

Pre Cold War British Spy Fiction, the “albatross of self” and lines of flight in *Gravity’s Rainbow*

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Abstract

In his introduction to *Slow Learner*, Thomas Pynchon suggests that an influence in his short story ‘Under the Rose’ was the spy fiction he had read as a child. What he takes from the form, he says, is an enjoyment of “lurking, spying, false identities, psychological games.” I hope to show that this youthful reading has interesting things to tell us about Pynchon’s writing beyond ‘Under the Rose’ and in more complex ways than his quote suggests. To do this I want to focus on that perennial issue of spy fiction - the maintenance and manipulation of identity. Negotiating ideas of subjectivity is a core concern in Pynchon’s work and to consider it I want to use the four spy novelists he mentions in the *Slow Learner* introduction - John Buchan, E. Phillips Oppenheim, Helen MacInnes and Geoffrey Household. This is a more disparate quartet of authors than Pynchon’s grouping suggests and I want to employ them to consider a variety of strategies used to ‘build character’ and the way Pynchon’s work approaches these strategies. This allows a reflection on questions of disguise, doubles, animals and the nomad within the context of a variety of postcolonial theories and aspects of Deleuze and Guattari’s “nomadology”. It would appear an obvious place to see connections to spy fiction, but, though I touch on some aspects of this novel, my focus will be very much on *Gravity’s Rainbow* because it has a much more concerted focus on the subject of Empire. Some intriguing echoes are to be found in the work of Pynchon in these authors and I hope to show how Pynchon’s attempts to formulate US “superimperialism” (Aijaz Ahmad) are reflected in the imperial concerns of what I would term the pre-Cold War British Spy fiction that engaged Pynchon in his youth.

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“James Bond has it easy.”

When Maxime Tarnow meets CIA man Nicholas Windust for the first time in *Bleeding Edge* (2013) she struggles to give shape to her impressions of him:

James Bond has it easy. Brits can always fall back on accents, where you got your tux, a multivolume set of class signifiers. In New York all you really have is shoes.¹

Clearly, this passage shows the US detective differentiating herself from the strange figure of the spy, a figure she finds difficult to pin down without turning to his (usually his) representation in another culture. In some ways, Maxine’s “analysis” reflects the broad perception of the spy, and by extension the spy genre, in the US for much of the twentieth century. The spy is a figure from another world: British, class-bound, imperial, morally suspect. A detective outside the law caught up in the murky world of politics. It is telling that Pynchon’s character mentions James Bond here as this is really the beginnings of the spy as an imaginable creation (not entirely negative in its connotations) to a US audience. The uncomfortableness with this figure is reflected in the rarity of the spy genre itself as a US form before Fleming’s success. The Stateside absence of the spy form before Fleming has been noted by several commentators who have proposed a variety of reasons for it: US isolationism made it an uninteresting genre for Americans, the dissembling of the spy hero made it antithetical to US democratic values and the genre reminded US readers of the undercover detectives used to break the unions in the late 1800s and early 1900s.²

However, watching *Homecoming* (2011) or *The Americans* (2013) it might be difficult to remember that there was a time when the “enemy within” could not be dealt with as complexly as this in US culture: that before the seventies an American spy text was a very unusual thing. Thomas Pynchon has written across this period and spies are not only at the centre of *Bleeding Edge* (Mossad, the CIA, the FSB), but have appeared in his work for over fifty years. The figure is obvious in Pynchon’s *V.* (1961), a novel which strikingly reflects elements of a classic

of the pre-Cold War British spy genre: John Buchan's *Greenmantle* (1916). Buchan's novel contains Von Einem, a mysterious and mesmerising villainess who is introduced to us under the cypher of "v. 1." and who seems not unlike several of the manifestations of the title character in Pynchon's first novel. Buchan also gives us a German commander of 'questionable' sexual tastes who fought with Von Trotha against the Herero. This is surely reflected in Pynchon's Lieutenant Weissmann, a sadistic figure we meet in South West Africa who returns as Blicero, the SS major, in *Gravity's Rainbow*.³ The figure of the secret agent is one also apparent in *Mason & Dixon* (where "spies were ev'rywhere") and other elements prevalent in the spy novel, I have argued elsewhere, are surprisingly visible in a fiction set long before the genre's pre-eminence.⁴ Similarly, Brian McHale has identified the influence of the early British spy novel in *Against the Day* (2006). He argues that the use of British spy fiction is an example of deploying generic conventions ("genre poaching") to comment on the historical contexts and subtexts their conventions might appear to disguise. Basically, McHale argues convincingly that "Pynchon queers the British spy novel" in *Against the Day* though I hope to suggest here that this is not the only purpose engagement with the genre serves across Pynchon's texts.⁵

Finally, the ongoing connection to the spy in Pynchon's texts may not be a surprise to those who have studied the introduction to *Slow Learner* (1985):

I had grown up reading a lot of spy fiction, novels of intrigue, notably those of John Buchan. The only book of his that anyone remembers now is *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, but he wrote half a dozen more just as good or better. They were all in my hometown library. So were E. Phillips Oppenheim, Helen MacInnes, Geoffrey Household, and many others as well. The net effect was eventually to build up in my uncritical brain a peculiar shadowy vision of the history preceding the two world wars. Political decision-making and official documents did not figure in this nearly as much as lurking, spying, false identities, psychological games.⁶

In this article, I want to propose that the youthful reading of spy fiction identified in *Slow Learner* has interesting things to tell us, beyond the short story it refers to directly, about the maintenance and manipulation of identity. I will focus on *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) and this novel's

representation of the figure of the spy to suggest a broader purpose in its use than McHale considers in his reading of *Against the Day*. Negotiating ideas of subjectivity is a core concern in Pynchon's complex seventies novel and to consider it I want to use Buchan, Oppenheim, MacInnes and Household. This focus helps us reflect on *Gravity's Rainbow's* identification of the US as a new sort of Empire, still an unusual idea when the novel was written.⁷ Amy Kaplan, the American postcolonial critic, has identified an "ongoing pattern of denial"⁸ when it comes to the cultural representation of US imperialism or reflection on cultural representation of US imperialism that continued right into the nineties.⁹ As such, beyond Pynchon's oft-identified recognition of "the centrality of identity politics to the American experience" his postcolonialist stance, evident in his representation of colonialism, is "remarkable and memorable" for a US writer.¹⁰ Finally, I want to identify how these pre-Cold War British Spy narratives may help Pynchon identify strategies of escape from these new imperial mindsets.

Defining Pre-Cold War British Spy Fiction

The 2011 film version of John le Carré's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (a book published one year after *Gravity's Rainbow*) and the resurgence of the global brand of James Bond in the early twenty first century reveal the resonance that still exists within the Cold War spy narrative. Yet what Bond or Smiley represent is not what the spy narratives Pynchon mentions in *Slow Learner* represent. Fleming's character and le Carré's character (and their filmic offshoots) are a post-British empire phenomenon: the spy novel has moved from a genre obsessed with losing the Empire to one obsessed with having lost it.

The pre-Cold War British spy novel was born at the turn of the twentieth century, at the height of the British Empire and its roots lie in the shifting alignments of class and state politics, its flowering out of war and war's threat. It takes place in a clear and idealized social landscape threatened by the alternative landscape of the villain, leading a hero into an uncertain, intermediate space, filled with the terrors of instability. It contains a hero with the sturdiness of the Establishment, but with the

resolute inventiveness of the outsider and with confidence in the fluidity of class, fighting a villain who threatens the personal, national and ideological identity of the hero. It has a narrative, in terms of form and content, that centres on a tension and paranoia reflecting the unstable situation of Empire, both nationally and internationally.¹¹

This may not sound that dissimilar from le Carré or Fleming, but the spy fictions Pynchon points to in *Slow Learner* are very different in outlook. They are much less hampered by the moral doubts of Cold War spy fiction (whether reflected on, as in le Carré, or ironised, as in Fleming), so confident are they in the correctness of the spy's actions. It is not that this pre-Cold War British spy fiction is infallible in its moral rectitude, rather, that its unselfconscious attempts to achieve this rectitude, inadvertently reveals striking contradictions about the nature of Empire. The clarity of these contradictions raises questions about Imperialism that are useful in considering *Gravity's Rainbow* and the views it represents of the US after the Second World War.

British spy fiction allows us to see the continuity that Pynchon's text draws between the subject in an imperialist world and a "superimperialist" world.¹² The representation of the subject in British spy fiction throws up striking characterization, even if those characters are not convincing. This helps us outline how Pynchon's writing deals with the disappearing subject, while bringing in the socio-historical question of how our political system plays an increasingly conscious part in the way we see ourselves. These spy novels throw up elements that show the direct influence of specific spy narratives on Pynchon's work (as we have already seen with *Greenmantle*). However, I am more interested in how the spy narrative, focalised through the four authors that Pynchon mentions in *Slow Learner*, identifies elements that are important in *Gravity's Rainbow*.

John Buchan and invisibility - the "carcasses under the snow"

Firstly, I want to employ John Buchan's fiction to show how Pynchon's 1973 text utilises and interrogates the nature of disguise in spy fiction

(both in terms of the flexibility and the stability of the hero). This interrogation helps the reader reflect on the nature of identity for those empowered and disempowered by Empire. Buchan was a novelist, politician and, as one of Lord Alfred Milner's 'Kindergarten,' an imperialist by ideology.¹³ I want to focus here on Buchan's *The Courts of the Morning* (1929) - a novel set in South America where our heroes try to stop a charismatic villain who threatens democracy. Sandy Arbuthnot, a Buchan stalwart across several novels, initially disguises himself as Miguel, restaurant waiter. He can then spend his evenings taking on other disguises - clerks of varying degrees of importance, a European engineer and a furnace workman¹⁴ - before arranging Miguel's death and becoming Black, a recruit to the Mines Police. These figures are both from the classes 'below' Arbuthnot and the races 'below' him (European, South American), and if we look in other books by Buchan we find similar transformations: Arbuthnot as Hindi swami in *The Three Hostages* (1924) or a Moslem prophet in *Greenmantle*. Even the less protean Richard Hannay has, from the time he pretends to be a milkman at the beginning of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915), played a plethora of lesser disguises. He also plays the major disguise of a pacifist/communist in *Mr Standfast* (1919): a figure 'below' him ideologically.

So, from make-up and proficiency in foreign languages to a change of hat and coat to slip past the enemy unnoticed, we see the British spy's mastery of a multiplicity of Others. This mastery is so accomplished that, often, we can do away with the presence of the Other altogether, for what shows the ability to hoodwink the enemy better than hoodwinking ones friends? Arbuthnot, especially, seems to take pleasure in startling his associates in this way:

A waiter had appeared suddenly, entering from the bedroom. He carried a tray with three cups of mat, which he placed on the table at Janet's elbow.

"Look here, you've made a mistake," Archie said in his halting Spanish. "We gave no orders."

The man replied in English:

"Didn't you? All the same you'd be the better for a cup. I'm going to have one myself. You might lock that door, Archie, and give me a cigarette."

While Archie stared thunderstruck, Janet laughed...(CM 68)

Though the disguise is in place to dupe the enemy (the Other) even the experience of being duped is seen through the compatriot (the Self). The disguise is successful in representing 'non-Self' without having to confront directly an Other (an actual Spanish waiter, for instance). The sense that one only needs to fool the 'important' people (the white Englishman) and the ease with which our hero can replicate 'lesser' figures, reduces, even erases, any Other and ensures the superiority of the hero.

To maintain the superiority of the hero, disguise is represented as a skill (RH 137). Even then, some races are better than others at this: "We call ourselves insular, but the truth is that we are the only race on earth that can produce men capable of getting inside the skin of remote peoples" (RH 124). This passage is inserted in the middle of a longer one on Sandy Arbuthnot which strikes the strongest of imperial notes.¹⁵ The suggestion underlying this passage is that the power of disguise is an English power and one that makes England the greatest imperial power. This Imperial confidence is, ironically, one of the English spy's biggest problems. It is the throwing off of self-importance that is the victory of the successful spy. However, the English spy prides himself in his non-invisibility and his unerring honesty. Thus, in *Mr. Standfast*, when Richard Hannay has to pretend to be a pacifist he has to be admonished before he gives himself away: "A word in your ear Mr Brand. Could ye not look a bit more sheepish?" (RH 402)

The disguise is a means to an ends: there is no moral or social life of any note, no responsibilities, and, when its aims are achieved, it leaves a space where an unimportant, replaceable figure should be. The only necessity is to make this space explicable, as we see when Arbuthnot's "Miguel" makes his exit, so Arbuthnot can become the mine's policeman Black:

Through a mysterious blunder a small packet of lentonite was detonated, and a corner of the compound wall was blown down and a great crater made in the earth. For some inexplicable reason Miguel seemed to have been in the neighbourhood at the time and he was the only casualty. Fragments of his clothing were found, and a bit of the hat which he was known to be wearing, and it was assumed that his remains were dispersed amongst the two acres of debris. (CM 75)

Miguel has done his job and is obliterated to allow Arbuthnot to take on his next disguise immediately. There is no mourning, there is no lover, there is no private self: only that which can be seen and explained, and thus ignored. In a sense, otherness is reduced to a disguise, a public persona, and certainly does not exist within the realms of a complex human being.

Pynchon's text clearly grasps the nature of disguise in British spy fiction and the notions of invisibility it plays with allow him to reflect on both the powerful disguising themselves as the powerless and the nature of powerlessness. With *V.* (1963) we see, in the character of Stencil, a character able to take on the identity of anyone he chooses, though these characters remain merely a parody of the disguises in British spy fiction. *Gravity's Rainbow*, however, focuses the ideas of *V.* Where Stencil still took on the roles of those below him, both culturally and socially, Slothrop, though taking on even more identities, disguises himself as figures of the Imperial centre.¹⁶ If we chart Slothrop's appearance changing, we might note him moving from American soldier's uniform, to American tourist shirt, to the British soldier uniform. He begins to dream in German, affects Cary Grant English, and grows a moustache (that core ingredient of disguise¹⁷). Though he moves into a zoot suit for a short time, he then becomes Ian Scuffling, English war correspondent. In Berlin he transforms into Rocketman as well as Max Schlepzig, actor and magician. We also see him in a tux and dressed as the Russian Tchitcherine. On his way back to Britain he becomes disguised as the pig god Plechazunga.¹⁸

Slothrop's disguises, usually enforced by external situations against his will and often clumsily constructed, are of soldiers in Imperial armies, of heroes from these countries (war correspondents are a bit of a favourite in spy novels), of superheroes (Rocketman is an American comic hero and Slothrop becomes him by dressing up in revamped Wagnerian opera props), even a comic god figure. We might also note that Slothrop is compared to a number of figures - including Lawrence of Arabia, Cary Grant, Ernest Hemingway, Don Ameche and Errol Flynn. These are all adventurers, adventure writers, actors who play heroes, and, of course, Slothrop becomes all of them in comically undermined situations (he is Lawrence of Arabia, stuck in a tree wearing nothing, but a sheet (*GR* 234), he wants to be seen as Errol Flynn, but people think he is Oliver Hardy (*GR* 443)).

The overall picture is not one of a spy well versed in invisibility playing the marginalised to perfection, it is quite the opposite. Slothrop clumsily takes on (often fooling no one) increasingly extreme manifestations of heroism, many of which are very much figures associated with the imperial establishment. The disguises are seldom of Slothrop's choice - they are the result of comic circumstances (e.g. clothes stolen or wet), develop over a long period of time (his Rocketman outfit is a disparate collection of clothes that eventually find a label) and hardly seem inventive or resilient (Rocket Man and the papier maché Pleszunga mask). If any of these disguises are successful it is out of luck, foolhardiness and even the planning of his enemies (as we see with Tchitcherine's allowing him to go unhindered to pick up drugs in Potsdam (GR 445)).

This is hardly the vision of control and superiority used to maintain invisibility, especially in an environment where the disempowered are not exiled outside the frame of the narrative. In fact, it is these characters who are often the first to see through Slothrop's clumsy ruses. This is not, however, merely an inversion of the subject of disguise for, though Slothrop might comically take on the heroic trappings of Empire, he is still also a victim of the changing sociopolitical network. His disguises are an attempt to evade the forces who wish to monitor his 'progress' and to discover his 'real' identity. His disguises (as Imperial ruling subject, rather than ruled) are a sensible strategy, if the Imperial ruling subject has become the enemy.

However, whereas in spy fiction disguise leads to the assertion of the 'real' underneath, here it seems only to aid in Slothrop's dissipation, revealing a complete lack of any such notion of 'realness'. Like Stencil, Slothrop comes to amount to a series of disguises and very little else: both, finally, have no 'home or position' (RH 467-8). Stencil continues to exist by following rumours, Slothrop ceases to be anything, but fragments of clothing, not even his own ("Item S-1706.31, Fragment of Undershirt, U.S. Navy issue, with brown stain assumed to be blood in shape of sword running lower left to upper right" (GR 866)) and rumours ("Some believe that fragments of Slothrop have grown into consistent personae of their own." (GR 866)). In this he is not unlike Sandy Arbuthnot, who becomes mere fragments of clothing after the obliteration of the waiter Miguel. They are also similar in the sense of being constituted merely as hearsay:

Lean brown men from the ends of the earth may be seen on the London pavements now and then in creased clothes, walking with the light outland step, slinking into clubs as if they could not remember whether or not they belonged to them. From them you may get news of Sandy. Better still, you will hear of him at little forgotten fishing ports where the Albanian mountains dip into the Adriatic. If you struck a Mecca pilgrimage the odds are you meet a dozen of Sandy's friends in it. In shepherds huts in the Caucasus you will find bits of his cast-off clothing, for he has a knack of shedding garments as he goes. In the caravanserais of Bokhara and Samarkand he is known, and there are shikaris in the Pamirs who still speak of him round their fires. If you were going to visit Petrograd or Rome or Cairo it would be no use asking him for introductions; if he gave them they would lead you into strange haunts. But if fate compelled you to go to Llasa or Yarkand or Seistan he could map you out your road for you and pass the word to potent friends. (RH 124)

Of course Arbuthnot reconstitutes himself into another disguise after Miguel and reappears physically in *Greenmantle*, ceasing to be merely rumours. But how are we to explain the deconstituting and reconstituting that goes on with Slothrop? To do this we have to look at the parameters of disguise, using the other British authors Pynchon identified. I want to examine MacInnes and Oppenheim in terms of nationality and Household in terms of the concept of the nomad.

Helen MacInnes and Doubles – the “ghost feather” (i)

If we look at the way Helen MacInnes uses doubles in one of her early spy fictions we can consider how these spy novel techniques might resonate with Pynchon's characterisation in *Gravity's Rainbow*. The double in spy fiction offers a specific way to reiterate the strength, resourcefulness and stability of the British imperial hero whilst *Gravity's Rainbow* utilises this figure to show the inflexibility and impossibility of what, on first appearance, may seem a more fluid element of identity.

The double is an interesting figure in the spy novel and brings an

intensity to the experience of being someone else in physical, moral and national terms. We can see a good example of the double in Helen Macinnes' *Assignment in Brittany* (1942), where the double plays out a sort of inverted Jekyll and Hyde story. The hero Hearne takes on the identity of a Breton farm owner, while the original lies in an English hospital. Hearne is physically identical to Corlay, yet the resulting reality Hearne experiences is, not one of merely being Corlay, but a super intensity of 'trying to be Corlay without giving himself away.' He, after all, finds himself arriving in a house he is supposed to have lived in all his life, to see people he is supposed to have known all his life:

There were two doors. That one on his left would be the large bedroom above the kitchen, so this one must be his. He touched the latch gently and pushed the door slowly open. Inside it was dark, save for a faint blot of light where the window lay on the west wall.¹⁹

Even an object as ordinary as a window becomes something strange, something that can only be placed by a process of connections dependent on visual phenomena.

How we see Hearne is partly determined by his relationship to external phenomena and the tension between how he sees them (unfamiliar), and how he should see them (familiar). This captures perfectly the dislocation of self, experienced by the double. There is a similar tension between how Corlay has behaved and how he should behave, but the dislocation of self is not only obvious in terms of how the double sees their surroundings and themselves, but also how other people see the double.²⁰

However, this is not to say that morality suffers in the developing picture of the double, only in its specifically religious nature. Though in *Assignment in Brittany* the physical matters (Hearne must look like Corlay), it is obviously the actions that result from this which are important. Hearne looks like Corlay, can come to know the places, people and things Corlay knows, but he also has to act like him. As we saw when Hearne entered Corlay's home, every minute action can define our identity. This is where the morality comes in because Hearne cannot be like Corlay: he cannot be a traitor to his fiancé, his family and his country. Being unable to act like Corlay, Hearne both defines him and redefines him. But it is not merely a question of Corlay being bad and Hearne being good, it is the necessity that Corlay is good. Corlay is an

individual identity, but also stands as a symbol for France. The strong-willed Englishman replaces the physically identical but weak-willed French collaborator. Hearne's place in the double relationship is obviously to provide brave, morally uncompromised, English backbone. However, in strategic terms (this is 1942 after all), the English desperately need a more invigorated France if they are to defeat Germany.

Hearne throws himself into his identity and carries out his responsibilities with a vigour unknown to the former occupier. Hearne strives to be a good lover and a good patriot. In doing so, he increases the hope and confidence of those around him. He rejects the role of Corlay as collaborator and takes the correct position in society (as a son, a fiancé, an heir to property and a Frenchman) with positive repercussions on all around him.

These are regenerations in terms of personal, social and national order (that is international, in the imperialist sense) and all these levels must be maintained to achieve stability. However, what threatens the spy most is dealing with personal situations: the private sphere, outside the remit of the spy's machinations. Social interaction may threaten the spy to some extent and it is in the area on which public and private concerns meet, but it is in the most intimate situations that the spy comes closest to giving away their identities. Hearne's downfall is the 'ordinary human kindness' he shows to Corlay's mother, their housekeeper and his girlfriend in contrast to the Frenchman's selfishness.

The spy novel demands a negotiation of this private sphere in the midst of the necessities required by the public sphere (the national good), and much of the action's tension revolves around this negotiation. The private sphere is the boundary of the playacting of the double, the most serious and exacting of the spy's roles. In it the spy handles the nearest and dearest with dexterity and compassion with the result that he not only avoids distressing them (which seems unlikely), but actually improves their lot (which seems impossible). Hearne gives Corlay's mother some dignity and takes his fiancée off to England.

The ideas in MacInnes – the dislocation of self in moral and national terms and the relationship to the private sphere of the spy are both important in Pynchon's text. The dislocation of the self can be so intense in Pynchon's novels that his characters can come to experience themselves at distances unimaginable, in terms of national identity, in

the spy novel:

American voices, country voices, high pitched and without mercy. He lies freezing, wondering if the bedsprings will give him away. For possibly the first time he is hearing US as it must sound to a non-American. Later he will recall that what surprized him most was the fanaticism, the reliance not just on flat force but on the rightness of what they planned to do... he'd been told long ago to expect this sort of thing from the Nazis, and especially from the Japs - we were the ones who always played fair - but this pair outside the door now are as demoralising as a close up of John Wayne (the angle emphasizing how slanted his eyes are, funny you never noticed before) screaming "BANZAI!" (GR 298)

Here lies Slothrop, experiencing himself as utterly other: as non-American. His countrymen are disembodied voices he hears from a cellar, the tone of purpose in their voices seems indistinguishable from those of other conquering forces. In Slothrop's state of mind even John Wayne becomes 'foreign'. Nationalism, the mainstay, the core, of all great British spies disappears here for Slothrop. He becomes, for the moment, totally Other (that which is not American) and this makes American Other (if only temporarily). There is no repaired fragmentation. The US here, in the shape of the MPs, is the enemy.

Experience of self as Other frequently takes place in Pynchon's texts, but seldom in the name of one's country and not in the same sort of extreme situations of the double in the spy novel. Something different happens to doubleness in Pynchon's texts. In *V.* we see this with the protagonist of the title and her love affair with the beautiful ballerina Melanie, a love affair consummated in the mirror (*V.* 409-410) or Slothrop's relationship with Margherita Erdmann (*GR* 462-3).²¹ Of course, they are not joined as doubles, doubles are a closed system in search of oneness, totality. This is a yearning apparent in most of Pynchon's characters, but increasingly dangerous for them as it grows in intensity.

Such intensity is highly visible in Pointsman whose megalomania seems to bring him close to insanity. Even the voices in his head are to the advantage of his powermongering, telling him to split up Roger Mexico and Jessica Swanlake in order that Mexico will work more conscientiously:

How many chances does one get to be a synthesis, Pointsman? East and West, together in the same bloke? You cannot only be Nayland Smith, giving a young lad in a funk wholesome advice about the virtues of Work, but you also, at the same time, get to be Fu Manchu! eh? the one who has the young lady in his power! How's that? Protagonist and antagonist in one. I'd jump at it if I were you. (GR 323)

The synthesis the voice describes is, of course, false. Its two halves are man-made, created by one side, one force: the Imperial West. The image of the East is Fu Manchu, an image of evil, but it is also an image created in the West (by Sax Rhomer) to justify the ways of the West (represented by Rhomer's character Nayland-Smith). Again the synthesis opens up, unfolds, fragments; its personalities a reflection of its context rather than closed binaries. After all the very notion of such binaries are, in themselves, an example of the context. Nayland-Smith and Fu Manchu are not the full extent of the picture, they are merely two more personalities related to Pointsman, two more surrogates promising the complete self: two more disguises. Pynchon's text will not allow the reduction to the binary, favoured by Pointsman, partly because the binary is a simplification of a more complex process, but also because it inevitably tends towards the single, the unique, the original.

The double in spy fiction shows one parameter of disguise; it shows disguise at its most thorough and controlled and it helps us see how Pynchon's text chooses to deal with this influential element in terms of the question of identity. The spy double is brought into the strange position of experiencing self as not self, to such an extent that every action, every perception, is shown to be heavy with his identity. The spy double, in the spirit of his literary forbears, brings out the mutuality of the double, the sense that there are two fragments to the self (a perfect whole) neither of which should take over or be discarded. The spy double shows the individual psyche as symbolic of the national consciousness. Finally, the spy double separates two spheres, the public and the private, with the former being the place designated for spying, whilst the latter demands a gentler touch. *Gravity's Rainbow* interrogates all these certainties and simplifications as it attempts to draw a more complex image of the imperial State.

E. Phillip Oppenheim and animals – the “ghost feather” (ii)

In this section I will focus on a specific E. Phillip Oppenheim text in terms of the representation of the animal in his spy fiction. This helps reveal how Pynchon’s text complicates the idea of the human ‘animalised’ to allow reflections on the roles of science and technology in the consideration of identity and the penetration of the most private of spheres by government and business. Oppenheim wrote over 100 novels in a career that ran from the 1880s to the 1940s. His most famous novel was *The Great Impersonation* (1920) – a sort of cross between *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), *Return of Martin Guerre* (1982) and *Heart of Darkness* (1902) written by Barbara Cartland – which was filmed three times.

The aspect on which I wish to focus here is another element of national identity. What we see in *The Great Impersonation* is the change of imperial battlefield from the nineteenth to twentieth century: evil moves from the externalized 'darkness' to an internal one. It is on the site of Dominey's personal identity (England's national identity) that the fight now takes place. The reader is never sure (or is not supposed to be), until the end, whether the character who returns to England is Dominey (the rejuvenated Englishman acting as double agent to save Britain) or Von Ragastein (the German spy threatening to destroy Britain). Various characters refuse both Dominey as Dominey (most notably Dominey's wife²²) and Dominey as Von Ragastein (Von Ragastein's former lover (SS 929)).

The most pertinent aspect of the double here with respect to Pynchon’s work, and ever-present in Oppenheim’s novel, is the savage, the animal in man. This figure is a complex aspect of the double and, in one sense, might be seen, in terms of the spy, as the flipside of the double. To play a man you resemble, as if you are identical to him in every way, demands complete control, as we see with Hearne in *Assignment in Brittany*. To find oneself playing the animal (or being it) is a sign of utter desperation, an abandonment of control. In a more general

sense, though, the savage is an element of, rather than the opposite of, the double. From the end of the eighteenth century, and through the rise of the double in literature, the animal-in-man was an increasingly prominent figure, as colonialism helped to clarify a new metaphor: the “concept of moral evil became associated with the primitive”.²³

Yet, as the primitive increasingly came to stand for the opposite of the rational, the two also became increasingly yoked together. Through science, industry, technology the image of the savage was created, disseminated and denounced. However, the worst crime of the primitive is his amorality (godlessness), which was increasingly what the scientist was accused of. In one of the most famous of double narratives, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) the animal is the evil, but spontaneous part, opposed to the good, but rational part, of the double. Yet this cannot remain a closed double, because the figure is inextricably linked to the scientist: in fact, the animalism is created by the scientist.

The Great Impersonation displays the animalistic aspects of the double in its colonial context, while trying to underplay the inextricably connected technological aspect. *The Great Impersonation* begins in Africa, with the doubles Von Ragastein and Dominey encountering one another with two very different perspectives of the Imperial adventure. For the German the drawbacks of Africa to his social life and the European physical constitution are secondary to his patriotism: "'I am part of a great machine,' was the somewhat evasive reply. 'I have nothing to do but obey'" (SS 778). Dominey, representing England in its Imperial decadence, lacks the stomach, the spirit, or sense of duty, for the civilizing mission. He fears, in fact, the reverse of civilization: "If I live in this country much longer I shall go on all fours" (SS 779).

This animalizing aspect of 'Darkest' Africa is not unusual in the contemporaneous genre text, but what is strange is that this image, of man as animal, remains to haunt Dominey when he returns to England and his ancestral home: "It moved at first on all fours, then on two legs, then on all four again" (SS 974). Amongst villagers and servants the story goes that this figure is the spirit of Roger Unthank, whom Dominey supposedly slew, before fleeing his home a decade before. Africa is connected to this ghost story in Dominey's attempts to downplay it: "I'll tell you a few West African superstitions which will make our local one

seem anaemic." (SS 835) Dominey also 'makes light' of the local ghost in another sense, when he talks of most ghosts being "a credit to the family," but this one as "quite outside the pale" (SS 909). The story can also be seen in class terms, when the ghost reveals itself to be the living, but insane school teacher, Roger Unthank. His madness arises out of an obsession with his social superior, Dominey's wife, and sees him living in the nearby marshes as "half man, half beast" (SS 975).

Class and Empire are revealed, not through the consciousness of an individual or a realist action delineating these issues, but by two 'dark' myths: one associated with the locals of provincial, rural England, the other with the indigenous peoples of colonial Africa. These myths are revealed as the products of 'inferior' minds, 'inferior' cultures and both are defeated by the rationalism of a 'superior' intellect. There is no ghost, there is no black magic, just a stout-hearted, clear-headed, English aristocrat.

Dominey is not shown to us directly as a psychological character, otherwise we would immediately realize he was Dominey and most of the book's suspense would be lost. However, as we have said, the consciousness of the story comes through the two myths, both of which are dependent on a sense of animalizing and connection to the irrational force of superstition. The fact that Von Ragastein is "collecting natives for drill" (SS 771), and putting a European order to this 'wild' place seems a far off threat. The bureaucratizing of the area ("the prospecting, the supervising of reports home") takes place over 'only' "a few million acres of fever swamps" (SS 771) because, basically, England is, or has been, bureaucratizing and regimentizing most of the other areas of Africa and Asia.

It is the force of Germany's "great machine" (SS 778) that Dominey sets out to stop, yet the idea of Empire as a machine, as a technological construction, remains a distant problem. If anything, *The Great Impersonation* seems to say Dominey could do with the discipline and purpose of the German imperial machine: "A war in my younger days, when I was in the Army," Dominey mused, "might have made a man of me" (SS 771). The threat, it would seem, lies not so much in 'regimentation' itself: the Empire works best when it is 'shipshape.' The threat comes from German regimentation, with the emphasis on the German. However, it is the image of the animal, not the machine,

defeating the Imperial Self which seems more intense. It is the animalizing force that can put a man “on all fours” which seems more potently threatening, physically and psychologically.

So, in *The Great Impersonation*, the animal in civilized man manifests itself both externally and internally. Externally as the effects of an increasingly unstable colonial Empire (which has become a burden rather than a mission) and internally in the breakdown of the schoolteacher Unthank (who himself symbolizes the ghosts to be slain within Dominey). In a sense the book is a shift from the external to the internal, not only in the terms above, but in terms of the shift of the imperial struggle from Africa to Europe: in the perception of Von Ragastein having infiltrated into England, to the very core of Empire itself.

The animalized man sets parameters for the spy. It shows the animal instincts that our heroes rediscover in moments of near disaster (closer to a 'pure' self than most men); it suggests an animalism just bubbling under the surface of civilization (that might be set off by dark currents in imperial satellites or even in mysterious regions of our own country); and finally, and most conclusively, it shows the beastliness of our enemies (animalism of a more wicked kind - usually fronted by some veneer of rationality). The animalistic is something that can show the flabbiness of 'civilization' (that which the British Empire, like every other Empire, contends to have given the rest of the world) as well as its fragility. It is also a force, when revealed in our enemies, that reveals how 'civilized' the English are by comparison. It both humbles the imperial (the great need to be humbled, and the fact that we can be, is what makes us better than our enemies) and spurs it on: it is a necessity and a threat. It is, of course, another manifestation of the double: the animal contains both a preternatural amorality, but also, an elemental essence (from which springs attributes like instinct and a will to survival) that complements the moral (but thought-bound) human side. Our heroes show their ability by getting the balance right and by defeating those who don't.

The animal appears in Pynchon's texts, in close proximity to the human, but always with the sense that there is nothing natural in the relationship: it is always a human construction. In *V.* the proximity between man and beast is played as a joke - especially when we realize

the story of Father Fairing is framed by Profane, in the sewers, stalking an alligator which turns out to be Stencil in a wet suit (V. 131-2). In *Gravity's Rainbow*, Slothrop takes on the disguise of the pig god Plechazunga (a figure both more than, and less than, human) and takes on an outdoors existence:

He keeps to open country, sleeping when he's too tired to walk, straw and velvet insulating him from the cold. One morning he wakes in a hollow between a stand of beech and a stream. It is sunrise and bitter cold, and there seems to be a warm tongue licking roughly at his face. He is looking here into the snout of another pig, very fat and pink pig. She grunts and smiles amiably, blinking long eyelashes.

"Wait. How about this?" He puts on the pig mask. She stares for a minute, then moves up to Slothrop and kisses him snout to snout. Both of them are dripping with dew. He follows her on down to the stream, takes off the mask again and throws water at his face while she drinks beside him, slurping placidly. (GR 668)

Here we are moving through a simple natural world, no cars, no cities, no war - just beech trees, streams, sunlight, dew and two animals drinking together. Yet, though Slothrop is "another pig," this is only by masquerade, by his "straw and velvet" suit and his papier mache mask. Their love affair (like Veronica's and Fairing's) points to other elements of the natural world. And where does the pig finally lead him to, but Pokler (GR 670) - back into the midst of the plot.

Slothrop does not become a fox or a wolf or a cat, he does not take on cunning or agility or a killing instinct: he is a fat, happy, domesticated creature who sleeps, eats, drinks and wanders about. Pig-headed Slothrop's ancestors were, of course, swineherds (555) and Pynchon uses the animal metaphor across the text. Indeed, several critics have identified the connection between the pig and the preterite (GR 222, 563, 657) as well as ideas of sacrifice and freedom. The linking and layering we can see with this extended image exemplifies how rich Pynchon's text is but this is in no way about using the animal metaphor to celebrate some violent primeval ancestry humans might share with animals. Pynchon does not celebrate the instinctual animal the spy hero sees in man, nor does he dwell on how civilization is threatened by older animal forces (the reverse if anything). Even in the beastliness of the enemy, Pynchon complicates the adversary and distances him from the beast. Major

Marvy, perhaps the most negatively drawn of characters in *Gravity's Rainbow*, is castrated while in Slothrop's pig mask: the animalism he portrays, a mockery of what animal is. What threatens man and 'civilization' is much more insidious than the threat of the return to the jungle.

Pointsman, the scientist, turns the analogy between man and animal upside down through his Pavlovian theories: through the conditional reflex found in the dog we can start to draw conclusions about (ab)reaction in man. Yet, even in this, Pointsman is not so much interested in animals as in power relations, and animals cease to be good enough to get him that power: "what I really need, is not a dog, not an octopus, but one of your fine Foxes. Damn it. One, little, Fox!" (GR 60). Fox is, of course, what Pointsman's colleague, Spectro, euphemistically terms human patients. Slothrop is Pointsman's Fox, with which he hopes to experiment, in order to perfect his Pavlovian binarisms, a way to control and know everything. The hospital, the laboratory, the whole institution of science²⁴ seeks to control and rationalize, as Pynchon's text shows it, seeks to reduce everything to answers and solutions: yes or no, up or down, moving or stationary, salivating or not salivating. If one can be reduced to working parts, a machine, then one can be made to function more successfully in the bigger machines of war, of state, of power hungry dreamers like Pointsman.

This can be seen, initially, in *V.*, which obsessively refers to the replacement of the animate with the inanimate (*V.* 488), but in *Gravity's Rainbow* the move towards the inanimate, the machine like, the non-human, is extended:

In and out of all the vibrant flesh moves the mad scavenger Tchitcherine, who is more metal than anything else. Steel teeth wink as he talks. Under his pompadour is a silver plate. Gold wirework threads in three-dimensional tattoo among the fine wreckage of cartilage and bone inside his right knee joint... (GR 392)

But it is not just individuals and not just individuals made inanimate by war. There is a subtle inanimateness (as opposed to *V.*) underlying much of the book, from the introduction of the first specific character ("His name is Capt. Geoffrey ("Pirate") Prentice. He is wrapped in a thick blanket, a tartan of orange, rust, and scarlet. His skull feels made of metal" (GR 5)) and visible even in the nature-bound scene in which we

see Slothrop with Frieda the pig: "The pig and Slothrop settled down to sleep among pines thick with shreds of tinfoil, a cloud of British window dumped to fox the German radars in some long ago raid" (*GR* 670).

Overhanging all of this is the Rocket itself, inextricably linked to Slothrop. Yet this relationship is, in its way, more frightening than men, or the countryside, or metaphors made more metallic by technology. For Slothrop's relationship may be the result of a conditional reflex. Even if it is not, his increasing obsession with the (death) machine integrates him more closely with the rocket, whether comically, as Rocketman, or more seriously through Jamf and his associations with Imipolex G.

The rocket is representative of the new world order created by "a brand new military type, part salesman, part scientist" (*GR* 467); it is they who are in charge of the "rationalized power ritual that will be the coming peace" (*GR* 206).²⁵ Pointsman's Pavlovism is such a 'rationalized power ritual,' and his constant manoeuvring for funding positions him as 'part salesman, part scientist' - a far cry from the "half man, half beast" that is the ultimate threat in the eyes of Oppenheim and his fellow British colonial writers. Here, in Pynchon's world, the power of the machine has proved itself superior to the power of the preternatural. The statistician, Mexico, may be arguing with Pointsman when he says "Bombs are not dogs. No link. No memory. No conditioning" (*GR* 64), but whether the scientist is connected to the field by animals, or by numbers, the wish for control shifts Man inexorably towards a machine like state. If men could be made like machines they would not need conditioning, or even if they did, they would not remember it. They could certainly not be as recalcitrant as Slothrop, searching for links, for memories. Slothrop is trying to hold onto his 'humanity' against the forces of the inanimate, just as our British spies battled with the animalistic to hold onto theirs. We might say, then, he is our 'hero', but what exactly is a hero?²⁶ The mindset of the hero (the mindset of his world) creates the limits of the figure, as can be seen in Pynchon's representation of the real life, American traveller, Richard Halliburton, a figure very much of the colonial era:

"There's nowhere to go, Slothrop, nowhere." The figure is huddled against a crate and shivering. Slothrop squints through the weak red light. It is the well known frontispiece face of insouciant adventurer Richard Halliburton: but strangely altered. Down both the man's

cheeks runs a terrible rash, palimpsested over older pockmarks, in whose symmetry Slothrop, had he a medical eye, could have read drug reaction. Robert Halliburton's jodhpurs are torn and soiled, his bright hair greasy now and hanging. He appears to be weeping silently, bending, a failed angel, over all these second-rate Alps, over all the night skiers far below, out on the slopes, crisscrossing industriously, purifying and perfecting their Fascist ideal of Action, Action, Action, once his own shining reason for being. No more. No more. (GR 309)

Halliburton's world is limited by a geographical mentality, it bounds his 'action' and in a world where all has been seen, with land all under control (made inanimate, made into landscape), he can only turn back on himself and disintegrate. This is a similar fate to Dominey at the beginning of *The Great Impersonation* and is a state of mind feared in the spy genre as a rule, reflecting the fears of the culture more generally.

Pynchon's text interrogates the animalism of the colonial world and its popular writers, its simple black/white, jungle/city separations and represents this mindset by showing the colonies as the "outhouses of the European soul" (GR 368). Yet this colonial barbarity is not what Pynchon describes in his new imperialism (a new imperialism that will demand new heroes): this force will not be limited by the geographical world, like Halliburton's. It still harnesses the fascistic tendency towards action that both fuels proceedings in colonialism then leads it towards a decadent turning in on itself, but, it also harnesses these decadent forces as well. This new imperialism goes beyond the physical colonialism to a mental one, making use of desire to increase its control rather than weaken it.

This is the commodifying of our most secret wishes, turning our thoughts into things we want, turning us into 'things,' for the people who can give us the things we want. These people are the business/scientists and this is their broader mindset: a sense of control could go beyond the physical world to a mental one as well.²⁷ Slothrop does not escape this, in fact, he is an extreme example of such conditioning, or so we are increasingly made to feel:

His erection hums, from a certain distance, like an instrument installed, wired by Them into his body as a colonial outpost here in our raw and clamorous world, another office representing Their white Metropolis far away.... (GR 332)

Whether Slothrop is the victim of the conditioning experiments of Laszlo Jamf or not, his world has instilled in him ways of behaving that reflect that world. His sex with Bianca reflects this:

this may sound odd, but he was somehow, actually, well, inside his own cock. If you can imagine such a thing. Yes, inside the metropolitan organ entirely, all other colonial tissue forgotten and left to fend for itself. (*GR* 548)

Paradoxically, it is as if Slothrop, tries to turn his cock into a womb. This is not to turn someplace that means death (metropolitan organ) into a sight of birth, but to avoid birth: it is some place he hides where responsibilities of power are given up to desire. The experience of orgasm is not, at its deepest level, mutual for Slothrop here, it is internal. The ecstasy is being inside the imperial organ, being the imperial organ, being part of its oneness. Even the eleven year old girl he is 'inside' has vanished, as he disappears utterly into himself. But, then, what is the colonial tissue for, except to satisfy the metropolis? Slothrop, searching for childhood (its purity, its authenticity), invades childhood with the imperial organ, and annihilates the child in the name of the concept. The search for Carroll's Alice (this section of the novel begins with Slothrop dreaming of the white rabbit (*GR* 546)) leads to the creation of Bianca and her destruction.

The doubling and the animalizing of spy fiction are the outer limits of spy identity showing, on one hand, a necessary control and exactitude and, on the other, a complete desperation and abandonment. At the same time they both reflect a binarism, a splitting that emphasizes the inextricable nature of its halves and thus reiterates a sense of wholeness, a totality. A splitting that, in both cases, searches for our hero's origins, his essence, to show or recapture his depth, his 'purity', whether this be on moral terms (rightness) or physical ones (survival instincts).

Pynchon's texts, in contrast, captures the animal in man as a fallacy. Even when deriding the notion he points to the inextricable link between the idea of man as animal and man as scientist, pointing us towards the more serious infiltration of the machine - an infiltration so deep it leads us through into the arena of the personal, beyond the public, self. It is with this we see most clearly the change between colonial and superimperial, totalitarianism and incipient totalitarianism, fascism and post-fascism²⁸: the move, due to increasing technology,

from physically invading public space to the mental invasion of private space. Of course, the public and private, the political and the personal, are false demarcations created by the wealth and morality of Empire, and Pynchon goes to some lengths to show the interpenetration of these spheres outside the character of Slothrop.²⁹ What Slothrop seems to show, however, is the extreme penetration of central power into the world of innermost desires and it is with him strategies of escape seem to lie.

Pynchon's work looks at the double and closes down several avenues of escape in pushing us away from the singular, away from the mere manipulative cleavings in the name of the singular. Pynchon's text moves towards another direction (which the spy form can only hint at) the double contains: multiplicity, the figure moving out to contain an infinite number of characters. As the fear in the spy novel moves, geographically, from external to internal, so in Pynchon's texts the site of colonizing moves on further, from the external to the internal, physically. The lands far away successfully colonized, the 'them' of the 'white Metropolis' return to colonize the private mind, the private body (the parts of the Western soul that gave themselves license in the 'outhouses'). Might the multiplicity be a way for Slothrop to escape the monomania of the Imperial machine, escape the non-choice of abuse or be abused?

Geoffrey Household and the nomad – “one plucked albatross”

Pynchon's text interrogates the idea of the double, the man/animal dichotomy, seeing them as false delineations associated with the Enlightenment obsessions of the Subject and the Whole. However, the spy novel's representation of the double also contains the seeds of disquiet, revealing moments of uncertainty and questioning within this concept. Not the least questioning of these texts is Household's *Rogue Male* (1939). In some ways Household is the most interesting of these novelists mentioned by Pynchon and the novel we focus on here is a more sophisticated text.

The Rogue Male is a tale of a desperate man's decline into, and utilization of, an animalistic state.³⁰ This might make us see it as a text showing us the animal at the core of the human, but it is possible to read it in a broader context. The animalism of the protagonist is closely connected to his attempts towards self-effacement, which in themselves reveal the 'rogue male' as a social figure.

Certainly, we know this figure, who goes hunting in Europe and can trace his family back fifteen generations in the same house, is of a specific social class (*RM* 152), but it is in his attempts to become invisible that he reveals essences difficult to cast off:

I worry with this analysis in the hope of hitting on some new method of effacing my identity. When I speak a foreign language I can disguise my class, background and nationality without effort, but when I speak English to an Englishman - I am at once spotted as a member of X (*RM* 41-2).

His class (as that which needs not be wealthy, but is the backbone of the country) is something, in his desperate circumstances, he must rid himself of, and yet he is proud of it.

There are similar mixed feelings about his nationality, a nationality which seems to remain even at his most Sartrean:

At present I exist only in my own time, as one does in a nightmare, forcing myself to a fanaticism of endurance. Without a God, without a love, without a hate - yet a fanatic! An embodiment of that myth of foreigners: the English gentleman, the gentle Englishman. I will not kill, to hide I am ashamed. So I endure without object (*RM* 128-9).

Our nameless hero is the archetypal existential, but he is an English existential. In fact, from the way he describes it, one would think that the Englishman makes the best existentialist (as they are the best at disguise). Yet, this is a less simplistic manifestation of nationalism than we find in *The Great Impersonation* and most other spy fiction. England here is two places - a nation of Englishman (most notably members of Class X) and a nation state run by politicians, the latter threatening to destroy the individuality of the former.³¹

When he is trapped underground, facing Quive-Smith's ultimatum (sign the confession saying that the attempt on the dictator's life was

sanctioned by your government), we see the rogue male's hatred of the State. Quive-Smith begins:

It's the mass that we are out to discipline and educate. If an individual interferes, certainly we crush him; but for the sake of the mass - of the State shall we say? You, don't give a damn for State. You obey your own taste and your own laws"

"That's true, enough," I admitted. "But I have respect for the rights of other individuals."

"Of course. But none at all for the nation. Admit it now, my dear fellow, you could get along perfectly well without the State."

"Yes, damn you!" I answered angrily - I hated this pseudo-Socratic cross-examination. "Without the shameless politicians who run this country or the incompetent idiots who would like to, or your blasted spotlight Caesars" (*RM* 146).

He declares himself an individualist, anti-mass politics, anti-state (the English as well as those of the 'spotlight Caesars'), but also an Englishman:

As a matter of fact no Englishman that I know would have signed his bloody paper - refusing partly from honour but chiefly from sheer obstinacy. He's a neurotic creature, the modern John Bull, when compared to the beef and ale yeoman of a hundred years ago; but he has lost none of great-grandfather's pig-headedness (*RM* 164).

For the narrator this 'pig-headedness' is a worthwhile political strategy against any State, his own included. He denies his final actions are out of patriotism: "I distrust patriotism; the reasonable man can find little in these days that is worth dying for. But dying against - there's enough iniquity in Europe to carry the most urbane or decadent to battle." (*RM* 176)

It takes the personal grievance of his murdered lover (for "Reasons of State.") to give him the purpose to kill the dictator ("now I knew the object of my existence (*RM* 153)). His hatred of State politics not only compromises his 'love' of his own country, but drives him towards his war against other ones. He leaves behind the identity of the animal, having digested its lessons without being consumed by its limitations. He

fades out the country, showing himself the master of human disguise and its bureaucracies, taking on a new identity and discarding it before disappearing completely into 'the town' where he intends to shoot the dictator.

The double, whether in his identical or animal manifestation, is a State-bound binary that throws up false oppositions and ties us to the circular notion of the Other. The double, however, is also a form (a parameter) of disguise, and if we look at disguise more broadly, we have the opportunity in Pynchon's text of useful strategies for avoiding capture: what Deleuze and Guattari's term "creative lines of flight" (Deleuze 120). Household's nameless, increasingly rootless protagonist seems a striking parallel to Deleuze and Guattari's figure of the nomad: "one of becoming and heterogeneity, as opposed to the stable, the eternal, the identical, the constant" (Deleuze 18).³² Most importantly, the rogue male stands in opposition to the concept of the State, and by the end of the book is, at least mentally, positioned amongst the chimney pots of the town, in the persona of the guerrilla seeking revenge for the State's invasion of his happiness. However, though *Rogue Male* is a text which engages with the protagonist's 'ad hocness' (his becoming; a celebration of the ingenuity, obstinacy, bravery and eccentricity of his tribe (his 'Englishmen')) , finally, the text is not a becoming, but a document of being:

This confession - shall I call It? - is written to keep myself from brooding, to get down what happened in the order in which it happened... I create a second self, a man of the past by whom the man of the present may be measured (*RM* 14).

To preserve my sanity it is necessary that I take things in their order. That is the object of the confession: to tell things in their order, reasonably, precisely: to recover that man with his insolence, his irony, his ingenuity. By writing of him I become him for a time (*RM* 119).

Ordering, rationalizing - these are the utmost aims of Enlightenment Man. Even the fact of describing his experiences, as if he was an animal, in terms of the animal, is an attempt to rationalize and decipher these experiences. Simultaneously, he is trying to formulate himself as he effaces himself. However, what really reduces him to the former rather than the latter state are events beyond the work itself. The novel was

published in 1939, on the brink of war. The dictator in Household's book remains a vague figure who could either stand for Hitler or Stalin; after all what is being represented here is a detestation of State government and 'spotlight caesars.' Of course, that nameless dictator was, in the political circumstances, quickly perceived as Hitler and the possibility that it was Stalin vanished.³³

Our disappearing nomad becomes the vanguard of war, not against the State in general (personified by the dictator), but against the Nazis. He is an individualistic, self-motivated hero who disappears or dies for his Country (not his tribe, whose ingenuity, obstinacy, bravery and eccentricity also become the hallmarks of the Nation State), even whilst he distances himself, at the very end of the text, from his nation's involvement. The rogue male is appropriated and the desire, that had propelled him into a constant state of metamorphosis, is manipulated to the ends of the State.

The rogue male is an extreme example of nomadic qualities to be seen in many spy characters. For instance, Buchan's former Boer war guerrilla Peter Pienaar or perhaps even more notably Sandy Arbuthnot, a character based loosely on T.E. Lawrence and Aubrey Herbert (a diplomat, explorer and spy associated with Albanian independence just after the end of World War I). These are characters who, although they may find themselves in the service of the State, are adaptable and unconventional, and are perpetually reinventing themselves to their own purpose. Might we not see Pynchon's text utilising some of the 'nomadic' tactics of the rogue male (and his complex connection to the State) in Slothrop's disintegration?

Feathers

Spy fiction offers up several of the obsessions that prove so important to Pynchon's texts and their consideration of identity – invisibility, national identity and sidestepping state control. Invisibility is important in physical, cultural and historical terms, both in terms of disempowerment and also as a line of escape. Also integral is the power of national identity both revealed in states of pure essence (the double, the animal) in the spy novel, but also buried (as with the scientist and the technocrat).

These figures offer problematic boundaries for the notion of empire. Finally, the spy novel can make us think about something at the heart of Pynchon's work: how might we erase ourselves to sidestep the authoritarian state and what might we have to sacrifice to do this? Centrally, it is through Slothrop we can see the deconstituting and reconstituting offered up by our Pre Cold War Spy Fiction.³⁴ I want to look closely at three connected quotes, spanning the length of *Gravity's Rainbow*:

Walt Disney causing Dumbo the elephant to clutch to that feather like how many carcasses under the snow tonight among the white-painted tanks, how many hands each frozen around a miraculous Medal, lucky piece of bone, half dollar with the grinning sun peering up under Liberty's wispy gown, clutching dumb, when the 88 fell - what do you think its a children's story? (GR 157)

He's been changing, sure, changing, plucking all the albatross of self now and then, idly, half conscious as picking his nose - but the one ghost feather his fingers always brush by is US. Poor asshole, he can't let her go (GR 726).

he [Slothrop] has become one plucked albatross. Plucked, hell - stripped. Scattered all over the Zone. It's doubtful he can ever be "found" again in the conventional sense of "positively identified and detained" (GR 830).

The feather works as a symbol of identity, but not as a monolithic symbol; like identity itself the feather shifts its meaning (and meaninglessness) as it appears through the text. The feather starts as a lucky charm, with all the power, poignancy and uselessness such a thing contains: it is something outside of us, something arbitrary, something we clutch at. It becomes that which helps constitute our personality (a series of lucky charms), part of something worn by Slothrop that is picked at, in a self-obsessive way, until it changes him: part of a 'cursed' self (in the sense of Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798)). Finally, it is something utterly absent, a manifestation of the level of distance from a former stage - Slothrop no longer 'wears' the albatross, he becomes the albatross: and featherless, pulled to pieces, the albatross is destroyed.

To put it another way, the feather starts as a token of our animal

superstition (as manifested in the cartoon animal creation of a great American businessman), becomes part of a psychological burden, a cursed inescapable Other, and, finally, is a vague memory of the Other we become, to disappear, to avoid capture. There is a sense that this is not the end of Slothrop, and this is not the worst position for him to be in. If to exist conventionally is to be 'positively identified and detained' with all the authoritarian (in every sense) connotations this wording contains, there is something to be said for this fragmentation.

There is no doubt that this fragmentation can be seen as Slothrop's disintegration, or that the regard he is held in after his disappearance helps create an atmosphere of opposition (the 'Counterforce') that is, once it identifies itself in relation to its enemy, easily assimilated by that enemy. However, Slothrop is not part of the Counterforce, he remains unassimilated, a multiplicity of identities that will not be pinned down to constitute a quantifiable individual. This extreme of disguise threatens destruction, but it is also a strategy of possible escape. (Deleuze 16-17) Perhaps this is how Slothrop avoids the "Occupation of Mingeborough," (GR 867)³⁵ the imperial shift back into smalltown US. The occupation manifests the new imperialism that seeks out new markets in the internal, in desires, by making the imperialism physically internal, an invasion of US by its own authorities.

To have an identity, a "home and position" is to be recognized, to be "caught and detained" - to be defined. *Gravity's Rainbow* increasingly forces Slothrop away from his subject position: it will not let Slothrop be. Even sex, the most private of spheres, does not reveal an authentic space, but reveals the extent to which Slothrop, and by extension all of us, are policed by the mentality of our culture. *Gravity's Rainbow* shows sex and childhood, two of the most 'pure' spaces (private spaces 'unsoiled' by the political) as tainted with the same public, imperial toxin as business or war. Conspiracy against Slothrop or not, there is no doubt that, at some level, he has been conditioned by the culture of imperialism. Disguise is, undoubtedly, one of the tools of that Imperialism, allowing individuals and whole races to live out fantasies as to their identities (Esther's nose job, US as land of freedom), but it is also one of the few strategies open to those trying to elude that culture. It can open up identity, destroying it as a fixed entity of halves or wholes or essences (the hallmarks of fascism in both its pre-war and post-war manifestations), creating a route out of the authoritarian edifice of the book (the Whole) and, perhaps, away from the

new global empire of the Rakenstadt the reader (the audience) must follow to the last page.

That Rocket State, so inescapably evident in Pynchon's present, cannot be destroyed by a single individual, a hero, a 'master of the inanimate.' The hero is a construction of the controlling hegemony, a figure invoked both in times of stress and celebration, a white, male, figure who sees himself as complete, independent and original. The heroes of *Gravity's Rainbow* are the rocket, the businessman/scientist and the State they rule over. This is an uncompromising picture, but it is not one of utter despair. It seeks to be realistic in turning from heroes, and the obsession with identity they represent, to the possibilities of the transformative and nomadic the spy novel inherently contains within its fascistic and imperialist narratives, and on which Deleuze and Guattari base their nomadology:

Yet the very conditions that make the State or World war machine possible, in other words constant capital (resources and equipment) and human variable capital, constantly recreate unexpected possibilities for counterattack, unforeseen initiatives determining revolutionary, popular, minority, mutant machines. (Deleuze 119-120)

Pynchon's negativity is turned, not against technology and power in themselves, but against the ends to which they are most often used, and he struggles to represent the positive aspects of these forces. Disguise, while a strategy of the enemy, can also contain the sort of creative line of flight Deleuze and Guattari describe. The spy fiction that Pynchon thumbed through in the local library as a child can be inherently imperialist, virulently racist, disgusted and repulsed by all that is not the narrow normality its writers celebrate, but it is here in the British Pre Cold War spy novel, with its extremes and the strategies they suggest, that we can see a tool *Gravity's Rainbow* can use to outline, survive and maybe even, sometimes, outsmart a new imperial world order. Finally, adeptly and imaginatively as it is used in *Gravity's Rainbow*, it is important to remember how the figure of the spy is not one that solely proves useful in his seventies novel. Let's return to *Bleeding Edge*:

"You must understand these are the Long Island Thrubwells, not all to be confused with the Manhattan branch of the family, and though we have never embraced eugenics or anything of that sort, it is often

difficult to not entertain some DNA-based explanation for what, after all, does present rather a pattern.”

“High percentage of...”

“Idiots, basically, mm-hmm...Don’t mistake my meaning. Cousin Lloyd was always an agreeable child, he and I got along well, at family gatherings none of the food he threw would actually ever strike me personally...But beyond mealtime assault, his true gift, one might say compulsion, was for tattling. He was always creeping about, observing the less supervised activities of his peers, taking detailed notes, and when these weren’t convincing enough, I’m embarrassed to say, making things up.”

“So perfect CIA material.”³⁶

This is Maxine and Cornelia (the “pearl wearing WASP” who is married to Rocky Slagiatt and offers Pynchon the opportunity for some subtle reflections on WASP and ‘ethnic’ interactions³⁷) in conversation. No, in New York you do not only have shoes; but rather a whole battery of hierarchal signifiers. And these do not just revolve around class (though they most definitely do in the quote above), but around gender and ethnicity. The “lurking, spying, false identities, psychological games” may be just as childish, but they are no longer British. They are still class-bound, imperial, morally suspect, but they are most definitely North American. And the problems of this US Empire are surprisingly similar to those of that British Empire: an inability to comprehend worlds different from their own in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and in Africa. The spy generates, negotiates and problematises some of the most important and fascinating markers of identity and power – both personal and international. This is why Pynchon’s texts have revisited this figure again and again for more than half a century.

Notes

1 Thomas Pynchon, *Bleeding Edge*, Jonathan Cape: London, 2013, p. 105.

2 Donald McCormick and Katy Fletcher, *Spy Fiction: A Connoisseur's Guide*, New York: Facts on File, 1990, p. 266. The chapter specifically relating to

this ('A Brief History of American Spy Fiction: before and after 1945'), runs to only six pages. Michael Cox, *The Oxford Book of Spy Stories*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. xiii. McCormick, p. 267. An early example of this was the Pinkerton agent who infiltrated the Molly Maguires in the 1870s. Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America*, London: Verso, 1987, pp. 118-148. By the same token, the only way the spy seems acceptable at times is by conflating him with the detective. Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1959) is often seen as a prescient text and early example of US spy fiction and yet it refers to the FBI, the CIA and Army Intelligence as representing "maximum police efficiency." Richard Condon, *The Manchurian Candidate*, London: Pan, 1959 (1966), p. 207.

3 John Buchan, *The Complete Richard Hannay*, London: Penguin 1992 (1956), pp. 116, 147, 172. Further reference to this text will be parenthesised.

4 Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon*, Jonathan Cape: London, p. 377-378, 394. Kyle Smith, "'Serving Interests Invisible': *Mason & Dixon*, British Spy Fiction, and the Specters of Imperialism," pp. 183-198.

5 Brian McHale "Genre as History: Pynchon's Genre-Poaching," 15-28 Jeffrey Severs and Christopher Leise *Pynchon's Against the Day: A Corrupted Pilgrim's Guide*, Lexington Books: New York, 2011, p. 24.

6 Thomas Pynchon, *Slow Learner*, London: Picador, 1985, p. 20.

7 William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life: An Essay on the Causes and Character of America's Present Predicament, Along With a Few Thoughts about an Alternative*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 222.

8 Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, London: Duke University Press, 1993, p. 11.

9 Ibid.

10 David Witzling, *Thomas Pynchon, Race and the Cultures of Postmodernism*, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 6. Joanna Freer, *Thomas Pynchon and American Counterculture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Luc Herman and Steven Weisenburger, *Gravity's Rainbow, Domination, and Freedom*, London: University of Georgia Press, 2013.

Daniel Grausam, *On Endings: American Postmodern Fiction and the Cold War*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011. Michael Harris, 'Pynchon's Postcoloniality,' 199-214 in Niran Abbas, ed. *Thomas Pynchon: Reading from the Margins*, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003. p. 201. We might also consider this in terms of what Don DeLillo terms Pynchon's "unapologetic global range" - as quoted in James Gourley, *Terrorism and Temporality in the works of Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo*, London: Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 5. Deborah Madsen, 'Alterity,' 146-156 in Inger H. Dalsgaard et al, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Pynchon*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

11 As Clive Bloom puts it, Spy fiction is "the genre tied to international political and social tensions" Clive Bloom, 'Introduction: The Spy Thriller: A Genre Under Cover?' in Clive Bloom (ed.), *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to Le Carre*, London: MacMillan, 1990, p. 10. I have constructed this definition using a variety of texts: John Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery and Romance*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Jerry Palmer, *Thriller*, London: Edward Arnold, 1978. Gerry Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinity*, London: Routledge, 1994. Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, New York: Basic Books, 1979. Michael Denning, *Cover Stories*, London: Routledge, 1987. Robin W. Winks (ed.), *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1980. Colin Watson, *Snobbery with Violence: English Crime Stories and Their Audience*, London: Eyre Methuen, 1978. Clive Bloom (ed.), *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to Le Carré*, London: MacMillan, 1990. Jerry Palmer, *Potboilers: Methods, Concepts, and Case Studies in Popular Fiction*, London: Routledge, 1991.

12 Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, London: Verso, 1994, p. 313. Aijaz Ahmad's readings of Edward Said and Frederic Jameson point to their simplification of terms such as 'the Other' and 'the Third World'. Ahmad, p. 45, p. 98, chapter 8, p. 122, p. 21.

13 P. Eric Louw, *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, pp. 10-19. For Buchan's views see John Buchan, *Prester John*, London: Nelson, 1911. John Buchan, *A Lodge in the Wilderness*, London: Nelson, 1906.

14 John Buchan, *The Courts of the Morning*, Edinburgh: B&W Publishing, 1993 (1929), pp. 71-73. Further reference to this text will be parenthesised.

15 Even a list of place names from this passage - Albania, Mecca, Caucasus, Bokhara, Samarkand, the Pamirs, Rome, Cairo, Petrograd, Llasa, Yarkand, Seistan - shows the stretch of Arbuthnot's influences, the British Empire's influences.

16 Ronald W. Cooley, 'The Hothouse or the Street: Imperialism and Narrative in Pynchon's V,' *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2 (Summer 93), pp. 307-326. Cooley tries to show how, by using the structures and traditions of the imperialist novel, even satirically, his project is doomed to failure and to the repetition of some the faults of the imperialist novel.

17 See the entry for "moustache" in the Gravity Rainbow's wiki - <http://gravitys-rainbow.pynchonwiki.com/wiki/index.php?title=M> [Accessed 12th December 2014]

18 Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*, New York: Bantam, 1974 (1973), pp. 26, 211, 235, 279, 280, 244, 289, 298, 425, 438, 535, 649, 661ff. Further reference to this text will be parenthesised.

19 Helen Macinnes, *Assignment in Brittany*, London: Harrap, 1942, p. 38. Further reference to this text will be parenthesised.

20 "there was the hint of dark currents in Bertrand Corlay's life which weren't covered by the data he [Hearne] had learnt by heart." (AB 48) The "twenty six years of another man's life reduced to headings and subheadings" (AB 10) in Hearnes' mind do not reveal the man he is impersonating, but, rather the gap between information about a man (especially from the man himself) and the experience of being him. It is the "dark currents" in Bertrand Corlay's life which lead to the breakdown of Hearne's disguise, but also the success of his mission. Hearne goes beyond the information to create new experiences, a new Corlay. Hearne can imitate Corlay's accent, show knowledge of his surroundings, reveal similar blemishes on his skin. (AB 40) However, what gives him away to Corlay's mother are his displays of "ordinary human kindness" (AB. 99)

21 Slothrop has taken on the name of Max Schlepzig, the same name as the man who played opposite the actress Erdmann in the film 'Alpdrücken'. Standing on the film's old set when they first meet both adopt their roles from the film: Schlepzig (Slothrop) as torturer and Erdmann as tortured. In the sex that follows he becomes her "Schlepzig-surrogate" (in terms of both sex and nostalgia for the films) and she is

"his latest reminder of Katje." (GR 462) Schlepzig is the father of Erdmann's daughter, Bianca - her name is the last word of the section, while the next section begins with a scene from the film *Alpdrücken* as seen by Pokler and fantasized as he makes love to his wife. (GR 462-3) It is from this union, Pokler believes, his daughter, Ilse, was born and he reflects on whether this scenario might not have happened elsewhere. (GR 463)

22 E. Phillips Oppenheim, *The Secret Service Omnibus*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1932, p. 869. Further reference to this text will be parenthesised.

23 Even Pynchon's animals are those the imperial 'passes over' quickly, on the way to more suitable metaphors. We do not hear of bears or lions or eagles, but albatrosses, dodoes, lemmings, sheep, rats and cartoon elephants with big ears. However, it is worth noting quite how important pigs are in Pynchon's works. Steven C. Weisenburger, *A Gravity's Rainbow Companion: Sources and Contexts for Pynchon's Novel*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006, p. 333. Patrick J. Hurley, 'Pynchon, Grimm and Swinish Duality: A Note on the Pig Image in *Gravity's Rainbow*' *Pynchon Notes*, vol. 46-49, Spring 2000, pp. 208-10. Shawn Smith, *Pynchon and History: Metahistorical Rhetoric and Postmodern Narrative Form*, London: Routledge, 2005, p. 82. Boris Kachka 'On the Thomas Pynchon Trail: From the Long Island of His Boyhood to the 'Yupper West Side' of His New Novel' <http://www.vulture.com/2013/08/thomas-pynchon-bleeding-edge.html> [Accessed 12th December 2014]

24 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (trans Brian Massumi), *Nomadology: The War Machine*, New York: Semiotext(e), 1986, p. 33. Further reference to this text will be parenthesised. See also Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism and the Atomic Age*, London: Duke University Press, 1995, pp. 38-50. Martin E. Rosenberg, 'Invisibility, the War Machine and Prigogine: Physics, Philosophy and the Threshold of Historical Consciousness in Pynchon's Zone,' *Pynchon Notes*, vol. 30-31, 1992, pp. 91-138, p. 132.

25 Dale Carter goes into some detail on this issue. Dale Carter, *The Final Frontier: The Rise and Fall of the American Rocket State*, London: Verso, 1988. pp. 13-68.

26 Benny Profane asks the same question in *V*. London: Picador, 1975

(1963), p. 288. Further reference to this text will be parenthesised.

27 Carter cites characters such as Mossmoon, Rathenau, and Bland ("the man has had his meathooks well into the American day-to-day since 1919" (GR 676)) as men who are successful in the "control and synthesis" (GR 60) of "human, natural and technical resources." (GR 66). But see also Bernard Duyfhuizen, 'Critiquing the Cartel: Anti-Capitalism, Walter Rathenau and Gravity's Rainbow,' *Pynchon Notes*, vol. 34-35, 1994, pp. 88-106.

28 I take the term "post fascism" from Deleuze and Guattari: "States tend to unleash, reconstitute, an immense war machine of which they are no longer anything more than the opposable or opposed parts. This worldwide war machine which in a way "reissues" from the States, displays two successive figures: first, that of fascism, which makes war an unlimited movement with no other aim than itself; but fascism is only a rough sketch, and the second, post-fascist, figure is that of a war machine that takes peace as its object directly, as the peace of Terror or Survival....a peace still more terrifying than fascist death." (Deleuze 118-119) See Carter for the term "incipient totalitarianism", pp. 20, 272-4 *passim*.

29 We already see these ideas developing in *V.* (21, 481, 102, 103) However, it is a more integrated affair in *Gravity's Rainbow* where we see spies not just as individuals, but as a community, a far from happy community. (GR 39) On a more local level we see Pointsman manoeuvring for control, using Katje Borgesius. (GR 112) Disguise is not merely evident in the very public sphere of Empire versus Empire, goodie versus baddie, it is also to be found in less nationalistic more overtly individual powerplays. In fact we see, through Katje, that disguise has a part to play in the most private of places: in the sexual fantasies of our powerbrokers.

30 This internalizing of the Imperial struggle, in the sense of the struggle taking place in England, is a major theme throughout our period of spy fiction. The internalizing, in the sense of the struggle being a psychological one, is a less well tread path that reaches its most sophisticated form in Geoffrey Household's book. Here, the animalizing of the hero takes place in England, from an enemy closing in for the 'kill.' Though, initially, he can still see himself as a human, alienated, individual (leading a "Robinson Crusoe existence" Geoffrey Household, *Rogue Male*,

London: Penguin, 1981 (1939), p. 87. Further reference to this text will be parenthesised. As the enemy moves nearer, the hero's situation grows less sedate. The possibility of finding a recognizable human existence fades and the animal language that surfaced right from the beginning is applied more forcefully. (RM 118-119) He feels humanity in all its positive and negative aspects stripped away. (RM 135) Even when he has escaped his animalistic existence and has taken on various other identities (human, passported ones), the language of the animal kingdom remains. Finally, the tables are turned and he returns to his role as hunter, now seeing the whole human race as just another species, formed by its habits and instincts. (RM 192)

31 "The ruling class are, I presume, politicians and servants of the state - terms which are self contradictory." (RM 41) The "lecherous clergyman and aged civil servants" (RM 50) that the rogue male wants to protect our children from are also 'servants of the state'.

32 The rogue male's attempts towards self-effacement point towards the nomadic necessity of learning "to undo things, and to undo oneself, is proper to the war machine: the "not doing" of the warrior, the undoing of the subject." (Deleuze 84) Also the rogue male has the "originality of the man of war, the eccentricity" (Deleuze 5) as well as a scientific knowledge, in the shape of ballistics (RM 162-163), that might be termed nomadic (Deleuze 75, 83-84). In his class X, his 'pig-headed' great grandson's of 'beef and ale yeoman' he has his tribe of 'Englishmen', as opposed to a Nation State. Similarly, the nomad's war machine "does not ally itself with a universal thinking subject, but on the contrary with a single race" (Deleuze 48), though this "tribal race exists only at the level of an oppressed race." (Deleuze 49)

33 In Fritz Lang's *Man Hunt* (1941), based on *Rogue Male*, the dictator is, not surprisingly, drawn as Hitler. Even later, as with the cover design of the reissued edition of the book (showing a still from the 1976 BBC television series) referenced here, the dictator was still seen as Hitler.

34 We see these ideas of deconstituting and reconstituting in earlier stages of development in both *V.* and *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965). For instance, the figure of V. herself, who "comes apart" as the Bad Priest (V. 342ff), while Stencil spends the whole book attempting to reconstruct her. Similarly, Mucho Maas is, as *The Crying of Lot 49* draws to a close, a "walking assembly of a man" to Caesar Funch, while Oedipa feels that

"So much of him already had dissipated". Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*, London: Picador, 1979 (1965), pp. 97, 100.

35 Paul Maltby makes this point and sees it as pointing forward to what he sees as the central subject of Pynchon's *Vineland* (1985). Paul Maltby, *Dissident Postmodernists: Barthelme, Coover, Pynchon*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991, pp. 174-175. A good example from *Vineland* is this quote: "all the occupants of the place were chanting, not the words, which were in Tibetan, but the tune, with its bone-stirring bass, to a powerful and secret spell against invaders and oppressors, heard in particular a bit later in the year at harvest time, when CAMP helicopters gathered in the sky and North Carolina, like other U.S. pot-growing areas, once again rejoined, operationally speaking, the third world." Thomas Pynchon, *Vineland*, London: Picador, 1985, p. 49. Paul Virilio says "It's no longer exo-colonization (the age of extending world conquest), but the age of intensiveness and endocolonization. One now colonizes only one's own population. One underdevelops one's own civilian economy." This reminds us of Ahmad's thoughts on the 'Third World in the belly of the First World,' but also, in terms of the connection to spy fiction, we might want to think of this quote by Clive Bloom: "The spy thriller coming early in the twentieth century (in its fully developed form) was, more than both its predecessors, the genre tied to international political and social tensions. Indeed, more than any form the spy thriller responded to a need to represent covert activity by state organisations." Maltby, pp. 174-175. Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War*, New York: Semiotext(e), 1997 (1983), p. 95. Clive Bloom, *Spy Thrillers*, p. 1.

36 Thomas Pynchon, *Bleeding Edge*, pp. 351, 275.

37 Thomas Pynchon, *Bleeding Edge*, pp. 63, 150, 279.

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