spectacle. The trajectory (motion toward the "More Probable") of the characters are dependent on one Spectacle significant to that individual or character. It is through belief that one arrives at Spectacle; therefore, each individual and each character has his or her own Spectacle and perception of what may be real, their own story—the intersubjective. What is real to one individual may not necessarily apply to the Spectacle of another character; the narrative lines of the characters collide and cause the action of the novel. The more the characters collide, the bigger the Spectacle becomes, heteroglossically.

CHAPTER 2:

THOMAS PYNCHON AND THE SPECTACLE

So now, less than five years later, you can go up on a steep hill in Las Vegas and look West, and with the right kind of eyes you can almost see the high-water mark—that place where the way finally broke and rolled back.

H.S. Thompson

Collective humanity, a society of sort, frequently move toward “The Condition of the More Probable,” mentioned by Callisto of “Entropy” and in societies own interests

[C]ertain aspects of language (reflective of culture and literature) directly and unmediatedly express the semantic and expressive intentions of the author, others refract these intensions; the writer of prose does not meld completely with any of these words, but rather accents each of them in a particular way ... the author does not speak in a given language, but he speaks, as it were, *through* language, a language that has somehow more or less materialized, become objectivized, that he merely ventriloquates (Bakhtin 299)

The mimicking of language to suit the needs of an author or character, “becoming objectivized,” allows language, and literature to play a part in, and to become of, the Spectacle.

Movements occur, each movement is a construct developed by those who are party to that Movement, or “the More Probable,” which have the most influence in society. Thomas Pynchon’s literature epitomizes this phenomena of society changing with the flux of time and how each change is a movement toward the more probable result or answer; he achieves this by conveying modalities of society through various perceptions, or Spectacles—sometimes looking past the constructs of society and is

sometimes hegemonized into a societal construct –which, when manifest in Maas, produces a Spectacle.

Since a character's movement is a modality toward the more probable, the Spectacle moves without will and is “the autonomous movement of non-life,” movements within a society occur without a logical progression, and occur independent of individual will –social movements will inevitably happen(Debord 12). Societal modalities are perceived and conveyed through one Spectacle, or another; by analyzing some of Thomas Pynchon's first works: “Entropy,” *Minstrel Island*, an unpublished play, and *The Crying of Lot 49*, one is capable of interpreting the narrative structures, characters, plots, and settings as metaphors based on empirical theories.

Empiricism, as a literary motif, is well adapted and applied to a literary genre which is commonly over-looked – Postmodernism. Postmodernism, in short, according to Loyard “[Postmodernism] can no longer call this [Postmodern] development by the old name of progress” (Loyard 1614). A fair amount of Postmodern writing is the deconstruction of language, psycho-analytical thought, and culture; but, this is not to say that Postmodernism is destruction for destruction's sake, rather seeing the beauty in the act of destruction. Loyard goes on to say that “Postmodernity does not mean a process of coming back or flashing back, feeding back, but of ana-lyzing, ana-mnesing, of reflecting” (1615). In Pynchon's literature he employs meta-narratives which seem “to be taking place by itself, by an autonomous force, or motoricity” (1614). To attempt to empirically catalogue the movement of society as insanity, or chaos is due to the nature of society as chaotic; through using empirical concepts and formulae, the narrative

structure Thomas Pynchon provides in his three works help explain the development of certain empiricisms as metaphors for American society.

Although empiricism attempts to explain why society acts the way it does or why, the plot plays out the way it does, the milieu of people from various backgrounds represents 1960s counter-culture, who perceive reality only through the lens of their own intersubjective Spectacle. As Postmodernism conceives movement as a “motoricity,” there seems to be a mechanization of humanity – a marginalization of the individual. Society attempts to marginalize its citizens causing ennui, or disparity creating a Spectacle of disillusioned, delusional, characters.

The Spectacle is energy and an important aspect of Postmodern literary perception. Through the Spectacle, realities are born, and perceptions are altered to a dialectic between opposing perceptions of reality. Energy, within Thomas Pynchon’s literature, seems to be the context for the empirical narrative: whether the Laws of Physics are maintained or defied. In respect to the Laws of Physics, Pynchon respects the impact energy has on perceived realities, and offers other perceptions of realities creating a cosmopolitan discourse.

By virtue of Thomas Pynchon’s use of physics as a narrative device, and as metaphors for explaining the reality of his fictions, he is by definition interdisciplinary. Both his literary career and his prior occupations help reflect his own unique perspective of the world. Through the author’s personal experiences, he is capable of conveying societal movements of energy, not only in the United States, but across the

Atlantic during the Second World War; this is evident throughout the extensive works Thomas Pynchon has produced.

Despite the constant disillusion and confusion the aesthetic devise Pynchon explores brings to light the passivity of Postmodernism. This aesthetic is appropriately viewed through what theorist, Guy Debord, explains as the Spectacle. As “the Spectacle is an autonomous movement of non-life,” (12) the counter-culture, and the characters which constitute each Spectacle, is perceived as art. Although, due to consumer culture, this art—ensembles of America via *The Crying of Lot 49*'s Peirce Inverarity—are devalued to a capital status. Each aspect of America is quantified and sold at Lot 49. Material objects are not only the aesthetic in *The Crying of Lot 49*; there are levels of reality and capacity to manipulate that reality, metaphorically, which are Spectacles in their own right. The quest of Oedipa Maas is a road into several realities, or (counter) cultures: the social movement of the 1960s through her husband, the veiled symbolism of an underground society named the Trystero, and Oedipa's orthodox reality which she begins her journey in the beginning of the novel. Her observations and cunning allow her to pursue, and navigate through the various realities she encounters, the discrepancies in Inverarity's estate.

Postmodernism, in the works of Thomas Pynchon, reflects the disorder of the social environment of the 1960s and explores it through entropy as a narrative device, through the use of the Second law of Thermodynamics. Pynchon attempts to explore the chaos and/or disorder of a social system by using empirical formulae. In specific, Pynchon utilizes entropy in order to manipulate the Second law of Thermodynamics. By

virtue of using Physics, his works take on a new life through its interdisciplinary applications.

The Spectacle, outlined earlier by Baudillard as the over-culmination of information of the real, flooding the perceptions of the readers, Pynchon's literature draws a poltemic, a binary, associated with Communication Theory of the Postmodern Character. The realities of each of the characters in the texts provide, through heteroglossia, for a culture where the truth is indiscernible. Through the smoke screen of indecipherable information, the Spectacle shifts and changes, not only through character, but through time, through a character's perceived time. Pynchon plays with time often to represent entropy and the relativity of the physical world. For example the symbols and icons Oedipa chases throughout the short novel are three hundred year old clues to a questionably fictitious underground organization; in the short story the narrative exists in the blur of a party which, for the sake of the narrator, seems to have no beginning or end. And the play attempts to meld traditions of a previous generation with the technologies of a modern day world and an action which can only exist and be produced by the pen of Pynchon.

However, through American consumerism, the Spectacle becomes commercial; and by virtue of commerciality, culture becomes marginalized and shallow. In the Spectacle, all images and concepts are a form of reality, communication breaks down and the characters of the community become despondent due to their lack of mutual discourse. Debord writes:

Spectacular consumption preserves the old culture in congealed form, going so far as to recuperate and redefuse even its negative manifestations; in this way, the Spectacle's cultural sector gives overt expression to what the Spectacle is implicitly in its totality—*the communication of the incommunicable* (136)

The incommunicable is what makes literature a quest for the truth. Spectacle is nothing but illusion, creating a paradox, since the Spectacle is constituted of the real. It is contradictory to assume that all that is real is illusion; however, it is through the application of the real that reality is manipulated into a form of reality, which is illusion.

Characters in Pynchon's fiction become confused with what is real and what is illusion, when the two are related Spectacularly. Most characters consumed in the Spectacle, on one quest or another, are blinded to the real and seek illusion with the belief that what they seek is Truth. Debord goes on to say:

[structuralism's] fashion of studying the code of messages in itself is merely the product, and the acknowledgement, of a society where communication has the form of a cascade of hierarchical science ... the society of the Spectacle, imposes itself in its Maasive reality, that validates the chill dream of structuralism (142)

The structuralism which Debord refers to is a language "composed of signs of the dominant" (Debord 13). Since these signs constitute a different type of communication, a different type of language, these signs are unique to community and/or society who use these languages as communication. By virtue of science constituting a language, "the Spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images"(12). Although the Spectacle is mediated by people, the

Spectacle is not organic, it is, in fact, “a concrete inversion of life”, and “is a locust of illusion” (12). The Spectacle manifests delusion and usually is manifested along with Magical Realism. It is through the application of the real that the real becomes illusion.

Those characters not emerged in the Spectacle are ostracized from the society of the Spectacle, the Postmodern reality and the human condition of the counter-culture. From an outsider’s perspective, the Spectacle is indecipherable, but, as previously mentioned, patterns emerge through the mediation of people’s perception of images. This epitomizes Pynchon’s plot in “Entropy,” *Minstrel Island*, and *The Crying of Lot 49*: various characters in “Entropy” and primarily Oedipa’s search for the truth behind the Trystero in *The Crying of Lot 49*. Since language is political, so is the Spectacle; the Spectacle can be best understood through a pseudo-Marxist interpretation.

The Spectacle is capital accumulated to the point of image; in a society of consumerism, there very well could be a person with the capacity to manipulate the Spectacle. Therefore, those who control the Spectacle, have the capacity of manipulating the perception of what is real. This is a primary key in Thomas Pynchon’s literature; this is what makes his fiction ambiguous and a part of the Spectacle. Foundations of the Spectacle can be found in essays pertaining to the reproduction of art; Walter Benjamin discusses the marginalization which occurs in Maas producing artifice in his essay: “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” It is not so much that what is being replicated will have no value, it is, rather that the values allotted to an artifice once had a substantial value. The significance of what is real pertains to each origin of artifice, before Maas production. Benjamin states that the, “quantity has been transmuted into quality” (239) and the Maas reproduction of art does devalue the arts’

worth as it pertains to value; however, what is occurring is a physical reaction to an overabundance of the real, an overabundance of reality.

Art, since Benjamin, has developed to reflect in his influential essay, what is considered Postmodern art and is an example of the corporation, capitalist, Maas production of art in America. The significance of art to Thomas Pynchon's literature is that the texts incorporate American culture, including the influence of art as commerciality. Artists such as Andy Warhol, reflected and experienced the Spectacle. Such paintings as "The Campbell's Soup Can" and "Marilyn Monroe" (to name a few familiar pieces) become Maas produced to ultimately represent the American sentiment toward individuality. In a Spectacle, human beings are marginalized, like that of art, when a group of individuals gather. Another aspect of the Spectacle is the Myth which supports the Spectacle.

By creating a structure, society or otherwise, of power based on superstitions, the mind of the human condition goes rambling. This is how the Trystero appears in *The Crying of Lot 49*. Images which could occur for a number of reasons, all real, start to form as a pattern in the mind of the reader, leading the reader to believe a suggested trail of clues. Unfortunately, this is the frustrating plight of both Oedipa and the reader. Suggestions are enough to enforce and influence the construct a legitimate power structure.

From the Frankfurt school of thought, Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno, in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, remark on the culture of the Mythical concept so central

to Pynchon's literature; keeping in mind the Maases suffers most from the effects of the Spectacle, in the concept of the enlightenment. They remark,

enlightenment's mythic terror springs from the horror of myth. It detects myth not only in semantically unclarified concepts and words, as linguistic criticism imagines, but in any human utterance which has no place in the functional context of self preservation"(22-23).

When a myth begins to form a context, that context perpetuates itself. The technical process, to which the subject has been reified, after the eradication of that process from consciousness, is as free from the ambiguous meaning of mythical thought, as from meaning all together, since reason itself has become merely an aid to the all encompassing cultural apparatus:

whose reason serves as a universal tool for the fabrication of other tools, rigidly purpose—directed and as calamitous as the precisely calculated operations of material productions, the results of which for human beings escape all calculation" (22-23)

Through this consciousness of meaning the readers are able to gain what psychologist Carol Jung has commented on as "Universal Knowledge." The concept in that all individuals share a sort of knowledge, which is metaphysical and archetypal, across all cultures, such as rituals associated with death. A universal knowledge links all humans across all cultures through the phenomena of linguistical images. The archetypal examples span history, yet the knowledge, universally shared, attained is

intended toward the betterment of humanity. Universal knowledge also marginalizes the individual in a Spectacular sense through the implementation of mythical devices.

Universal knowledge is a tumultuous culmination of the real; although, too much of the real becomes overwhelming for one person or reader's consciousness. The gathering of all these real factors pertaining to knowledge marginalize the significance of the knowledge attained. In reference to Debord, Baurdilliard remarks "beyond the end, beyond all finality, we enter a paradoxical state—the state of too much reality, too much positivity, too much information. In this state of paradox, faced with extreme phenomena, we do not know exactly what is taking place" (66). The constructs are build upon the perception of the individual in relation to the Spectacle. Baurdillard recognizes universal knowledge acknowledged in real time events, where in reflection, are enlightened by virtue of a particular Spectacle experience.

The birth of technology is the beginning of obsolescence; marginalization is the rationalization for obsolescence. The art which surrounds the Postmodern condition ought to be the source of obsolescence; universal knowledge is responsible for its archetypical time-space association. The construct of the real is not founded on illusion (but leading to illusion), yet the same illusion may bear the burden of destruction. Destruction is a large part of the Postmodern Spectacle. The most prolific aspect of Postmodern Spectacle, in respect to Thomas Pynchon, is the application of heteroglossia as a Spectacle in the Debordian context. Within Thomas Pynchon's texts there is a concept of the Spectacle which Baurdillard explains, within the context of the 1960s; Baurdillard proclaims

human subjectivity becomes a set of useless functions, as useless as sexuality is to clones. More generally, all traditional functions—the critical, the political, the sexual, the social functions—become useless in a virtual world. Or they survive only in simulation, like body building in a disincarnated culture, as mock functions or alibis. We seem to be driven by a huge and irresistible compulsion that acts on us through the very progress of our technologies ... —a compulsion to draw ever closer to the unconditional realization of the real (65).

Within the context of the American environment of the 1960s counter-culture, there became a new development which contributed to the fracturing of reality, in Postmodernism as a whole; upon the advent of technology, people are being replaced by machines—an act which marginalizes humanity to that of having no utility in society; Thomas Pynchon illustrates this progression in his play *Minstrel Island*, and slowly, through Postmodernity, the American possibility of a dream fades away and becomes less culpable. The overabundance of the real, interpretation of the individual's intersubjectivity, resists the progress of culture; the more the real becomes prevalent within a Spectacle, the comprehension of the "real" becomes fractured.

Technology contributes to more than the culmination of ones and zeroes; it is the virtual real. Baudillard also contrives, concerning the ramifications of the real pertaining to culture,

for reality is but a concept, or a principal, and by reality I mean the whole system of values connected with this principle. The real as such implies an origin, and end, a past and a future, a chain of causes and effects, a continuity and a

rationality. No real without these elements, without an objective configuration of discourse. And its disappears is the dislocation of this whole constellation (63)

The disappearing factors are a Postmodern motif, but the lack of the real is Spectacular in its own accord. Along with its intrinsic value, the real operates autonomously to create the illusion of something real—readers, human beings, are mediators of the reason, and the logic, behind the significance of the reality of the Spectacle. The Myth of the Real is the primary priority in the concept of the Spectacle and the Postmodern Condition.

The manner in which the Spectacle is manifest is in the human condition; according to Debord, as

the individual who in the service of the Spectacle is placed in stardom's spotlight is in fact the opposite of an individual, and as clearly the enemy of the individual in himself as of the individual in others. In entering the Spectacle as a model to be identified with he renounces all autonomy in order himself to identify with the general law of obedience of the course of things (39).

In this respect, the Spectacle drives the individual; the Spectacle provides parameters—social parameters. The parameters manifest as social structures which the Spectacle provides and effects individuals. The effect of the Spectacle on the individual is a reflection of what and how society shapes and reflects, through Spectacle, upon the attitudes and actions of the Postmodern character.

As a Postmodern device, heteroglossia links the Second Law of Thermodynamics and the universal knowledge behind all cultures. Heteroglossia is not for mere narratology; it has multiple applications. Bakhtin proclaims that every utterance participates in the 'unitary language' (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and, at the same time, partakes of social and historical heteroglossia. Through the culmination of heteroglossic movements, a characters' entropy is capable of occurring. Only within closed systems (i.e. a plot, subplot, or narrative) can entropy occurs. Thomas Pynchon treats each individual character as a form of energy—energy which could be used to drive a heat-engine; it is through this design that Thomas Pynchon's heteroglossic application of empiricism emerges. The Spectacle manifests, autonomously, such as natural order; through the utilization of energy, entropy and the Spectacles are contingent on one another. A Spectacle needs to occur within a closed system, in one chamber of what Thomas Pynchon refers to as Maxwell's box (there are two chambers which are sorting molecules via a demon). The Spectacle is a culmination of energy in the entropically packed chamber, a unique Spectacle occurs about its socio-historical contexts and contents. There are a few ways in which the Spectacle effects characters venerating a Spectacle in an entropically designed system. The characters become ambiguous, or anonymous, because of their heteroglossic nature of a multitude of characteristics—the reader might not recall which character may be referred to; this is another application of the Myth of the Real.

Another effect (a Postmodern effect) is that the character, by value, are marginalized to the extent of their utility. Characters do not emphasize the creative, organic, artifice; there is no room in the Postmodern world of the real organic. The

effect that heteroglossia has on the reader is distracted with the overabundance of the real in fiction. There are many applications of heteroglossia, but to expound further would lead to speculation and bias a heteroglossic application. In reference to problems pertaining the Spectacle, offered by Derrida, there are three problems which exist concerning the multiplicity of the real. These limits pertain to issues of borders and space,

first, those that separate territories, countries, nations, states, languages, and cultures ... *second*, the separations and sharings between domains of discourse, for example, philosophy, anthropological sciences and even theology ... *third*, to these two kinds of border limits we have just added the lines of separation, demarcation, or opposition between conceptual determinations, the forms of the border that separates what are called concepts or *terms*—these lines that necessarily intersect and over determine the first two kinds of terminality (23).

These are problems which exist in a Postmodern linguistic culmination of the real. However Pynchon takes into consideration the faults which truth behold, and implores these parameters into his narratives

As Guy Debord is a Situationist, Thomas Pynchon shares similar qualities. Pynchon happens to be a proclaimed Luddite who avoids a media Spectacle, while creating a Spectacle all together by his absence, through the myth of Pynchon. For both authors, action depends on the situational opportunism; this is, philosophically, a writing which offers seemingly chaotic order which, entropically, gather into some Spectacle or another. Many Spectacles may exist at once; time-space exists in many

author's narratives spontaneously and simultaneously at the same time. Each Spectacle is a heat-engine which drives the entropic narrative. The Spectacle exists outside and within the realm of the real, and is unavoidable in relation to the Postmodern condition—the Spectacle is obsolescence abject of meaning, yet a significant aspect of Pynchon's literature. Even though obsolesces occurs within Thomas Pynchon's literature it does not define the literature's value, rather it becomes a thread in the tapestry of the "reality" which constitutes the Spectacle.

CHAPTER 3: ENTROPY AND “ENTROPY”

When an animal's dying, the animal absolutely doesn't want to die, but this veracity often means nothing. When a human's dying, the human sometimes realizes that his belief in justice and society is ungrounded and that this death, and this life, is meaningless. ... we all die alone, and so we live alone.

K. Acker

3.1 Entropy

There are three ways in which Pynchon exemplifies interdisciplinarity: the author's direct connection with the discipline of physics, the application of a particular aspect of science as a literary device, and the interdisciplinary play between the Postmodern relationships of his characters. Thomas Pynchon, before he began to write and publish, had worked for Boeing Aircraft; he then graduated from Cornell with a B.A. in English in 1959, he was remarked in “The Cornell Writer” as having distinction in all subjects.

The developing theory he works out, exemplifies, and then applies, is based on the Second Law of Thermodynamics, in specific the concept of entropy which is the capacity for isolating and controlling the chaotic order within a isolated system, which potentially creates a heat-engine that can be harnessed. If a person or persons are capable of harnessing this energy, one would have the ability to alter culture and society through an influence of power in the form of entropic energy. The transition between culture and power is manifest in the development of entropy, the Spectacle.

The Spectacle and Entropy... these are two aspects of the human experience which, at this Postmodern juncture, are inseparable. The Spectacle is merely an illusion and the foundation of interaction in our objective, comprehensibly accepted, reality.

The Spectacle is not organic and is a construct of humanity's capacity for rationalizing what may be real; just like a rumor, the Spectacle feeds on what it perceives as real and, yet, has no organic structure, just sheer chaos. In Thomas Pynchon's early works, specifically "Entropy" and *The Crying of Lot 49*, he uses the Second Law of Thermodynamics as a metaphor for a societal entropy. The culmination of energy results in creating aspects of many perceived Spectacles – accepted illusions of realities in American society supported by popular culture, the media, and the myth of the American Dream. The Spectacle contributes to what Pynchon refers to as a cultural heat-death. As the energy of a culture increases, for instance a social movement, the molecules begin to gather, collide, and oscillate about in this energy charged region; theoretically, many molecules occupying one region, also, with a rate of increase, begin to become devalued in proximity to other molecules in the region. These molecules, in the context of Pynchon's works, are aspects of a culture.

While discussing Postmodernism and how it has developed in America, Jeffery Ebbesen, suggests that in Postmodernism, "Defamiliarization also serves to break down the numerous and interrelated binaries." (Ebbesen 9) When cultural entropy is applied to Pynchon's works of fiction, the molecules represent aspects of "American Culture" (separated into binary extremes.) A gathering of these cultural aspects begin to lose substance in the context of its social significance, and, as a result, a Maas Spectacle is created; this Spectacle is a diversionary capacity of the human condition to escape from anything tangible and distance themselves from anything real. When entropy gathers, and the Spectacle develops, a cultural heat-death is eminent.

In order to understand Pynchon's applications of entropy, one must understand the principle behind the Second Law of Thermodynamics; the law states that "in all energy exchanges, if no energy enters or leaves the system, the potential energy will always be less than that of the initial state. The process of entropy pertains to an isolated system – entropy is the method by which one measures the disorder, or chaos, of the molecules involved in the isolated system. More simply put, Entropy is formulae: $\Delta S = S(\text{final}) - S(\text{initial}) > 0$; or, the measure of the changing systems is derived by subtracting the energy of a system at its final state from that of that systems initial state of energy. The product of the measurement of entropy is always greater than nothing at all or zero. Since entropy is the measurement of a system of disorder, the final system – moving toward the More Probable – will always increase in energy, yielding a changing system which is always increasing in the potential for kinetic energy. Empirically, the reader may empirically comprehend, and/or understand, the dynamic relationship between physics, literature, and the interdisciplinarity at play within the study and interpretation of Thomas Pynchon's literature. Two works of his literature, "Entropy" and *The Crying of Lot 49*, directly reflect how literature and physics can interplay, interdisciplinarily, and illustrate the various disciplines which Pynchon employs in his characters.

3.2 "Entropy"

A work of fiction pertinent to entropy, and its discussion in interdisciplinary Literature, is a short story published in the Spring of 1960 which is appropriately named and central to the metaphors concerning the Second Law of Thermodynamics – "Entropy." In this story, Pynchon addresses the metaphor in a more matter-of-fact

fashion which reaches to the heart of Pynchon's use of entropy. The setting of the story is that of a lease ending party; the reader is initially aware that the occupants are being displaced. The lease-ending party ensues, including members of a band, a man brooding for a lost love, naval cadets looking for prostitutes, and various other motley individuals rising out of the 1960s. The party had been going on so long that energy in the form of information begins to venerate about that pad, eventually leading naval cadets to believe that the party was a brothel; the party begins gathering various versions of American culture into one region, and a Spectacle begins to culminate in the form of a party.

In the midst of the Spectacle, contributing to its affect and effect without any knowledge of being a participant, a brooding friend of the protagonist cannot reconcile his life after his own personal tragedy (breaking up with his girlfriend); Callisto, the protagonist, remarks in a poor attempt at consolation, in third-person, leading into a discussion of the Laws of Thermodynamics as a societal metaphor:

Callisto had learned a mnemonic device for remembering the Laws of Thermodynamics: you can't win, things are going to get worse before they get better, who says they're going to get any better. ... That spindly maze of equations became for him, a vision of ultimate, cosmic heat-death. He had know all along, of course, that nothing but a theoretical engine or system ever runs at 100% efficiency; and about the theorem of Clasusius, which states that the entropy of an isolated system always continually increases. It was not, however, until Gibbs and Boltzmann brought to this principle the methods of statistical mechanics that the horrible

significance of it all dawned on him: only then did he realize that the isolated system – galaxy, engine, human being, whatever – must evolve spontaneously toward the Condition of the More Probable ... Nevertheless, he found in entropy or the measure of disorganization for a closed system an adequate metaphor to apply to certain phenomena in his own world. He saw, for example, the younger generation responding to Madison Avenue with the same spleen his own had once reserved for Wall Street: and in American ‘consumerism’ discovered a similar tendency from the least to the most probable, from differentiation to sameness, from ordered individuality to a kind of chaos. He found, in short, restating Gibbs’ prediction in social terms, and envisioned a heat-death for his culture in which ideas, like heat-energy, would no longer be transferred, since each point in it would ultimately have the same quantity of energy; and intellectual motion would, accordingly, cease. (282-284)

Callisto still has some hope, not in his own society or culture, but in that of life. He clutches a dying bird to his chest in order to transfer some of his own warmth against its impending death from the cold; he is constantly checking the temperature: 37 degrees Fahrenheit and holding steady. The energy of the Spectacle created by the party patrons is undergoing a cultural heat-death; this is apparent when Callisto and Aubade (Callisto’s girl-friend) retire to a separate room, a simpler, isolated system including only the couple and the bird. However, Callisto’s heat is not enough to keep the bird alive and its heart stops beating. He tried to save the life of something beautiful and not deconstructive – all the while hearing the surmounting chaos in the party below – and

he has failed. He is as damaged as the rest of his American culture; by referring to himself in the third-person, he is capable of detaching himself from the Spectacle of reality. He is a product of its commercialism and the Spectacle thereof; he has already suffered, along with the rest of America, a cultural heat-death. In order to symbolize this death, both of which the bird and the culture the couple is a part of, Aubade breaks the bedroom window literally letting the energy transfer from inside the building out – stabilizing entropy. She represents the natural order of entropy, where as Callisto is a dead heat-engine, in terms of his place in his own culture; he is used up, no-longer able to function due to his incessant battle for controlling entropy in his own social context, a context his love-lost friend is beginning to experience.

The breaking of the window signifies the beginning of a cultural heat-death. Due to the autonomous nature of entropy and its relation to the Spectacle, it seems that human kind is destined to repeat this cultural heat-death in order to have the potential of cultural rebirth in a form of hope. In a cultural heat-death, the values of concepts and ideas become a commodity. In order to endure a death that hits at the heart of a nation and its identity, dissociating from reality, or popular culture, seems a comfortable thought – nothing has substance and American culture then becomes plastic and artificial – where the only dream attainable is through disillusioned hope.

CHAPTER 4:
MINSTREL ISLAND: THE POSTMODERN COLONIAL

There is a danger of becoming too logical. At the end of the day one can only consult one's heart.

T. Pynchon Against the Day

Thomas Pynchon is more than an author whose appeal only reaches those who are familiar with his novels and short stories; he has also dabbled around as a playwright. Together with Kirkpatrick Sale he composed this satirical musical centered around the fear of technology, a type of luddite satire (Gibbs). He transcends his association with empiricism, without negating its significance to his literature, as a Postmodern author of Literary prowess. There exists, as a precedent to Pynchon's credibility as a Postmodern playwright, a manuscript of a play held at the Ransom Center, at the University of Texas at Austin, which epitomize Pynchon as a Postmodern author. The text is a script for a play, one which was never published –it exists in his own penmanship and type, in the archives.

The play is an unpublished document, but important; nonetheless, like many other Postmodern novels and texts, the atmosphere is tragic and each character feels the social pressure manifesting itself into ennui. The play seems to be a satire of IBM, without any scruples of changing the name of the company. IBM's introduction is a colonization effort, an effort to technologically colonize a beach-side bay town. A post-colonial reading could be taken from this Postmodern play; this emphasizes Pynchon's versatility in Literature and his use of criticism.

The IBM members are both colonizing and converting – not religiously, but technologically – the native Galveston-like beach setting, despite the native peoples lack

of reception to change. Edward Said explains in his groundbreaking Postcolonial text, *Orientalism*, that “we can better understand the persistence and the durability of saturating Hegemonic systems like culture when we realize that they are internal constraints upon writers and thinkers were productive, not unilaterally inhibiting” (14). IBM offers the natives an opportunity to enter their area: draw in tourists through the technological efficiency of IBM technology. Each character seems to be a victim, one way or another, of technology. As a post-colonial reading, hegemony exists for both the native resident of the island and the members of IBM. Antonio Gramsci expounds at length of the development, function, and use of Hegemony, which he describes as the “dominant group exercises throughout the society and on the other hand, to that of direct ‘domination’ or command exercised through the state and ‘judicial’ government” (Rivkin 673). The characters of the play do change from time to time as Pynchon plays with the relevance of each name; however, for the sake of argument and precedent, the characters are as follows: Hero, Broad (Ivey), Bomber, Tubetester, chicks, Whore, Sailmaker, Gambler, and Jazzman and his band.

The characters express how they enjoy their little island community; from the perspective of IBM, the natives appear hedonistic and Anarchist. There becomes a gradual rationalization of the ideal of efficiency, mechanism, which IBM possesses and preaches; the chicks (auxiliary characters) fall victim to the commercialization of what IBM has to offer. Some of the characters had jobs at the Coney Island type bay area and are being marginalized by virtue of being replaced by machines, autonomous and void of life. Those characters effected by being replaced – Hero, Sailmaker, Gambler – are the characters with the conviction to resist internalizing IBM ideals. In a way, alluding to

the short story “Entropy,” IBM as a technological movement sweeps in, divides and conquers; through the manipulation of a Spectacle, IBM is capable of shifting energy in their own favor, a shifting which is explored in “Entropy.”

The members of IBM are characters which are most victimized by their own system; they have internalized the technological benefits to a degree where the concept of love is not even a factor. The characters have become instruments, or agents, of this autonomous, spectacular movement; this is done hegemonically; hegemony so dire that it has marginalized people to that of utility – mechanizing them. As stated in Walter Benjamin’s article “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”:

For the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility...the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice—politics (244)

People, like art, become Maas produced commodities which are constantly devalued in proximity to how many people are marginalized; in this instance, they are disposable and possibly in danger of being commodified to a degree that their own creations , computers, might take the place of their own jobs. However, they are not aware of this effect, the members of IBM are hegemonically fated to this inevitability.

The native characters who are resistant to any hegemonic influence are the Postmodern exemplars of the play, *Minstrel Island*. Hero identifies that the Broad, Ivey, is human, but denies that any emotion, since emotion commonly leads to

irrationality, should be explored, no less love. Through the persuasive devices of the Whore, Hero decides to woo Ivey, an IBM member, in order to influence IBM away from the island. However, this is not the intention of Hero; he genuinely tries to evoke love—at one point of the play, Hero has a conflict in loyalty. To his friends or his new love Ivey, love prevails as Hero realizes that by commodifying material objects, and not human beings, is the narrative device used to prove that love exists. The resistance to Postcolonial IBM is Postmodernism. The natives of the island prevail as triumphs of the spirit of the human condition; each resistant character to IBM embodies one or more Postmodern quality.

Hero is literarily heteroglossic, an analogist to many characters across history including Manfred including many Byronic characters, as he questions truth. The Bomber creates bombs which do not go off, despite days of work, and are viewed as objects of art—representing the potential for great, beautiful, destruction. The Whore actually advocates for love and is the subverted, gendered character of the play, as she exhibits male qualities. Postmodernism usurping Postcolonialism is significant to the morphology of literature; the play develops from a Postcolonial play into a Postmodernist play. An American rebellion seems to drive and, also, trump any colonizing effort.

As a foundation for Postmodernism, Thomas Pynchon utilizes Postmodern tropes of technology as art, socially challenging gender roles, apocalyptic setting, and which at a surface view would be perceived as chaos. One of the most significant Postmodern examples in Thomas Pynchon's literature is the Bomber. His characteristics are obsessive and pathetic; he spends days building the most intricate of bombs for the

enjoyment of his fans, but he has no real fans as a bomber since not a single bomb he has made ever goes off. However, the care he puts into the construction of something so destructive is a beautiful act. It becomes ironic when the bombs of the Bomber consistently do not explode, but they exist more effectively as benign—as a culmination of dedication and Spectacle. Though the bomb does not go off, a Spectacle occurs anyway: voyeurs gaze in awe in the direction of the bomb, a type of energy moves through the Spectacle in the form of anxiety of the explosion; the suspense of the bomb is enough to create an energy charged, emotionally driven, Spectacle.

The play is a dialectic argument between Postcolonial ideologies and Postmodern ideologies; the medium seems to be a post-technological texts fraught with implications of both technological colonization and Postmodern apocalyptic chaos. Also, it is a play: a medium which Pynchon has yet to be known for, is the best example of empiricism as metaphors and technology as art. Through the synthesis of empiricism and literature the contexts collides in Pynchon's literature as Spectacle of varying varieties. Even though empiricism is applied, the Spectacle is still ambiguous; it is the perception of the reader that drives each subjective Spectacle. The Spectacle is intersubjective; the belief in a Spectacle encourages the existence of a Spectacle. Thomas Pynchon readers are often drawn into the narrative through the belief in one Spectacle or another.

A Spectacle of resistance, much like that of *Minstrel Island*, protecting their native land from IBM, is mirrored in the society which was occurring and enveloping Pynchon as he wrote. A budding movement, a momentary Spectacle, is blooming, becoming the counter-culture of the 1960s: hippies, free love, and anti-war sentiment flow about the minds of Americans as a new era of perception dawns on the United

States. Time has a habit of leaving behind aspects of its culture, once the context of time is separated from the aspect of culture, the aspect becomes irrelevant to contemporary society. This is the case with the Whore and the Jazzman.

IBM has moved in and replaced the Jazzman and his band with a machine, Postmodernism is usurping Modernism. As radical as this may be both the Whore and the Jazzman, as an icon, remain as an image of the past, remembrances of creativity of modernity. The culture of the heroin addict/musician it is a cliché, not to say it is not a frequent, real occurrence, but just not as a relevant literary device, of the 1950s. Pynchon is not making a social commentary, merely an observation—the times of heroin as a fad is passing into the newest fad of technology. There are similarities between the addictions of both drugs and technologies, and how they both interfere with life. If there is any commentary, there is a suggestion, or paranoia, of a culture's addiction to technology. Ivey exhibits a personality like an individual under the influence psychotropics and is brainwashed clinically by IBM. This is a form of mind alteration, a Spectacle in itself which Pynchon addresses in a later work: *The Crying of Lot 49*. Ivey is non-responsive to any kind of human emotion, or any sort of experience which may be deemed as human; she walks through life like one of her machines—her perspective and perception is narrow.

The Whore is the foil of the relationship between the Hero and Ivey, and is a significant character in the play as she is the manipulator of the human condition. She uses the heart of both Hero and Ivey to gain her advantage; although these may be flaws, they are human flaws and Ivey appears as one of the most feminine of characters, next to the Whore. Ivey is hardly human in her mind or emotion, she mimics her machines.

The Whore, by contrast, feels sympathy, empathy, love, and ennui. She epitomizes humanity and its gradations and degradations. Just like the Jazzman, the Whore, who is an everywoman of an antiquated age, being displaced in time as Postmodernism approaches.

In a time which love could be substituted for the Whore's own services, then she has no function in passive development life, she is commodified to her action in society. Modernism would suggest the existence of this "lady of the night" as historicity and, therefore, relevant; however, post-technology does not provide a venue, or clientele, for the Whore, she would lose her business based on the narcotic effect technology has on the colonizers (IBM). They are incapable under, hegemonic IBM influence, of feeling love; they walk about in a type of lithium-like gaze. Time, along with technology has produced a culture emerging out of the place, yet hesitant to merge into the future; this is analogist to the counter-culture revolution of the 1960s. The social revolution draws parallels from many instances in the play, however, there is a desperate ideal in which the viewer/reader is left with—even though love is possible, it is antiquated compared to the efficiency of technology. People will become obsolete as machines begin to take the place human communication, interaction, and senses. Humanity is usurped by machines—a Postmodern nightmare—only to Hegemonically become a part of the entity in which they have created, the Spectacle.

Much like the rebellions in the play, they mirrored a protest against the Vietnam war. According to Jeffrey Ebbesen, Postmodernism reacts during a reaction in a society, "When approaching literature, they [Postmodern critics] isolate only those textual elements their chosen theory deems 'Postmodern' eliding elements which do not fit their

chosen paradigm” (4). This is to say that Postmodernism will frequently occur when a social movement is nigh and will quickly disappear. Anyhow, it does appear and does not exist on any timeline; it exists as a moment with a history which will, like chaos theory, never happen again at exactly the same. Postmodernism exists on the reactivity of the character pertaining to the human condition. This is true for much of the Pynchon novels and short stories; however, *The Crying of Lot 49*, which exemplifies the influence of the manifestation of the 1960s counter-culture—epitomizing the social unrest of the Postmodern Condition^{vii}: social revolt. The novel is an amalgamation of characters, most of which exemplifies counter-culture of America. Each character provides for various realities and perspectives of society—not making a social comment but making an aesthetic comment.

Aesthetics of American society entropically culminates into a social movement and, therefore, produces a Spectacle. The social environment of the 1960s is the binding factor for both the counter-culture and the Spectacle. By using the Spectacle as a narrative device, Pynchon is capable of exposing the reader to the Spectacle—a Spectacle based on patterns of belief. The Spectacle engages the reader in the text: separating the reader from the real, the real which constitutes components of American culture and American counter-culture.

The reason the American counter-culture is so significant to the text of *Minstrel Island* is that the riff raff characters resemble the characteristics of current movements evolving throughout the 1960s. The social revolutions are a reflection of one another; however, there is a downside to the representation of the ideals of the 1960s: Pynchon’s play seems to illuminate the disillusionment of the real. Each character, from the

Jazzman to Ivey, has an intersubjective perception of reality based on previously taught beliefs. The 1960's ideals of peace and love mirror the ambitions of the characters in the play; they have idealized their dream, a so called American dream, to a point where it is unattainable. The myth of the American dream's Spectacle grows stronger the longer it remains without fruition—the further out of reach something is the more desirable it becomes. Other than Hero and Ivey who have found love, the remaining characters gain nothing and practically lose everything, including their bohemian lifestyle.

Each character has experienced a cultural heat-death; a heat-death which draws into question what a character then perceives as real—what Baurdillard refers to as “the murder of the real”—and any dream dies. From the ashes of the pyre of the real, a *Tableaux Rosa* is exposed; each character may have lost everything, but now they have everything to gain. By reducing their concept of reality to zero, Pynchon grants the characters the privilege to do anything, should they choose to rise from the ashes. Pynchon implores this method throughout his literature, giving the narrative a misguided apocalyptic feel, or some form of depressing energy. It is through the perseverance of the human condition that the characters are capable of retaining some hope for something better.

All that has resulted in the play is a domino effect of entropy and its metaphoric philosophy of narration—moving into the Condition of the More Probable. The myth of the dream, American or otherwise is symptomatic of the Condition of the More Probable, turning into some form of heat death. Hope remains in the dream prior to a heat-death and is irrepressible to that heat-death; there is a possibility for freedom of

what previously had held back a character in their prior reality, now that they literally have nothing.

From this phenomena of the human condition, the resilience of Hope is what binds the love of Hero and Ivey and keeps the Postmodern play positive to all characters, except IBM. From Hope, a new Spectacle is produced and entropy begins again, as the Spectacle is not destroyed upon a heat-death, rather it becomes a part of the new “real” as it is to the history of that reality. Nostalgia of the way the island used to be contributes to the hope of betterment of place and character, which, in term, contributes to the Maas of the Spectacle. The more romanticized an ideal of hope becomes the more spectacular the Spectacle.

Thomas Pynchon does not use romantic endeavors often as central to the plot, of his fiction, but for the purposes of the play, entropy and the Postmodern condition, it serves its purpose. This play is the only text in which there is a romantic involvement. The characters of the other texts discussed have too dismal an outlook or are losing their own relationships. Love is a great example of hope idealized, specifically within the dramatics of the play; this may be the best example of how Postmodernism could offer hope and positivity. Read as a Postmodern romantic play, *Minstrel Island* may be a text which is not available to the Masses, however, it offers the clearest example of how the human condition can retain hope despite the dismal aspects of a Postmodern atmosphere.

CHAPTER 5:
THE CRYING OF LOT 49: AMBIGUITY AMID HETEROGLOSSIA

CAN YOU PASS THE ACID TEST?

T. Wolfe

Pynchon's short novel *The Crying of Lot 49* best illustrates the author's applications of the Second Law of Thermodynamics – The Nefastis Machine and Maxwell's Demon therein. Oedipa, the protagonist, who is the executor of the estate of the late, and most Postmodern of characters established in the novel: Pierce Inverarity. As a character, Inverarity represents parts of a great whole which has made his empire. However, the empire is not holding strong, legalese are picking it apart, piece by piece, Inverarity's life for auction: what once might have been sentimental is now devalued to that of a common object. A considerable problem arises when the secrecy of an organization prioritizes over all other items in the estate by what Oedipa finds as a discrepancy in a postage stamp. By virtue of these particular, and peculiar, aspects of the life and history of Inverarity, he is a reflection of the American culture as a whole, developing and evolving as time goes on; and as with Inverarity's death, his image is assumed into the Spectacle by virtue of creating the Spectacle. He was "A California real estate mogul who had once lost two million dollars in his spare time," (Crying 1) and a man with enough influence to ruin the career of Wendell Maas. Oedipa reminisces upon a call made early one morning to her by said Inverarity, " 'why don't you hang up on him,' Mucho suggested, sensibly/ 'I heard that,' Pierce said. 'I think it's time Wendell Maas had a little visit from The Shadow.' Silence, positive and thorough fell." (3) It is clear from Oedipa's reaction to the mention of The Shadow that Pierce's intentions cannot be good for Maas; Inverarity is a character impressed with the power to

transform cultures and create and destroy realities. Invararity is specific to the American culture through Oedipa's residential context; by virtue of the story existing in California Inverarity is a reflection of the movements and activities arising in the 1960s America.

Inverarity as Spectacle is first experienced by Oedipa due to the nature of entropy at work; the Spectacle provides a smoke screen which misdirects anyone looking for the truth behind this organization: the Trystero. Confusion begins to muddle the perceived symbols on the stamp: a figure riding a horse bearing a black feather -- to the acronym W.A.S.T.E (We Wait Silent Trystero's Empire), to *The Currier's Tragedy* (whose original text dates back 300 years), and the crude symbol of a trumpet carved into a bathroom stall. All these images, when viewed in correlation with one another, leads the reader to believe that this organization really exists; anyhow, whoever may be involved in creating this smoke screen, Inverarity or the Trystero, had done so through entropic design.

Through a man named Koteks, Oedipa is illuminated to the significant power of The Nefastsis Machine which contains Maxwell's Demon; an entity with the capacity to defy the Second Law of Thermodynamics and manipulate a heat-engine by sheer will. James Clerk Maxwell had discovered the effects of kinetic energy, and what could not be explained empirically was justified by this demon. According to Eric Weisstien, the reversal of all events is still consistent with the Second Law of Thermodynamics; this is where Empiricism and Literature take separate roads. What makes the two disciplines differ is the method by which, and to what, the subject of the metaphor for entropy is applied-- empiricism is aimed at the factual accumulation of tangible physical evidence, where as literature focuses on the concept of entropy. The method by which the demon

is persuaded to move molecules from one chamber to the next – gathering more energy in one chamber than the other –is through the manipulation of communication, telepathic or otherwise; this creates an increase of potential, rather than a decrease. The Trystero understands the effects of cultural entropy in order to keep their veil from being revealed, and they metaphorically have the capacity to influence Maxwell's Demon. Pynchon Writes:

The Demon could sit in a box among air molecules that were moving at all different random speeds, and sort out the fast molecules from the slow ones. Fast molecules have more energy than the slow ones. Concentrate enough of them in one place and you have a region of high temperature. You can then use the difference in temperature between this hot region of the box and any cooler region, to drive a heat engine. Since the Demon only sat and sorted, you wouldn't have to put any real work into the system. So you would be violating the Second Law of Thermodynamics, getting something for nothing, causing perpetual motion. (Crying 68)

The prospect of controlling a Natural Law supports Pynchon's metaphorical applications of entropy; this alludes to human-kind taking control over the governing laws of existence and, thus, provides the potential for illusionary existences, or Spectacles. In this way the Trystero have created a power advantage over the ignorant Maases, but is still threatened by exposure – an exposure which would topple the power structure already in play. Social theorist Jean-Pierre Bourdieu remarks,

The source of ‘creative’ power, the ineffable *mana* or charisma celebrated by tradition, [the Trystero], need to be sought anywhere other than the field, i.e. the system of objective relations which constitute it, [the Spectacle], in the struggles of which it is the site and specific form of energy or capital which is generated there (81)

Edward Mendelson, claims that “*The Crying of Lot 49* is a book partly about communication and signals—Oedipa’s discovery of the Trystero involves the interpretation of ambiguous signs—and, logically enough, is the central scientific metaphor involves communication theory” (24). From Oedipa’s quest to the Trystero, to Dr. Hilarious and Mucho Maas, all of the characters experience information entropically. The Nefastis Machine modeled by

John Nefastis, the inventor of a machine which joins the worlds, of thermodynamics and information theory (of which more later) through the literal use of a scientific metaphor known as Maxwell’s Demon is ‘impenetrable, calm, a believer’—in whose presence Oedipa feels ‘like some sort of heretic.’ Nefastis, the book’s fundamentalist, believes his scientific metaphor is ‘not only verbally graceful, but also objectively true.’ His language recalls similar moment in the rest of the book when he refers to the visible operation of his machine as ‘the secular level’ ... and the photograph of the physicist James Clerk Maxwell that adorns the machine is, oddly enough (through the narrator does not remark on the oddity), ‘the familiar Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge photo ... Nefastis’s unbalanced science is endorsed, shakily, by the language of belief. (23) (86) (105-106)

Metaphorically, all images and symbols, through the metaphor of Maxwell's Demon, are reduced to the belief behind language. As the demon sorts molecules, as mentioned above, it constructs the information (metaphorical molecules) into a pattern which may be discerned by any character or reader of Pynchon's short novel. Since both Entropy and the Spectacle are autonomously driven, the illusion will only continue to perpetuate – slipping comfortably into the shadows of history.

An engine, manifest by using the differing of temperatures or energies in a system, may be any such thing as "Entropy's" Callisto proclaims – Pierce Inverarity, the Trystero, Callisto, Aubade, the bird, or society. Maxwell's Demon is a metaphor for the harnessing of the flow of entropy, constantly increasing in one *place*, in an isolated system, and defying the free flow of energy suggested by the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Culturally, what the metaphorical demon, or engine of consciousness, is gathering are aspects of American culture. An overabundance of these cultural aspects become chaotic from an objective perspective; the engine, or demon, creates the Spectacle of American culture and its future prospects unique to that engine, or demon. The Spectacle, essentially a non-life entity, devalues these cultural aspects of American culture metaphorically causing its death – such confusion ceases intellectual productivity. A heat-death occurs, and the aspect of what once had constituted a particular Spectacle is reabsorbed into other Spectacles, perpetuating other delusions and illusions of what may or may not be real.

Oedipa's quest for the Trystero and her place, as an individual, in society is that of ambiguity. She is overwhelmed with signs, images, and the patterns inherent in

Pynchon's web of illusion. A literary critic, Anne Mangel, emphasizes an important aspect of the Spectacle through perception; she espouses that

Perception, here, is working to create disorder. In Oedipa's perception the post horn replicates infinitely. The entropy increases until finally she is unable to distinguish reality from fantasy—insanity ... Oedipa's task has shifted from sorting through an estate to distinguishing between reality and fantasy, the attempt to establish order having lead to insane disorder (92)

Oedipa is thrown into a place of the in-between, the areas of the real painted grey. The significance which Mangel is referring to is Oedipa's intersubjective perception. She suffers from a Postmodern condition; one absorbed in the Spectacle, one which she perpetuates by pursuing her quest. Ambiguity in Oedipa's instance is Spectacle (as is her husband under the influence of LSD-25). Her quest, by virtue of being unable to "decipher the indecipherable" sends her through a narrative which perception as Spectacle becomes anarchy. Nevertheless, anarchy atmosphere aside, being able to decipher the indecipherable is a rationalization of the perceived real. To each character in the novel, the perception of the real is subjective and individual, and can commonly be referred to as intersubjective. Therefore, the perception of each character is a Spectacle, thus, perpetuating the American Myth Spectacle in Maas. Oedipa's quest is much like her husband's.

Oedipa's husband, a commonly underexplored character, Wendell "Mucho" Maas has entered into the Spectacle throughout the duration of *The Crying of Lot 49*. Surrounding the events of the novel is the raise of radio and, rock and roll, and Mucho

is, by profession a Disk Jockey, immersed in the psychedelic wave which has left its mark on American society. Through a psychiatrist, Dr. Hilarious, Mucho procures some LSD-25 and proceeds to take his own trip. By indulging in the psychedelic, Mucho Maas is capable of dissociating from the real while still participating in it. Too much information is flooding in, the people, the advertisements, the propaganda, and the syncopated rhythms of “Muzak” popularly heard over the radio waves. Images begin to superimpose, so do voices, and soon Mucho is tuned into a different frequency, a reality which is intersubjective and only relevant to Mucho himself. Pynchon describes Mucho under the influence:

everybody who says the same words is the same person if the spectra are the same only they happen differently in time, you dig? But time is arbitrary. You pick your zero point wherever you want, that way you can shuffle each person’s timeline sideways till they collide. Then you would have this big, God, maybe a couple of hundred million chorus saying ‘rich, chocolaty goodness’ together, and it would all be the same voice. (Crying 116-117)

The timelines Mucho is referring to is the heteroglossic narrative by which Pynchon implores his characters, every now and again colliding.

Dialogue breaks down and there is a foreboding break up impending; the two characters (Oedipa and Mucho) who no longer exist in the same reality. At one time, their lives had intersected or collided, but they have suffered a condition common to Postmodernity: the Spectacle. Mutual destruction has occurred between both characters. Mucho cannot be entirely held responsible for the loss of the relationship. The

parameters that the character possesses do not relate, and so they cannot. Oedipa, a bit prudish and job oriented, but driven, set off chasing a Spectacle of her own.

The delineation between these two paradoxical realities are unique; these two characters have a polar experience with the Spectacle. To Oedipa, the Spectacle confuses because she is looking for Truth, when truth is relevant; however, Mucho Maas has discovered something within the Spectacle. He began to take LSD from Hilarious because he felt that he was not connecting to his job and, by extension, his individuality. Psychedelics seem to link up what enjoyment Mucho was missing.

Thomas Pynchon is not making a social comment, rather illustrating what was so prevalent of the times. LSD is mythified as a dangerous drug throughout history; however, in the 1960s it was preached to the masses by Timothy Leary and Ken Kesey. Kesey and the Merry Pranksters, and the Warlocks (soon to become the Grateful Dead), traveled the nation—extending Haight-Ashbury to all corners of the United States, making a movie, distributing Oseley Acid. Without the introduction of such a psychedelic, the perception of a nation would not have been altered to temper activities mythified in the 60s, but it offers the reader of such literature a reality which has the capacity for its own form of perceptual heteroglossia.

Oedipa is chasing patterns; Mucho sees the patterns of existence and constitutes a reality from what is leading toward The Condition of The More Probable—forming a unitary language—under the influence of not LSD, but society and culture. It is through society and culture that the perceptions of the characters are manipulated. As seen through Dr. Hilarious and Mucho Maas, the Spectacle will interpret that causality of

patterns as not coincidence, but real. It is the characters of ambiguity who refuse to see or believe the Spectacle about them as real.

The persuasion of language, through entropic design, is how the Trystero is capable of being an organization of ambiguity. Mendelson also remarks on the Trystero:

The Trystero implies universal meanings, and since universal meanings are notoriously recalcitrant to analysis, it will be necessary to approach the holistic center of the book from various facets and fragments. I hope the reader will bear with the argument that may, for a number of pages, ask him to assent to resolutions of issues that have not yet been discussed (18)

The pattern which is woven is a pattern of obscurity and ambiguity; by approaching the Trystero from a “holistic” perspective one must have a feeling, or belief toward the existence of the organization, in order for the organization to exist.

Language as Communication Theory constitutes the realities of the characters of *The Crying of Lot 49*: Dr. Hilarious’ influence on Mucho, The Trystero’s influence on Oedipa, and Pierce Invarity’s influence on the American culture. Whether they believe the images or a dialogue, the language perceived by the characters is an accumulation of information which persuades the characters toward the Condition of the More Probable. The influence language as information has on the impact of the novel seems to be mechanic in nature or, self perpetuating, existing between two separate binary opposites. The images and signals Oedipa and other characters perceive operate between the two extremes and this confuses the characters and readers leading into a narrative between both poles. Oedipa never comes around to entirely believing in the

Trystero, but in her husband, the reader is capable of seeing the impact of entropic information upon one of Thomas Pynchon's characters.

Mucho Maas, as a literary character, has a trajectory which starts at the same level of comprehension about his occupation as Oedipa. He is not understanding, or rectifying, the reality around him, then Dr. Hilarius, then LSD, and then the character drifts blissfully into an intersubjective Spectacle. However, his initial state is posited as a condition of the Postmodern—bombarded by information—flooding into an area of gray and ambiguity. In an entropic system, Mucho is unstable at this juncture in his trajectory, thus Oedipa never becomes stable as she is always between poles. In Mucho's plateau, the end of his trajectory, the information he once had found dull is now Spectacle—he has traveled into a polar extreme. This extreme is created by a language, in Communication Theory or Information Theory, as binaries: Mucho has moved from ambiguities into a belief in the information he is constantly privy to.

Communication Theory exists in *The Crying of Lot 49* as a literary device, by utilizing the language to provide parameters, although binary to the reality of the novel, as the parameters of a reality of a physical world which are influenced by information. Mendelson remarks, in detail, about Information Theory in the contest of the Trystero stamp,

The unit of information in communication theory is the *bit*, abbreviated from *binary digit*. Theoretically, all information can be conveyed in a sequence of binary digits, i.e., ones and zeroes. By the end of the novel ... Oedipa perceives the

dilemma presented to her by the possible existence of the Trystero in terms of the choice between one bit and another (27)

And, then, much like Mucho's trajectory Oedipa has the same experience with language as information in binaries, where in ambiguity she is waning to zero; and in the case of Oedipa,

The signs themselves do not prove anything: the streets are 'hieroglyphic'—and example of sacred carving—but behind the sacred sign *may* lie what is merely profane, 'only the earth.' The religious content of the book is fixed in Oedipa's dilemma: the choice between the *zero* of secular triviality and chaos, and the *one* that is the *ganz andere* of the sacred (27)

Although, she experiences entropic information in the form of signs and symbols, she still is witness to marginalization of the meaning behind these signs and symbols in the crying of Lot 49.

All the information which is conveyed to every character, in one way or another, is in respect of the American culture; and, this is in direct relation to the estate of Invararity. The value of America is being marginalized to a monetary value; this marginalization occurs within every character through the absorption of the Spectacle. Mucho experiences this marginalization through his own intersubjective Spectacle; most of the information perceived in the novel, by the characters and the reader, is viewed through the lens of one Spectacle or another. Whether the character exists in ambiguity or in binary extreme, they are perceiving and feeding the Spectacle by the belief in the pattern of language they choose as "real." It is the belief in the Spectacle, in Thomas

Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, which propagates the Spectacle. A heteroglossic culmination of characters contributes to the flood of information and the Spectacle thereof. The Spectacle feeds the narrative drive of the characters, seeming insane and chaotic at times, but is giving parameters through natural law: entropy. The Spectacle may appear to be an all consuming beast, and it is, yet it is constructed of a deadly design set by the parameters of natural law, entropy included—implemented to those who control the flow of information which constitutes the meaning of language itself.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION: THE SPECTACLE OF THE REAL

“conventional metaphors ... that structure the ordinary conceptual system of our culture which is reflected in our everyday language. We would now like to turn to metaphors that are outside our conventional conceptual system, metaphors that are imaginative and creative ... are capable of giving us a new understanding of our experiences”

G. Lackoff & M. Johnson

Suffice to say, Thomas Pynchon's works require a different perspective from which to view his Literature. His prose congeals with the context wherein he writes; the heteroglossic storm of characters flood the reader with stimulus and energy, fusing the prose of the context though the characteristics of his characters. Pynchon's characters are a reflection of the time Pynchon wishes to reflect; moreover, through this reflection there is an archetypal pattern which emerges. The pattern is uniform in a binary sense -- for every pole there is an equivalent reciprocal pole. In the context of the Physics of his prose, the literature is a closed system (a play, short story and a novel) where no energy -- character, subjective reflection, or objective reflection may be lost; all aspects of the Prose constitute energy, giving value via a proximal distance and validity to each minuscule aspect of his Literature. A subjective critique may be appropriate, since there is not a single definitive critique in Pynchon's work; however, Reader Response Theory (namely edified by I. A. Richards) is not the best method to address his literature. Given the construction of his prose, reinforced by Foucault's Web of Power, founded on heteroglossia and Postmodern motifs, proves problematic in direct interpretation; this is where Pynchon's literature confuses its readers. Peter Shaub remarks that like the characters, the reader chases patterns which Pynchon plants as narrative structure, but essential to the plot and construct of the prose. These Postmodern motifs are essential to the application of empiricism into literature; there are, in most every aspect, epitaphs

of truth dissolving into the ether -- fractured by the light of other realities, convoluting perception. The Spectacle is more than a theory, it is a literary metaphor for space-time and how it relates to the human condition. The realities of energies gathered, filtered through one scope (or reader), is perceived as a prism type effect; reality, such as light in the form of energy, become fractured through the structured glass, forming colors which metaphorically divides and splits how the readers are able to understand what the readers are to interpret of reality, a Spectacle.

The Spectacle could be confused with Magical Realism; this is a misdirection, a trap set and laying in wait for the unsuspecting reader. The difference between Magical Realism and the Spectacle is that the Spectacle, within the context of the narrative, are invading realities. By founding the omniscience in Physics, the “New Omniscience”, the natural world, Pynchon's prose seems to have the air of realism; however, Magical Realism is the allusion to fantastical reality, or other reality distorting devices, whereas, the Spectacle, founded by natural law –all the while defying it, is a constitution of the real, literal to its context in relation to its subject. In Magical Realisms’ stead, the Spectacle gives the foundation of literary parameters when empiricism is implored; this is not a limiting virtue of the Spectacle and metaphorical physics. Pynchon's fiction is constantly defying empirical devices -- entropy, relativity, and the Second Law of Thermodynamics –the constructs of reality, Physics takes place as the determining factors for Thomas Pynchon's fiction.

Where an author such as Salmon Rushdie would use Magical Realism as the foundation of the theory behind his Postmodern motif and fiction, Thomas Pynchon uses the Spectacle like Rushdie has done in *Midnight's Children* with Magical Realism;

in this context the Spectacle and Magical Realism are narrative devices and construct of the Postmodern plot. Magical Realism is ephemeral; the Spectacle has roots in the physical world. In order to establish the order by which Pynchon may construct prose, the Physical Laws must be established in order to be broken. Physics plays another part in the construction of the reality of Thomas Pynchon's Literature; fiction does not support much of the natural world, it may reflect the physical world, but it can never be edified as truth.

The Physical properties of Reality offer parameters which Pynchon (Maxwell's Demon) breaks to conventionalize as fiction. Science and Literature are a problematic relationship; the more concrete Science becomes the less concrete Fiction becomes -- Pynchon reinforces the bond between science and prose. There is nothing magical about words which reflect reality in an ordinary way, no matter how significant; this is how Pynchon's fiction does not constitute of Magical Realism. Literary scholar, Scott Simpkins, remarks on the difference between an American, or western, literary culture's usage of Magical Realism opposed to its traditional European tradition. Simpkins writes:

The magic realist text 'does not depend either on natural or physical laws or on the usual conception of the real in Western culture' because it is 'a narrative ... in which the relation between incidents, characters, and setting could not be based upon or justified by their status within the physical world or their normal acceptance by bourgeois mentality'(142)

Pynchon utilizes natural law, therefore, Pynchon's literature may not be Magical Realism, or Magical Realism in its classical sense. Magical Realism, in the context of Thomas Pynchon, is paranoia that the reader and his/her apprehension of floating away from a reality which they are familiar with. The prose of Pynchon is unique, in so far, as it is constituted of elements of reality, but remains as fiction (by no way intimating that Pynchon's prose is autobiographical). There are aspects of fantasy, but the fantasy is manifested by the Spectacle of his Literature. In the case of *Kotecks and Oedipa*, nobody bothered to look in the box for the Demon which sorts atom telepathically; although, this is meant to be a metaphor, it has mythical applications, yet it is of the "real", constituted of the real, and becomes real in the context of the narratives.

Although Pynchon's literature may not be Magical Realism, it still embodies the elements of Magical Realism, but, within a western context, may be referred to in the scope of Magical Realism without belonging to the genre specifically. This is true for "Entropy", *Minstrel Island*, *The Crying of Lot 49*; however, Magical Realism exists in the belief of one system or another. There is a common thread, one which is a distinguishing factor against traditional Magical Realism, which is seen through all the texts: Entropy is related to The Condition of the More Probable, by virtue of the inevitable potential for the increase of energy; this potential creates a metaphorical heat-death. A heat-death is a form of the Spectacle, and the Spectacle operates on information contingent on the interpretation of the characters and reader's beliefs concerning the images and symbols offered throughout the three Pynchon texts; this belief in the patterns of images is Entropy at work—ideas and concepts gathering toward The Condition of the More Probable: this is the Postmodern Condition.

In the instance of *Minstrel Island*, hegemony operates as Spectacle. For instance, the hegemonized characters, IBM, and, more specifically Ivey, have moved into The Condition of the More Probable; the information, media, and propaganda that the employees of IBM are indoctrinated to have been conditioned toward believing in the efficiency, lifelessness, of the ideals of mechanized life. The Spectacle also sees to its common effect of marginalization on the individuals of IBM; these characters, illustrated through the actions of Ivey, are reduced to utility, to practice and worship the technological efficiency of computers. The IBM characters end up working *for* the computers and technology, an invasive all consuming Spectacle.

In the case of the Minstrel's of the island, their individuality gathers entropically as a social revolution against IBM; as a group of individuals with their own unique attributes, constituting a Spectacle. They are a motley crew of stock freaks; the Minstrels gather their own beliefs to preserve the way of life that they prefer. However, IBM does take over, misplacing the Minstrels from their occupations and status in society. The Spectacle of IBM has produced a marginalization effect on the natives of the island.

Entropy as Spectacle is developed, in the plot of "Entropy." The short story epitomizes The Condition of the More Probable. The party blows out of proportion and the chaotic social scene is being conveyed to the reader; the party had taken on its own life, an unnatural life. The beliefs that there were prostitutes and a good time to be had drew, entropically, so many people, so many individuals, that the Spectacle increased to a proportion so large that all the chaos collapsed upon itself; it is motion toward the More Probable that the social environment grew so big that it could not support all the different types of individuals with contradicting or congealing thoughts. For the

protagonists, Callisto and Aubade, the Spectacle of the party had consumed all the energy in the bedroom of the apartment, all the warmth. The bird dies as a consequence of a heat-death by losing its temperature to a terminal rate. The fact that Callisto cannot warm the bird is evidence that Callisto, with his pessimistic physical metaphor for life, has suffered a Postmodern condition, a spiritual heat-death.

The Crying of Lot 49 is a culmination of Entropy as Communication Theory; seeing development from the short story to the play, and now peaking at *The Crying of Lot 49*. The text is often confused by the reader because Pynchon has projected a Spectacle, and its effects, on the reader by employing Oedipa as the protagonist. By supporting an ambiguous character, Pynchon guides the reader down his rabbit hole, luring him or her through a series of images and symbols which translate into information which the reader is lead to believe. Pynchon frustrates his readers and his characters by providing polar aspects of information; this leads the reader and the characters to become confused with what is real.

The Spectacle challenges reality—how it is perceived and how it is constructed. The atmosphere of *Minstrel Island* provides entropic social revolution; “Entropy” and *The Crying Of Lot 49* both constitute elements of the physical world—the parameters of The Second Law of Thermodynamics—and through elements of a cultural revolution happening in 1960s America, which involved desperations so deep to an individual perception that the perceptions of the characters appear to be dismal. Pynchon brings together the aspects of his play and short story to *The Crying of Lot 49*: heteroglossia, constructs of power, non-traditional Magical Realism, Information Theory, entropy, heat-death, and all amounting to a narrative structure that is purely Spectacle. Pynchon

adds ambiguity which reflects the Spectacle on the audience, and as Oedipa tries to decipher the indecipherable, the reader is brought to a realization about “the real” in Pynchon’s fiction—it is relative. Relativity is the distinguishing factor which keeps the signs and symbols within the texts entropic; Pynchon both supports and defends entropy.

Rather than a dismal reading of Postmodernism, Pynchon’s texts operate on relativity; no matter how lost the reader or the character may be, Pynchon offers a plethora of possibilities through entropic design, through the belief in what may be real. Each character in Pynchon’s literature possesses the capacity to be a sort of Maxwell’s Demon; they have the capacity to move toward the More Probable, inevitably toward a heat-death, and to construct their reality as Spectacle. The Spectacle offers the possibility of the moment, and the moments to come, as a cohesive narrative string through the belief of what may be real. Though Reader-Response Theory is not the best application for Pynchon’s fiction, heteroglossia gives the reader enough to contemplate the ambiguousness of the texts, polar in nature, and experience the Postmodern Condition—entropically arriving at the Spectacle inches from the edge of a chasm, or vacuum of thought, of a literary heat-death.

Whether the heat-death is experienced by the reader or the characters, the developmental, theoretical, applications of empirical and social modes offers a perspective within Pynchon’s literature that Postmodern critics hardly explore, a positive effect upon its characters and readers. Thomas Pynchon may only offer the reader the only option of a heat-death, yet it is the involvement of the reader that makes the heteroglossia of Spectacles of literary realities real; it is through the hope provided

by the hubris of the characters which illuminates the human condition in the dark criticism of Postmodernism and its theory. By providing an empirical parameter of narration, Pynchon challenges the conventions of Postmodern theory through his introduction of empiricism as metaphor in literature while epitomizing Postmodernism's tendencies to break conventions of Modernist motifs and ideals. Like many other great authors, Thomas Pynchon has created a world wherein his fiction may thrive. It may be difficult to separate an author from his texts, trying to find Pynchon's intention of a text, given his ambiguous narratives; however, it is through the devices unique to his style of writing which constitute his narration in fiction that codifies him in the American literary canon. As a key figure in Postmodern literature, Thomas Pynchon is a beacon of light among the motifs which stereotypically identify with the genre of Postmodernism.

Within the contexts of Pynchon, the Postmodern is significant to the human condition and the hope for future prosperity. The stories, at first, may appear bleak and full of dismay, but through the destruction of an individual's reality or character's reality, there is a possibility for progress—there is hope. Hope is not only present at the most desperate of Postmodern condition, in Pynchon's sake, but it is inevitable given the resilience of his characters to wade through the mire of his literary labyrinth. The human condition resides as the inspiring factor behind Postmodern enlightenment; it is up to the reader to analyze and step further than what is written on the page in order to discover the resilience of such characters, such as Oedipa, Calisto, and the Whore. There is no greater value to the texts of Thomas Pynchon than the reflection of resilience the human condition portrays—whether malice or peace, humanity has hope for either

dream. The consequences to literary entropy in fiction are aspects of what constitutes the real within dreams, only to become shattered due to the trajectory of the Postmodern condition. Yet, the pieces of those destroyed realities are reassembled into the creation of an entirely new Spectacle of reality, not without the reminiscence of the past failures of realities.

Thomas Pynchon's literature ought to be received by a literary scholar in the most highest of regards; however, he is perceived by the common reader as banal and difficult to interpret. There must be some reason why Thomas Pynchon's literature is still read today. Does it challenge us? Does it challenge our perception of reality? And most importantly does it challenge ourselves as individuals? Even unanswered, Thomas Pynchon's texts beg at these questions, not necessarily illuminating the answers behind each texts, but the answers behind each reader; ergo, how does each reader perceive Thomas Pynchon. It is not so important that the reader perceives what he reads as Truth, but *how* he perceives truth.

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ENDNOTES:

ⁱ The Spectacle: A situationalist concept pertaining to what is real. The Spectacle may not be easily defined, but can be commonly applied to literature and social theory. It is a structure which is ostensibly man-made, that does not exist within matter and which can be perceived by Masses of people. The Spectacle may be mistaken as communication, and through its interpretation reality. In the Postmodern literary world the Spectacle is a necessity, or what Baudrillard would refer to as a vital illusion—a myth which supports the structure of a culture.

ⁱⁱ Heteroglossia: a literary type of multiplicity.

ⁱⁱⁱ Heat Death: A result of entropy. When one system experiences an over flux of energy or when one system is negated of any energy the resulting factor is referred to as a type of death since there is no more motion; the system has ceased to be living.

^{iv} Entropy (entropic design): The measurement of disorder. $\Delta S = \text{final system} - \text{initial system}$.

Literary Entropy: When one system (a character) encounters a previous system (character) the change reflects the amount of energy left when these two systems meet. With the introduction of each character, Thomas Pynchon introduces more systems into his empirical metaphor.

^v The Condition of the More Probable: In a set of actions, from matter to characters there exists a tendency for action to happen in a prescribed way; i.e. when dominoes are stacked to topple each other over, it is the action of the last domino to topple is the condition of the more probable. An action has occurred and it has acted in accordance with its set of parameters.

^{vi} Ennui (French): Pathological boredom.

^{vii} The Postmodern Condition: In the contexts of Thomas Pynchon a character who experiences a heat-death. Synonymous to other literary Postmodern conditions, Thomas Pynchon's heat-death includes the uncertainty of truth, an apocalyptic perception of reality, and a dismay of the information surrounding all of the characters. A character under the Postmodern condition is the other and usually isolated from the culture he or she claims to be a part of.

CURRICULM VITAE:

Ira Anthony Walker was born in El Paso, Texas; graduated from Cathedral High School in 2001 where he became recognized as a swimmer at nationally ranked swim team. Swimming brought the opportunity for Ira to attend Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas on an athletic scholarship. While attending Arkansas' only state funded liberal arts university, Ira found his passion in literature; he attended a new writing specialization program, double minoring in English and Philosophy and helped found the English Club. Ira then went on to graduate school at the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas where he received the honor of being accepted into the international English honor society Sigma Tau Delta. He continued his education at the University of Texas at El Paso. Ira began presenting at conferences around the nation; he, in 2010, attended the Midwestern Conference of Literature, Language, and Media, in 2010 he attended his first Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico where he earned the position of Chair of the Science and Literature panel, in which he still resides. Ira is currently enrolled at Louisiana State University pursuing a Master's degree in Library Science with a specialization in Archives and Special Collections. Through the development and writing process of his thesis, he became aware of a world behind the major literary canon—archives. Through this development in Ira's education, he is determined to seek a professional degree in Library Science where he may continue to contribute to literature as a whole.

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