Memory Machines: Exploring *Moby-Dick* and *Gravity's Rainbow* Through the History of Film

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Other critical writers refer to a similar concept through various other terms, ultimately equipping my thesis with a method for studying the relation between myth and allegory. The method draws from each writer's focus on the form and content dynamics of artifacts, and how these dynamics reflect the historical conditions that affirm or produce them. Specifically, all the writers I have selected to study, in some way consider the play between the mechanical apparatus and the representation it produces. Thus, I concluded that my literary comparative approach could involve juxtaposing a different, historically concurrent mode of documentation: film media and photography.

Gravity's Rainbow is often considered, after *Moby-Dick,* the most universally-recognized "Great American Novel". Pynchon spends a lot of time referring to mass-produced films, their effects on the global order emerging with WWII, and to the material occurrence of film technology as it relates to the book as a material artifact. For Pynchon, the backlots built up by such "greats" as D.W. Griffith constitute the twentieth-century frontier.

Introduction

For close to a decade, I have weighed comparative approaches to "the Great American Novel". Progress increased as soon as I resolved on selecting *Moby-Dick* as the work originally responsible for issuing that slogan. Making this particular selection required the application of a dynamic concept which, appropriately, reflects critiques of knowledge production: "the Archive". Perhaps the most direct references to a conceptual archive appear in Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, which addresses the dual forces –preservation/destruction, hermeticism/constitutionality –that influence allegory and mythology, respectively.

Other critical writers refer to a similar concept through various other terms, ultimately equipping my thesis with a method for studying the relation between myth and allegory. The method draws from each writer's focus on the form and content dynamics of artifacts, and how these dynamics reflect the historical conditions that affirm or produce them. Specifically, all the writers I have selected to study, in some way consider the play between the mechanical apparatus and the representation it produces. Thus, I concluded that my literary comparative approach could involve juxtaposing a different, historically concurrent mode of documentation: film media and photography.

As a novel that betrays archival tendencies –footnotes, excerpts from journal entries and obscure documents, taxonomies, etymologies, etc. –*Moby-Dick* seemed to arrive, through "the Archive," at an appropriate conceptual port. In one chapter, Ishmael writes of only the *Pequod* and its crew, while in the next, he writes of exegetes and librarians. With respect to "content," *Moby-Dick* preserves and documents a particular picture of America that it simultaneously deconstructs (or deconstructs through its mode of preservation).

In other words, both the form and content of Melville's novel appear to demonstrate a kind of interplay or co-realization. *Moby-Dick* tends to expose the gears that comprise its form/content dynamic: we as readers witness its 'technology of memory' or its "mnemo-technic". By one perspective, we witness the process of self-creation through a technique that shares much with the production of photography and motion pictures.

Film or novel, we will focus ultimately on the shared "technology" for archiving history. We will understand how Melville's and Eadweard Muybridge's "documentation" of the American frontier was preoccupied with representing it as a site of knowledge production –specifically, the knowledge of (pre)destiny. (Muybridge is considered the "father," the "origin" of motion pictures).

This study will not settle on a limited definition of "form" and "content": for example, form as narrative order, and content as the individual scenes. We propose that a comparative methodology using film history will help us explore the problematic nature of form/content. Overall, we will suggest that an artifact's "mnemo-technic," or mode of archiving events, refers to a form/content interplay influenced by material historical conditions. The concept of "the Archive" posits that materials and discourses are co-influential, within historical contexts.

So, consider, for example, that *Moby-Dick* was printed in 1851: two years after the '49ers made their name famous, and only a short time before the motion picture was invented by Californian Eadweard Muybridge, who filmed a horse –the quintessential

frontier animal –apparently to settle a dispute about whether all hooves are off the ground simultaneously during full gallop.

Melville did not know that Muybridge's "Horse in Motion" was on the horizon. Melville did write a lot about "the horizon" in *Moby-Dick*, a trope that, figuratively, encompasses all the scenes in total, and splices together the individual ones between the *Pequod* and Ishmael's uncanny, exclusively print records. "The horizon" works dualistically as a kind of "supplement" based on the archival impulse to give totality to a body of work, and to relate the individual parts to each other without reference to an overarching factor.

This dualistic 'reversibility' of the main concept we will work with, i.e. the Archive, specifies our central concern with the part and the Whole. As a result, we will be poised to discuss the narrative dynamics of allegory and myth in terms of their mode or "technique" for expressing totality in a temporal sense. The critics, writers, and philosophers we will draw upon, Freud included, will give us a cohesive platform for discussing totality and temporality.

We will want to note how Melville's preoccupation with "the horizon" produces a certain historical reflection of Muybridge's famous study, which was assembled, at least unconsciously, around the hubristic myth of American "predestination". Muybridge serves to illustrate Melville, and vice-versa, by focusing on one of the most remarkable trends of the late 19th-century: the "documentation" of the American frontier as a site for knowledge production.

As our study develops toward an exploration of Thomas Pynchon, we will understand the effect of this uncanny trend as such: macro-organizations of religion, science, the military, and entertainment –yes, Hollywood –could consume and use the knowledge of (pre)destiny to develop a grand narrative or mythology of "progress" that actually justified a process of total destruction. It is worth noting now that we will study the way Derrida deconstructs Freud's discourse so that we come to understand the abstraction of 'total destruction' as a textual process of effacing all names and namesakes, even its own.

Gravity's Rainbow is often considered, after *Moby-Dick,* the most universally-recognized "Great American Novel". Pynchon spends a lot of time referring to mass-produced films, their effects on the global order emerging with WWII, and to the material occurrence of film technology as it relates to the book as a material artifact. For Pynchon, the backlots built up by such "greats" as D.W. Griffith constitute the twentieth-century frontier. Those who subvert the grand cinematic ideal are of equal importance to the historically-minded Pynchon, too.

To ignore Hollywood's relation to the American frontier would seem to leave out the conclusion to our premise. At the same time, the early development of Hollywood refers to a much evolved use of the American frontier as a site of knowledge production, resulting from two world wars. Melville's novel simply cannot address that evolution without severe theoretical manipulation. Better to include *Moby-Dick* as *part* of that evolution by involving the counterweight of Pynchon's "Great American Novel," which directly addresses WWII, and was printed over 100 years after Melville's text.

If *Moby-Dick* marks the ostensible genesis of the Great American Novel, then, apropos its title and thematics, *Gravity's Rainbow* serves as a kind of incendiary Revelation to Melville's diluvial Old Testament –Pynchon gives us the hot, earthbound,

eschatological plummet that was divinely promised in the wake of the deluge that had sunk man's early destiny. Again, and importantly, *Gravity's Rainbow* will allow for study of Hollywood's relation to the American frontier, through its use of allusion and its critique of mass culture.

Not only do Melville's and Pynchon's novels carry the slogan "Great American Novel": both transmit a lucid-deliriousness, a "fever" that has already drawn the text toward an uncanny process of becoming an exclusively print inscription, without need for a reader. Such an uncanny process posits a kind of "writing" with no basis in speech, so that print finds no justification in an external signifier.

The "thesis" (his term) of Derrida's *Archive Fever* suggests that the "fever" of this uncanny documentation relates to the anxiety for establishing an eternally-preverved "origin". In both form and content, *Moby-Dick* and *Gravity's Rainbow* reflect the tension of historical forces seeking an origin or point by which to establish a mythology and thereby justify total destruction in the *name* of "progress".

It is the reader's feverish experience to understand their relation to these uncanny texts. How do we find the narrative horizon in a world that, *a priori*, does not assume a reader? Melville suggests stealing someone else's name; Pynchon suggests accepting "paranoia". Both suggestions share similar effects in the application of allegorical reading to mythic archetypes.

Let us elaborate on the comparative approach of this thesis, its method, and relevance to extant scholarship, before continuing to explain how each novel will receive separate treatment. Film, whether photograph or mass cinema or early motion picture, shares a certain metaphorical affinity with the literary dimensions of "the Archive," which we have been outlining.

First, consider the archivist: a figure usually interested as much in the vessel as the documents contained; thus, archives ultimately receive a dialectical treatment: the whole gives rise to myth, a labor endorsed by "history," while any of the collected individual documents could potentially deconstruct the appearance of a unified totality, through what Derrida calls a "hinge" –some peripheral, destabilizing fact. Archives project mythic narrative power and that power cannot exclude an unconscious agency – creator, author, paper hero –who introduces contradictions during the labor of construction.

By comparison, one can also consider the mechanical elements of film in a dialectical fashion: an exchange between form (light-proof box; compare: printing press, stylus) and content (undeveloped, light-sensitive film; compare: paper, tablet) produces (eventually) a document whose apparent unity remains exposed to deconstruction by contradictions introduced by the agent. (For example, consider the editing process for cinema: we as viewers have access to "persistence of vision" that allows us to enjoy a film as total artifact; at the same time, one individual frame can transition us to a completely different scene.)

In other words, a photograph or motion picture also wishes to project mythic power through the intervention of some agent 'behind the machine' –after all, consider Kodak's slogan ("You Press the Button, We Do the Rest") or Cartier-Bresson's famous "decisive moment" theory of photography. Film media, like printed text, cannot exclude peripheral, destabilizing facts: cinema's illusion of motion founds itself upon a collection of disjointed frames; and photography's illusion of an "aura" (Walter Benjamin's term),

which projects a romantic, frontier-esque sense of distance, must negotiate with the fact that "photographic original" implies a contradiction in terms.

By considering the American frontier in particular, this study will contribute to the extant scholarship that broadly considers allegory, myth, narrative order, and film media when exploring *Moby-Dick* and *Gravity's Rainbow*. A significant amount of literary scholarship on war, entertainment, belief systems, and science, in *Moby-Dick* and *Gravity's Rainbow*, will inform this study, because these are the macro-organizations that capitalize on, unconsciously, the "documentation" of the American frontier, in order to develop a mythology that justifies total destruction.

Many studies compare *Gravity's Rainbow* and film, in part because the novel makes certain allusions to movies. Some film theory, such as Andre Bazin's proposal that cinema eventually becomes the equal of the novel, would seem relevant for this thesis. Individual films and individual directors also deserve consideration.. Theories of knowledge production from the 20th-century will supply a conceptual method – particularly the work of Benjamin, Foucault, and Derrida. This study will consult Freud, too, of course. Studies on the history of film and photography will figure prominently.

As these texts describe the play between form and content, artifact and historical condition, material and discourse, they will help to produce a broad, improvisational discussion: the narrowing of this study to a character or a few scholarly prejudices would simply make a project based on multiple discourses unfeasible. In other words, this thesis will not scaffold secondary sources in the manner of a survey; the texts will serve as conditions that allow us to include multiple discourses.

The first section, which addresses *Moby-Dick*, will consider the figure of "the horizon," as previously discussed. "The horizon" provides stimulus for some of Ishmael's conjectures; characters scan the horizon constantly in anticipation of Moby-Dick; sometimes Moby-Dick becomes the horizon.

"The horizon" also has a strong relation to the quintessential inspiration for the American frontier: a geographical and topographical sense of distance which implies a sense of predestination. Benjamin's definition of "aura" as a 'sense of distance no matter how close the artifact or its representation,' applies well in this context. Because "the horizon" provides a semblance of totality, a way to order sudden flashes –of insight, ambition, expectation, recalled data, sightings of the Leviathan –it subtly influences the transitions between the contradictory chapters, as well as providing an overarching, encompassing line around all the individual chapters.

Exploring the form/content dynamics of *Moby-Dick* through a comparative study with Muybridge will allow us to reflect on the necessary opposition between preservation and destruction. We will understand this opposition as a performance between materials and discourses in historical context(s). Through a comparative reading of *Moby-Dick*, this study will demonstrate what, perhaps, contributes to the "greatness" of Melville's "Great American Novel" –and Pynchon's, too.

As for the second section, the study will juxtapose *Gravity's Rainbow* with Hollywood and the emergence of the "paranoiac condition". Exploration of Pynchon's text will proceed according to a method similar to that used in the first section, and will consider what the previous section cannot –the relation of Hollywood to the American frontier. As mentioned, *Gravity's Rainbow* stands as another "Great American Novel" that exudes a sort of "fever," an anxiety attributable to the search for an eternally-

preserved "origin". We will understand this anxiety as reflecting the historical processes of mythologizing "progress" on the basis of an "origin" and a predestined "end".

According to Freud's theory of "the uncanny," supposedly contradictory drives actually share an identity, and undergo destructive, artificial separation in order to mark a disjunction in time –to serve as a monumental "mnemo-technic" against time. If macro-organizations affirm the American frontier as a site for the production of knowledge, they do so because the knowledge of (pre)destiny justifies a fevered collective desire for authoritarian control –a strange, uncanny, operation that "re-writes" the framework of time in order to destroy it.

Mass culture, from this perspective, relies on spectatorship of the myth of "re-writing," as represented by Hollywood movies, in effect destroying the inherited image of Americans as guardians of history. In turn, military systems and belief systems (including science) ultimately capitalized on this knowledge of a mythic (pre)destiny embodied by the Hollywood-mass culture relation, and developed the discourse of ideational "re-writing" into material, total destruction.

Chapter One

The relentlessness of the Calvinist ethic that informs *Moby-Dick*, Melville's "Great American Novel," holds out as its utopian reward a white metropolis of the future. This "city on the hill" was to serve as a *tabula rasa*, on which to inscribe "History's" final, redemptive comments: it was a frontier, not only between the cumulative mass of a cycle and its end point, but between this world and the next. America was to become that honored refuge, that "white metropolis".

In this world-historical vision, allegory supplements myth, giving to individuals the impression that always *another* mythic narrative can appear on the horizon –as if to say the future was the experience of an infinitely subdivided approach to eternity. The power of allegory is with its ability to punctuate the static –by some definitions, almost entropic– quality of myth. Allegory gives a frame for reading, and then another, *ad infinitum*; myth projects the simultaneous re-union between an individual and "Nature," a marriage to the symbol.

When allegory supplements myth, it introduces *disjunction*, and thus describes the individual only in relation to other individuals and a field of objects, i.e. in communal, "regional," and democratic contexts. Myth poses redemption through the individual's ability to decode the symbols which all lead to the same god-head or self-elected Signified (*one* way of reading and *only one*). Modernization, which gives birth to industrial history, heightens this mythic promise by giving to masses myths shaped by "experts" (thus individuating members under personal fantasy while "homogenizing" a "mass culture," i.e. the movie theater design).

Such "politicization" of myth requires that contemporary novels, if they address their allegorical dimensions to a 'community' (and, *a priori*, they do), then they should emphasize the allegorical features of *duration* and *contingency*, in order to "supplement" the mythic quality of *simultaneity,* which mass representations rely upon to the exclusion of other modes. Importantly, the historical "genre" of allegory –not necessarily the contemporary novel –already promotes those features.

We will need to define "allegory," "myth," "simultaneity" and "disjunction," because these are contested and complex terms. Also, this study will rely upon each of these terms throughout its various sections. If the reader grasps that "the American frontier" relies on two complementary "genres" nevertheless in tension, then they will understand the overall project of this study. So, in order to secure a basic understanding of our map, let us first spend time defining "allegory". Our best source for a definition is Maureen Quilligan's *The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre*, because it is the most recognized work on the historical origins of allegory as a genre, and because she uses as examples the two authors we will focus on in this study, Herman Melville and Thomas Pynchon.

Quilligan's research has given her to understand that allegory appears because a community will desire to give attention to how it produces representations and how those representations subsequently become consumed, particularly if written language serves as the raw material. Allegory takes two positions on language. First, that written language inscribes a "Law" that precludes its referents from appearing to us in a simultaneous totaltity. In other words, written language ultimately cannot simultaneously "resurrect," in the present, the "things" that are "more than the sum of its parts," at least not through

deliberate and particular "form," i.e. the inscription of partial phonetic units. The individual consciousness, whose principle is to select and discern, would become subsumed and thus annihilated under the saturation of surplus meaning.

Allegory also posits that, as a result of this "Law," written language produces infinite sequences, so that any sign can generate another, especially if the signs are "enfolded" and "reversible," as with puns. This leads Quilligan to conclude that written language is both the subject and object of allegory, its form and content, the frontier of its infinite possibilities and "the limits of its possibility". (15)

Any language, or we should say, any type of language will not support this definition: allegory has to work with written language as the inscription of partial phonetic units, a material embodiment of *logos*. The Greeks defined *logos* in terms of speech –*it* was the medium that had the "it" power of "being," "presence," "meaning".

Ultimately, because of this relational approach to written language, Quilligan defines allegory as a "genre" in terms of its difference from and tensions with other "genres," particularly myth and theology, which allegory, paradoxically, can supplement. As a consequence, allegory emerges peripherally, alongside other historical "genres," as a way for communities to respond to how they value "truth" in representations and myths:

Allegories have a generic status much like satire, which is unarguably a genre in its own right, but which shares with other works in other genres a quality we can legitimately term "satirical." Just as some works are satires and others are satirical, so some works are allegories, while others are merely allegorical. The problem of classifying allegory as a genre is a trifle more complicated than in the case of satire, because it is a genre of narrative which has no classical progenitors. (18-19)

In this extensively quoted passage, Quilligan informs us that a form/content opposition does not suffice for a definition of allegory, or even for a definition of literary genre. Form/content is useful insofar as it distinguishes certain generic qualities, as they appear within their "native" genre, or within others. Quilligan believes that her definition shifts our attention to the readers of allegory, who ultimately serve as the "end point" of, and "source" of inspiration for, allegory.

Not that Quilligan wants to put the reader at the "center," as an *individual* –that dynamic rests with myth. "The reader," for allegory, is a communal construct, designed by a community's attitudes toward receptivity, consumption, and the experience of time. "The reader" is the community's *archive*: "Other genres appeal to readers as human beings; allegory appeals to readers as readers of a system of signs [myth], but this may be only to say that allegory appeals to readers in terms of their most distinguishing human characteristic, as readers of, and therefore as creatures finally shaped by, their language." (24)

In this study, we will also define allegory as a "supplement" to myth. As we suggested, the result –"an allegory of myth" –attempts to describe how the disjunctive qualities of allegory "punctuate" and mediate the "simultaneity" of myth: it is a community's means for negotiating the Romantic conclusion of an epiphanic revelation, and the merging of individual consciousness with "Nature" (which appears as the self-destructive annihilation of the individual, under modern myth).

We derive our understanding of myth's "simultaneity" from its basis in *archetypal symbols*; and especially the Romantic employment of archetypal symbols. For a "redemptive" narrative "resolution" to occur, archetypal symbols must be coded, and

the "decoding" hero is expected to uncover the Signified from which all signifiers emanate, and to which they are all connected in direct genealogy. Thus, a recurring myth that allegory encounters is "the myth of a return to origins". The myth sometimes exceeds domestic boundaries –whether strictly familial or of the greater "father/motherland" – toward even greater, temporal "frontiers," to become "the myth of re-writing History". Allegory negotiates this possibility of synechdoche in myth, of simultaneously relating the "cosmos" to the "local," by scrutinizing myth's claim to a single –even if "universal" –truth.

We derive this definition of myth, and its particular relation to allegory, from two sources, one on Melville and one on Pynchon –again, the two authors this thesis will explore. Each source draws upon esteemed mythographic work to reach their definition, like Joseph Campell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, for example, in which the hero "monomyth" is explored by structuralist methodologies.

The first source relies heavily on Jung's description of archetypal symbols. *Melville's* Moby-Dick: *A Jungian Commentary*, by Edward Edinger, is an archive of archetypal symbols that appear in the novel, and the entries range from "Melville the Man" to "Ishmael, the Alienated One," to "Ahab and Mythology". For example, in the latter entry, Edinger notes the pervasiveness of a redemptive sign-system throughout *Moby-Dick*, attributed primarily to a recurring symbol standing for exodus and return to origin:

In fact, the figure of Ahab assimilates to itself most of the major myths of the world. We have already noted Ahab's identification with the newborn sun in the facts that the Pequod sails on Christmas Day, the winter solstice, and, as the ship sails south, Ahab's increasing appearances on deck parallel the sun's increasing emergence…In one of his aspects, Ahab belongs to that group of sun-heroes who, like the sun, are dismembered or swallowed by a monster in the west only to rise again newborn in the east. (61)

Ahab's own myth of the 'white whale,' which he suddenly announces to the crew one day, participates in the simultaneity that draws all signifiers toward a radiant, eternal Signifier/*tabula rasa*. "Black" –as in the text that punctuates the blank page; or the "dusky" and laboring "savages"; or a partial, "false leg"; or simply "exiled" Ishmael and myriad other "dark" tropes –is the allegorical supplement to this mythic simultaneity. As we will see, the allegorical supplement gives the novel *duration*, and this temporal dimension represents the American frontier –both a "predestined" point of arrival and an "origin" –as not entirely Romantic and redemptive.

Pynchon's Mythographies, by Kathryn Hume, extends our understanding of symbols as mythopoeic units when she attempts to define *modern* myth, or the appearance of myth during industrial history (a history which includes the invention of photography, cinema, and the general process of "mechanically reproducing" images). Her foundational understanding is clear enough, and in agreement with Edinger's survey: "[P]rimary myth is a traditional narrative, usually concerned with gods and heroes, that embodies and reinforces cultural values through its symbolism. It often deals with such socially important subjects as origins and birth, growing up, marriage, death, and humanity's relation to animals, plants, and the cosmos at large." (13) She then notes that myth becomes somewhat altered when applied to literature, plays, and other deliberately fictional mediums, like novels; for example, in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, mythic

"content" appears, while a specific myth that structures the overall form seems absent. (15)

Still, an application of myth to the contemporary medium of the novel –usually appearing as cosmography –continues to describe the genre as primarily symbolic, which Hume details: "[M]ythological cosmoi tend to use the traditional components of their form, the archetypes (as these are popularly called). While it might theoretically be possible to create a mythological cosmos without using such archetypes as creation, apocalypse, *axis mundi*, underworld, and monsterfight, the resultant realm would lack the familiar resonances that guide readers to the desired seriousness of response". (37)

When myth encounters allegory in the medium of the literary novel, the allegorical supplement *dis-joins* the simultaneity of the archetypal symbol and its extended cosmos. In other words, allegory pushes mythical *form* into a not-yet signified *content*; indeed, the mythic cosmos may be commented upon during the process of its construction.

We might say that allegory, by this supplement, *deconstructs* myth –which is not to say that it wishes to *destroy* myth, but that it wants to educate us, in allegorical fashion, how to "read" modern myth. Hume notes that such an allegorical reading still defines myth "in the sense that term is used for systems that characters impose on experience when trying to wrest order from chaos." (191) The value of an allegorical supplement is that it demonstrates how modernity gradually allocates the myth-making power to self-elected "experts," at the expense of a "mass": it wishes for the reader to determine the truth-value of the document, and they may in fact choose "zero".

Such a novelistic stance posits that "literature transforms expected functions into blanks," and, Hume points out, it acknowledges that the "factor contributing to the mythology's ability to interrelate with uncertainty is the symbolic nature of mythology." (191-7) Myth in the novel, according to Hume's argument, does not promise certain redemption: in other words, "tragedy" is always a possibility, and the mythic genre is open to contingency. Ahab the tragic "sun-hero" is a perfect example. Allegory always-already stands at the periphery of myth's entrance to the novel.

At the same time, modern myth expresses a heightened, "intense concern with origins". (17) Hume describes to us that this "overcompensation" (Jung's term) actually "reverses" historical teleology into eschatology: "The futures made possible by immachination correspond to the biblical predictions of apocalypse in both senses –as revelation of the new and as warning of destruction." (94)

Hume again reinforces our argument that, if the conditions of industrial history make myth available to allegory by introducing the novel, they also make myth vulnerable to "politicization" by the leaders over modern communities, who first benefitted from the ability to communicate across vast spatio-temporal distances with the aid of technology, whether transportive or communcative: "The next major myth after paradise and fall is immachination," Hume explains. "This corresponds in Jewish thought to Abraham's offering of Isaac [whose brother "Ishmael" fled the sacrifice]…namely the process by which the animate turns into the inanimate." (91) With appearance of *modern* myth we can witness its manipulation by an elect that projects redemption –singular, total Abrahamic "truth" –according to a promise of simultaneity (for example, a telegraphic, trans-national "frontier" that sacrifices the community to a permanently unattainable destiny of Edenic prosperity, infinitely receding in order to remain vital).

In other words, if industrial conditions give communities the novel, it is worth noting that trans-national telegraphy, transportation, and motion pictures are developing at that time, too. The community's Edenic destiny/origin (uncanny paradox!) that is projected as a simultaneous horizon cannot escape modernization's push for infinite recession through infinite frames –frames of reading, of film, of landscape through windows or telegrams. Delay marks –punctuates– revelation for America's industrial communities, because of modernity's inherent tension, which we call "progress" (the paradoxical preservation of originality through destruction of tradition).

As we proceed to our discussion of *Moby-Dick* with definitions of allegory and myth at hand, it is worth mentioning that this first of three sections will predominantly take for its guide/captain a text titled *Exiled Waters*: Moby-Dick *and the Crisis of Allegory* (though, of course, we will have other important crew members aboard; note chief mate Roland Barthes).

Exiled Waters will determine the influence of available research for this study – for example, archetypal and characterological evaluations, or critical philosophy –and will provide us the opportunity for discussing how a comparative method using film becomes useful for exploring the "greatness" of Melville's "Great American Novel". *Exiled Waters* focuses on the historical dimension of tropes –specifically, "the crisis of allegory," as its subtitle suggests –and by extension how various historical "epochs" use tropes to address perceived temporal imbalances or disjunctions.

The "supplementation" of myth with allegory describes the complex "shadowed" quality of the concept which this study relies upon. That concept, referred to as "the Archive," will explain how film and certain American novels operate as part of a larger historical negotiation among all of modernity's discourses for *truth-value*. It just so happens that the concept of "the Archive" opens up a wide field of play on black/white oppositions, such as inherited ideational attitudes and prejudices toward truth-value (either true *or* false), as well as the immediate influence of certain relevant material artifacts on critical perception, for instance black and white film media, and the convention of black text on white page.

A genre that devolves around a shifting, asymmetrical duality between audience and a "final" narrative truth, i.e. allegory, directly addresses the entire semiotic package delivered by "the Archive". The present study has emerged from the conviction that discussing the history of film and "the Great American Novel" in terms of self-contained entities can only predetermine the conclusions of research by positing analogies, blindly tracing the figural processes it seeks to explain (symbols, metaphors, synechdoche). When certain critical resources become available –the "philosophy" of deconstruction and "archaeology" as methodology (Derrida and Foucault, respectively) –the process of research can explore artifacts commonly known as "novels" and "film" to illustrate the aforementioned discursive negotiation for truth-value; and, to a great degree, we have chosen artifacts which express historical "epochs" of critical fusion among select discourses (the fifty-year run-up to year 1900 A.D. and WWII, respectively).

By positioning artifacts in conversation with each other, this study embraces an inter-disciplinary, comparative method based on the work of the Frankfurt School (specifically, Walter Benjamin) and the late-twentieth-century French criticism referred to as "poststructuralism," in order to explore *conditions* and *influences* versus positing causal relations. Because of the relatively layered quality of this methodology, this study

cannot omit periodic elaborations of the guiding concept of "the Archive," when it seems necessary, gradually defining it, in order to fulfill a more ultimate goal: to explore what makes *Moby-Dick* and *Gravity's Rainbow* "Great American Novels," in the broadest historical sense. This study also cannot omit extended discussion of historical contexts, which includes influential individuals, techniques, and the political and cultural milieu. For all of these reasons, each section will retain coherence by a repeated focus on the figural implications and the tropes of various texts. Our study remains intensely relevant to the English discipline through its dependency upon a wealth of previous research made by English scholars. This justification has been explained in detail in the "Introduction" to our study.

The introduction of *Exiled Waters* describes the goals of an advanced historical methodology when approaching contemporary Western literature: to focus on history's "determination of generic form, the linguistic structure and figural relationships, and the overall sense of lived time and space." (Cowan, 5) The author explains that, if we need a figure to guide us in this methodology, we can choose Walter Benjamin; for example, Benjamin's critical writings specifically and extensively work with allegory as a way to negotiate "between temporality and the relatively timeless realm of art". (6) While not, by any means, a solely artistic concept, "the Archive" features a similar dynamic, when defined as an historical record that continuously comments upon its own evolving method of recording truth-value.

The focus given to Walter Benjamin in *Exiled Waters* will provide a means for addressing allegory as both a genre in its own right and as a "supplement" to myth; additionally, Benjamin's indispensable comments on allegory, from his work titled *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, will be of interest to us. Actually, from Cowan's perspective, it's Benjamin's commentary that allows us to claim high value for an advanced approach to *Moby-Dick*, because he (Benjamin) illuminates allegory "not as a word designating a set of literary conventions, nor as an honorific title meaning that the work is profound, but as a mode of discourse employed in past Western literate societies to come to terms with a crisis in the imagining of the relation between the timely and the timeless." (6)

What this could mean for comprehending the relation of *Moby-Dick* to its potential "community" –what it could mean for comprehending Melville's work as an "archive" –serves as a primary reason for accepting Cowan's perspective. In fact, Cowan's text eventually *does* apply 'genre analysis' to *Moby-Dick*, in order to explore the "archival" dimension of Melville's novel: "[A]t the ever-present second level of narrative, Ishmael the writer is already portraying this transformation of himself as an allegory of allegory." (6) To prove his hypothesis, Cowan proceeds through the bulk of his text according to a strict, but advanced, historical methodology: from "a single premise, that *Moby-Dick* presents the central drama of exile –from being, from tradition, from community –that shaped the nature of allegory in the Romantic epoch." (7)

Cowan even starts to address features of a larger, overarching concept of "the Archive" by referring to it as form continuously commenting on content, and vice versa, and by stating, contrary to the research of certain Melville scholars, that "Ishmael's understanding is cumulative, and like the imagination in allegory, endows all events with meaning by recalling them as part of lived history." (7) As readers of *Moby-Dick*, we realize that the *form* of Melville's novel, like its *content*, operates allegorically. The

ultimate result is that we realize an *allegorical correspondence* plays between the body of Ishmael and the material body of the text we hold in our hands: "The deaths of whales and men which he [Ishmael] is to witness leave him far from a vision of 'dumb blankness,'" Cowan explains, "they leave no space in his memory that is not written on." (8)

Nor does the material world escape becoming "written on" by Ishmael's experiences: the pages of *Moby-Dick* serve as substitute "stamps" of the "impressions" Ishmael has left on the world of whales. We as readers can never conceive of whales the same way after reviewing Ishmael's record –they become "ungraspable phantoms"– and Melville allegorically wants to convince us of the ineluctability of modernized time (the mechanical time of modern land-bound communities).

Moby-Dick, by re-presenting its process of unfolding on all levels, demonstrates the concept of "the Archive" as a negotiation not only between 'the timely and the timeless' but between materials and ideas. It was, perhaps, part of *Moby-Dick*'s "greatness" to open with sections titled "Etymology" and "Extracts," and to quote not wholly extant sources –or, as Cowan puts it: "It is of the very character of *Moby-Dick* as allegory that it begin retrospectively, long after the disastrous whale hunt is past….The tension between epic venture and allegorical commentary is what defines the structure of the entire narrative to come." (60)

The "correspondence" implied by allegory –a deferred, disjunctive, and discontinuous correspondence between reader and reporter, registered, paradoxically, by the *immediate experience* of "lived history" –will also facilitate understanding of our comparative method involving film, because most essays on *Moby-Dick*-as-movie focus on the difficulty, even the impossibility, of establishing direct cinematic correspondence with a novel that appears so bound to the realm of print.

Just as we have defined two important terms for our study, allegory and myth, we'll also need to define an important concept, "the uncanny," in order to justify our dependency on such a paradoxically-defined "correspondence"; from this Freudian concept, Derrida develops his definition of "the archive" (Derrida uses that exact term). This concept also may have influenced Walter Benjamin's critique of "mechanical reproduction," and, later, Foucault's own definition of "the archive" (he, too, uses the exact term).

"The uncanny," described by Freud, functions as allegory: it involves the sudden reunion of artificially alienated drives (separated via repression), and this reunion produces shock for the ego, becuase it suddenly realizes dual opposites constitute a single identity. An initial separation or alientation, Freud believed, was inspired by a response to anxiety –a way of overcoming the relentlessness of time, by disjunction. Thus, a past was artificially produced in order to establish an "origin," and to stamp the present with the impression of "progress". The myth of a return to origins and the myth of re-writing History derive their inspiration from this principle of "the uncanny". *Moby-Dick* addresses both myths across its pages.

An initial anxiety –a fever-producing anxiety, Derrida will say– expresses, ultimately, an anxiety over forgetting, and serves as mnemotechnic for consciousness; paradoxically, the fight against forgetting relies upon the same violent technique employed by the "antagonist" –self-effacing destruction. The fight against forgetting appears this way because mnemotechnic is always a lifeless, statuesque stand-in, a

substitute, a supplemental "monument" for the "thing," the "origin" it represents. This is the uncanny paradox at the heart of modernity's will to remember and preserve. We have already understood modernity's role in modernizing myth and symbols; and we have understood allegory's response to this, in terms of the novel's printed language.

When Freud opens his essay, "The 'Uncanny'," he directs his attention first to written language, and to an etymological methodology, in hopes of clearly explaining this complex concept. *Heimlich* –which might amount, in translation, to the English "canny" –is Freud's starting point: "*Heimlich*…belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly, etc." (222) Would the addition of a mere "*Un*" be the only way to detect the opposite of this peculiar word?

As Freud continues to research various dictionaries, he discovers that the common definition of *Heimlich* actually *contains its own opposite*, so that it also means: "Concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others. To do something *heimlich*, i.e. behond someone's back." (223)

The etymological discovery itself seems "uncanny" to Freud, and he proposes that *Unheimlich* "is undoubtedly related to what is frightening –to what arouses dread and horror". (219) The "*Un*" seems to always-already be present in "*Heimlich*" –yet, at the same time, "forgotten" and repressed –so how might we discern what it ultimately tells us about "the uncanny"? In other words, what does this "negative mark," this "supplement" tell us about our relation to memory? Advancing his research to philosophical discourses, Freud notes that Schelling, the German philosopher, suggests "everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret but has come to light." (225) This "ought" conveys a kind of levianthanic foreboding, and sends Freud off to his own discursive field, psychoanalysis.

Freud hypothesizes that "repetition" –which produces a "double" –explains the uncanny principle of (re)united opposites, and that it is "this factor of involuntary repetition which surrounds what would otherwise be innocent enough with an uncanny atmosphere" (237).In terms of his own field of study, Freud offers the "ego" as a primary example of how this principle extends to the temporal realm of experience:

The idea of the 'double' does not necessarily disappear with the passing of primary narcissism, for it can receive fresh meaning from the later stages of the ego's development. A special agency is slowly formed there, which is able to stand over against the rest of the ego, which has the function of observing and criticizing the self and of exercising a censorship within the mind, and which we become aware of as our 'conscience'. (235-6)

Importantly, for our study, Freud continues to build on this argument, to say that "the uncanny" affects our sense of the future, our destiny, which is our temporal "double": "There are also all the unfulfilled but possible futures to which we still cling to in phantasy". (236) The "American frontier" certainly applies in this instance, as a future that promises to (re)unite "the garden" and its opposite, "the wilderness". Of course, the "involuntary repetition" of photography applies as well, because it is a material substitute or supplemental monument of the past, to be viewed in the future; and this viewing supposes a (re)union of material and idea. Even restricting ourselves exclusively to the photographic discourse, we realize that photography has its own "double," its own "*Un*" and "negative mark," with the photographic negative.

Reviewing his argument, Freud recognizes that it can really only account for "superficial" processes (like artistic or literary instances of "the uncanny") and lacks the "depth" that would explain how the ego can encounter something "outside" itself in the material world as "uncanny" (and thus "foreign," hostile). He concludes that "the uncanny" is spatial *because* it is primarily "superficial," i.e. "of surfaces": it is the ego's compulsive necessity to ensure its own survival through narcissistic "repetition" that inspires it to "project" the secret concept –i.e. an identity of dual opposites –on to the mirror of a "foreign" (and hostile) other. This process of achieving depth through projection onto a surface, and then valuing the reflection, is much like cinema's projection of a superficial image on the surface of a viewed screen, we could say.

Freud explains how "projection" retains the fantasy of having a single identity; paradoxically, the ego's initial anxiety to "make progress" ultimately creates the uncanny conditions for revealing what was "originally" intended to remain secret: "When all is said and done, the quality of uncanniness can only come from the fact of the 'double' being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since surmounted –a stage, incidentally, at which it wore a more friendly aspect." (236)

Significantly, Freud supplies his –and others' –experience of suddenly encountering the self's image in a mirror in a public place, and, taking it for a stranger, felt the "uncanny" impulse of hostility toward this "foreigner". This leads Freud to suggest that the highly developed and "projective" narcissism inherent in fantasy can be described in terms of an unconscious "compulsion to repeat," in other words, a compulsion to stamp the critical ego "over against" all difference. (238)

As for the narcissism invovled with the act of writing, especially endeavors of literary fiction, Freud concludes that a special class of the "uncanny" appears, and he emphasizes this with his own italics: "The contrast between what has been repressed and what has been surmounted cannot be transposed on to the uncanny in fiction without profound modification…The somewhat paradoxical result is that *in the first place a great deal that is not uncanny in fiction would be so if it happened in real life; and in the second place that there are many more means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than there are in real life*." (249) That Melville –and later, Pynchon –creates a fiction that appears as archival documents, as facts supplementing the greater myth and cosmography, suggests a high degree of "uncanniness" in *Moby-Dick* (and *Gravity's Rainbow*).

It is from Freud's concluding remarks, with a focus on the (self)effacement of monuments, substitutes, and supplements, that Derrida begins his study titled *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Derrida develops upon Freud's concept of "the uncanny" through a deconstructive critique of Western metaphysics and its obsession with tracing "origins". Establishing and proclaiming a "self-evident" mode of "Being" involves a violent exclusion of an "Other," Derrida finds: in other words, the additional obsession with causality in Western metaphysics also produces oppositional binaries.

A significant contribution by Derrida to late-twentieth-century critical writing was his ability to discern how Western agency, like a reader, is *traced upon the process which creates binaries* (no *a priori* subject, in other words; and, just as important, no provable "origins," only the possibility of detecting "origin-machines" or what Derrida calls "a pre-originary origin").

Since Derrida attempts to explain that Western metaphysics naturalizes certain binaries, he encourages examination of the separation process, over which conscious agency appears as a cosmetic gloss: of course, this argument posits the "existence" of a process beyond rationality that creates the artificial opposites –the "existence" of an "Other" much like a collective unconscious. By extension, Derrida encourages examination of the process of sudden reunion and 'pasting together,' what Freud refers to as a "return of the repressed," in order to detect how the opposition was naturalized in the first place.

In literary contexts, the "return of the repressed" is re-presented in some peripheral corner of the text, a "fact" that both reinforces the overarching argument and supplies its counterargument. We find that the definition of "allegory" in *Exiled Waters* already suggests both of these processes: "Allegory is a device for bonding together opposite and contradictory aspects of a functioning society –aspects too widely separated for the immediate and delightful conjunction that paradox implicitly effects within the individual." (Cowan, 32) Cowan, of course, refers to the "delightful conjunction" experienced by the mythic individual, whose epiphany through the symbol brings re-union with a "Signified"; we are arguing that, unconsciously, this is actually an uncanny process of annihilation and self-destruction through "surplus" meaning.

We recognize that the figural representation of "the frontier" implies a moral agent on the line between "garden" and "wilderness," which describes Ishmael's position, his consciousness, and, by extension, his narrative. But what is the relation between Ishmael's record and the community intended to receive it? Note that Derrida's definition of an "archive" rests on its relation to a political community of individuals: "It [the archive] runs through the whole of the field and in truth determines politics from top to bottom as *res publica*…Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation and access to the archive". (4)

As mentioned, Derrida proceeds from Freud's argument of an unconscious "compulsion to repeat" and the projection of the ego "over against" a hostile "foreigner". In exile, even by his stolen namesake, we wonder if Ishmael actually embodies both ego and foreigner; and if his narrative is that "uncanny," too: how much is the material record we hold in our hands a simulation of how modernization organizes worlds, through stamps, classfications, genealogies, etymologies, archived extracts?

We continue referring to *Archive Fever* and find that Derrida wants to use Freud's research on "the death drive" to further explain this "uncanny" process by which a material artifact mirrors an ideational system. Derrida attempts to capture a process that goes beyond the individual toward communities; a process that is "anti-archival," and which paradoxically supplies the possibility of simulating a system of truth-values through gravity-bound materials:

[I]f there is no archive without consignation in an *external place* which assures the possibility of memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, or of reimpression, then we must also remember that repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains, according to Freud, indissociable from the death drive…The archive always works, and *a priori*, against itself. (11-12, italics in original)

The same process by which an ego attempts to "make progress" by narcissistically and compulsively repeating itself, by violently separating itself then aggressively projecting

that difference externally –this is the "uncanny" communal process by which "archives" are both material and idea, an anxious signifier of a group "origin" and the subsitute "mark" that destroys and obscures that same "origin". "The Archive" is thus the representative of modernity and its project of Enlightenment ("rational" organization of democratic communities and dominance of "nature" through mechanical time).

Historically, "the frontier" serves as one of the greatest myths of origins and of re-writing History –so, how exactly does *modern* myth originate? Again, Freud and Derrida supply explanation: the origin of modern myth is in the techniques of industrial history, in the substitute marks made by the printing press and photography. These are the seeds of "expert" leaders who command through a "mass culture".

Industrial history features a "mechanically reproduced" drive toward preservation, a drive whose inherent dynamic actually involves destruction and self-effacement, because repetition supplies a substitute "origin". A material monument represses its identity with the idea's immediacy in 'lived history,' because it is inherently delayed, an artifact that must be received by an audience; at the same time, the material monument wishes to preserve the truth of the idea's originary status. This despite the fact that the idea, the "original origin," has no more claim to originality than the material supplement. Only the anxiety over forgetting invests the idea with originary status. Mass-printed text, and later, photographs, seem both "self-evident" *and* capable of "deliberately resurrecting" the idea, whenever needed: it is only a matter of allotting one more unit of mechanical time –the opening of the shutter, the stamp of the press or turning of the page –to ensure the future dissemination of an "origin".

This destructive drive, by extension, serves as a means of securing the future of a modern community's consciousness, because, paradoxically, it is cumulative in its destruction, and constitutes an archive of substitute images, remarks, and discourses. We perceive "destruction" only through its absence, by reason of its self-effacement; that is, we perceive the preservation of an "origin" with substitute origins, but having repressed the substitute quality, destruction appears only subliminally: the "monuments" of industrial society become "ruins" when we excavate the "original" landscape, now "secularized". "The Archive" is "consigned to an external place," but that does not mean we can point to it, any more than we can point to language or to the dominance of nature by mechanical time. We can only point to representatives of "the Archive": a material artifact, a cosmetic trace that has placed the more "original origin" under erasure.

The rationalized bureaucracy emerging through WWII serves as an example of the trace of modernized destruction, as does the invention of the motion picture and "the Great American Novel": this section will address the latter directly (we'll address WWII when we get to Pynchon). Broadly, the destruction drive accounts for the impossibility of re-presenting "the Archive" in its totality at a simultaneous instant: we can only consume its cumulative wealth through deferred, disjunctive fragments. This explains why "the death drive" is not antagonistic or what we should eradicate: its repetitive "logic" serves as a regulating function against *total* destruction, i.e. spatial organization without temporality.

The destructive drive –so self-effacing that Freud occasionally refers to it with a "dead" ancient tongue, the Greek word *Thanatos* –shares an identity with "the Archive," its "opposite". This realization has deep consequences for the narrator of *Moby-Dick*, because it suggests that Ishmael is conscious of making records which speak as much to

themselves as to a potential audience. "The 'real' name of the character behind this literary persona is never to be known," Cowan explains of Ishmael. "[F]or the duration of his fictional existence he lives in exile in the linguistic sphere also, banished from a proper name and forced to adopt one which is his only allegorically." (70) From the first sentence –"Call me Ishmael" –the narrator steals his namesake from a biblical figure who evaded sacrifice at the hand of his father, only for his substitute brother to take his "original" place.

What are the conditions for making a record that speaks to itself? Derrida articulates how Freud developed the concept of "repression" as 'an unfolding of space,' as an exploration –versus a kind of causal 'hammering down'. With this distinction, "repression" can remain co-extensive with the narration of a literary artifact or record, and Derrida reminds us that Freud believed 'only the failed repressions gain our attention'. Thus, "the archive" of *Moby-Dick* is the positioning of an unconscious (phonetic marks with no expectation of audience) against consciousness (phonetic marks with expectation of an audience). Ishmael writes for no one *and* for an unknown reader.

Bringing this distinction about "repression" to his discussion of archives, Derrida introduces the term "hypomnesic" to refer to an impression made on some "ontological" surface or substitute "origin," which we could, in potential, return to later, to refresh our imperfect memory. For example, the mnemotechnic of associative recollection –investing an object or word in order to recall a date, let's say –is a type of "hypomnesic" mark. As a result, Derrida's term "archontic" refers to a communal organization that functions according to hypomnesic investments, i.e. "constitutions," "Law".

Plato warned against hypomnesic investments, because he felt they implied dependency on an externality, and thus weakend man's faculties; at the same time, his philosophy posits that we can locate a genealogical "origin" outside of ourselves: consider, for example, his famous "Allegory of the Cave". "The death drive" will seek to efface "hypomnesia" as its "foreign Other" –which Plato would seem to rather like – *except if*, Derrida emphasizes, the death drive can play at *becoming* hypomnesia through a material, "superficial" appearance, a "disguise," in the same way a page stamped by a press, or a photograph developed from a negative, is a "disguise" of a"more original" immaterial idea.

Or, as Freud mentioned, in the way a "conscience" is a disguise of a more antecedent narcissism. In these instances, Derrida refers to the proliferation of *materialized* subsitute monuments that "re-member" an "origin" as "archive fever":

The death drive tends thus to destroy the hypomnesic archive, *except if* it can be disguised, made up, painted, *printed*…The death drive is not a principle. It threatens every principality, every archontic primacy, every archival desire. It is what we will call, later on, *le mal d'archive*, "archive fever". (12, italics added)

The notion of a conceptual "origin" is also of intense interest for Walter Benjamin, hence the title of his work, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Benjamin, too, finds a tension between destruction and archival preservation, at least on a conceptual level, when he attempts to define "origin". For Benjamin, "origin" is different from "genesis," because it implies a kind of excavation –a "restoration and re-establishment," in his own words. (45) A "genesis" gives us, in the present, a definition of a distinct progression, signified cumulatively by the features of a symbol at any given instance: this explains why

symbols seem so "eternal," and why Benjamin calls work with "origins" an "imperfect" labor.

"Origins" can represent a distinct progression, too: the condition is that it comments on, or overtly states, the partially artificial status of this representation. In other words, an allegorical sign could direct the reader to some absent pretext, but that pretext, since absent, will be illumined mythically, saturated with a formal imagistic quality by reason of textual distance and delay: "That which is original is never revealed in the naked and manifest existence of the factual; its rhythm is apparent only to a dual insight," as Benjamin puts it. (45)

Commentary, or an overt acknowledgement of the artificial condition of a sign, can appear as such, like in *Moby-Dick*: Benjamin does not dispute the fact that a work on "origins" may focus on the "history and subsequent development" of a sign or signs. (46) So, for example, we notice that *Moby-Dick* actually begins with an etymological table on the word "whale," translated through various languages. It is true that such a demonstration has an "infinite" quality to it, and that allegory, defined as the generation of signs form any given sign, is "infinite" as well.

"Infinite" in reference to a symbol is different because that quality poses an individual who proceeds through infinite frames of reference to reach a redemptive conclusion (at least potentially); or an individual who realizes that the infinite progression itself is a redemption testifying to what Benjmain calls the individual's moral "perfection" (the possibility of moral perfection, *given enough time*). Benjamin bases his claims on the understanding that the symbol promises re-union, as we previously discussed:

As a symbolic construct, the beautiful is supposed to merge with the divine in an unbroken whole. The idea of the unlimited immanence of the moral world in the world of beauty is derived from the theosophical aesthetics of the romantics…What is typically romantic is the placing of this perfect individual within a progression of events which is, it is true, infinite but is nevertheless redemptive, even sacred. (160)

Allegory, Benjamin believes, will restore balance to narrative because it focuses on transience, ephemerality, and contingent outcomes as the basis of "nature". The "white whale" is forever eluding its captor, and when they do meet, anything can happen – including a retreat by either party, or both. Still, it would be a mistake to believe that Melville could not reconcile symbols, archetypes, and romantic myth with allegory, even on their own terms.

The kind of diplomacy necessary for that kind of narrative, Benjamin believes, can be found within allegory's relation to "the natural world". Allegory, he argues, is the vehicle for the inherited myth called "the fall of man," and ensures transmission of that myth to future historical communities by giving "significance" to the absent, "timeless" and Edenic, prelapsarian state so impossible for "fallen" consciousness to grasp. "Significance" in this context is similar in definition to Derrida's concept of "archive fever". It is the possibility for meaning to accumulate for a reader (or viewer), and for that meaning to draw itself close to the material world in which its representation is consumed. In other words, Benjamin posits that allegory begins a relation to myth during industrial history or the "mechanical reproduction" of consumable artifacts.

At the same time, Benjamin defines "significance" as the possibility for that received meaning to decompose at any given moment, forcing the consumer to re-construct a narrative arch:

The greater the significance, the greater the subjection to death, because death digs most deeply the jagged line of demaracation between physical nature and significance. But if nature has always been subject to the power of death, it is also true that is has always been allegorical. Significance and death both come to fruition in historical development, just as they are closely linked as seeds in the creature's graceless state of sin. The perspective of allegory as a development of myth…ultimately appears, from the same baroque standpoint, as a moderate and more modern perspective. (166)

Thus, Benjamin understands the quintessential trope of the twentieth-century as "ruins". By extension, the artist (or consumer) that emerges from this context "reconstructs" a narrative –and not only just once, but again and again, after "de-composing" the "restored" edifice. With the advent of industrialization, the artist finds "tradition" in "the highly significant fragment, the remnant". Such is impact of industrialization for realizing the "textuality of history". (178-9)

If allegory "moderates" the mythic symbol, though, it does so on behalf of a larger community. For example, in *Moby-Dick,* Melville understands that "the individual" is a romantic inheritance, and his employment of allegory juxtaposes this inheritance with the emergence of a liberal, democratic American community. Benjamin shares Melville's concern, and their concern is "archival": how to signify the relation of the part to the whole in terms of temporality.

In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, defining that relation starts from realizing that "the individual" appears as the product of "genesis" only because "genesis" endows its products with a mythic "aura" of linear development. Benjamin proposes that "the individual" seems, to us, to appear at the end of a "teleology" rooted in a "nature" that exists "for the sake of" man's happiness ("*hominis causa*"). This is the Enlightenment's project, he affirms: objective consciousness is the "fruit" that grows from the "seed" of a natural kingdom that was always-already predestined to become the object for a discourse. (178)

On the other hand, industrialization, Benjamin argues, allows us to interchange the hierarchy of form/content implied by "telelogy's" subjection of "nature" to man's forms of knowledge. As a result, industrialization gives to an artist the unprecedented technique of combining allegory to myth; the artist takes a "ruined" secular landscape as an archive of signs that can be juxtaposed in infinitely different configurations to produce varying degrees of "significance".

In other words, that artist is involved with a technique of reconstructing then decomposing then reconstructing again: "The exuberant subjection of antique elements in a structure which, without uniting them in a single whole, would, in destruction, still be superior to the harmonies of antiquity, is the purpose of the technique which applies itself separately, and ostentatiously, to realia, rhetorical figures and rules." (178-9) The resultant artifact has the quality of "infinite" temporality, but acknowledges the artificiality –the contingent and "timely" nature –behind its construction.

Benjamin calls this lingering desire to give an "eternal" quality to signs, despite acknowledging the artificiality of such, as "one of the strongest impulses of allegory" (223). If industrialization is the ironic materialization of the "fall of man" because it

secularizes the landscape it was supposed to redeem from an "original" fall, then allegory does not merely speculate on the "ruins". Benjamin argues that allegory conceives of all the remnant myths that had built an "enlightened world" as so many "names" passed over by the "muteness" of a nature restored to a trans-historical, though wounded, status.

The grand myths that had sought to re-organize "nature" now experience the distance between a sign and its material referent. Through allegory the reader gives new "significance" to that empty space, that "frontier," argues Benjamin: "To be named –even if the name-giver is god-like and saintly –perhaps always brings with it presentiment of mourning. But how much more so not to be named only to be read, to be read uncertainly by the allegorist, and to have become highly significant thanks only to him." (224-5) Allegory, for Benjamin, is ultimately the means by which a community gains relief from the "crisis" of colliding temporalities.

This heated digression turns us back toward the critical importance of Cowan's text influenced by Benjamin, *Exiled Waters:* Moby-Dick *and the Crisis of Allegory*, in which he makes the "archontic" claim that "truth and the notion of community…leave behind fragments of their existence –testimonies –that can be found only in history." For Cowan, the archivist, like Ishmael who gathers extracts and etymologies, is an allegorical agent; the archivist thus deals with disjunction, and his task "to remember (and re-member) the dismembered –has always been the defining concern of allegory." (10)

Ishmael, his body and the body of his records, sails on the frontier between destruction and "the Archive": Melville re-presents the correspondence between each through placing the records alongside the drama of a crew. "The allegorist stands…between two imperatives," Cowan claims. "[O]n a thin line that marks the convergence of two disciplines just as it demarcates the separation of two historical epochs." (12) *Two* epochs, Cowan says: Ishmael-at-sea reflects on Ishmael-at-land, and thus on the different orders of time between an ancient world and a more modernized one.

Perhaps the opening sections, "Etymology" and "Extracts," ultimately do serve as the best texts for exploring the allegorical self-effacement of Ishmael by his own hand, as obvious as those examples may seem. Their form and content re-present the narrative process which defers the unity of Ahab's drama. Already, by the first official page, *Moby-Dick* has to negotiate with the myth of a return to origin. As Ishmael lists the name for "whale" in various languages, attempting to grasp the "ungraspable phantom," we can realize, at Cowan's insistence, that "each successive epoch has been brought about by the failure of the previous one to capture the whale's nature completely in a name." (64) Even the most memorable line of *Moby-Dick* –the first line –expresses an obsession with naming, substitution, and exile ("Ishmael" is not the narrator's actual name; he ironically expresses the power of a command –"Call me" –on the basis of its allegorical power, through its reference to the son whom God commanded Abraham to sacrifice).

Both the opening sections and this memorable first line immediately raise the 'temperature' of the text toward "archive fever". *Moby-Dick* sets out to explore its own dimension as a material, printed artifact that must, through the process of being read, unfold a "repression" between the body of Ishmael and the body of his records. Thus, Melville "unfolds" repression not just through the typical "form," the narrator; through content, Melville constructs a page which cannot escape its printed territory, and starts to overheat: he signals this uncanny fever through a reliance on various, even suspect

sources, as exemplified in the opening passages, leading Cowan to conclude that "[o]nly after the book has been exposed as being impossible can it truly begin." (66)

Beyond the realm of printed language, a photographic parallel arrives in the section titled "Ishmael as Allegorist," during Cowan's analysis of Chapters 1 – 23 of *Moby-Dick*, when he describes Ishmael's consciousness as *"seeking flashes of revelation in a secular landscape"*. (68, italtics added). Of course, we also recognize this critical description from our review of the Romantic symbol. *Moby-Dick* does reflect these sudden "flashes" in its form, taking on the quality of a photographic album, that secular book which, during the late-19th-century, started to symbolically rival the most commonly owned household book. But if the placement of Ishmael's records reflects the process of photography in form, the content of *Moby-Dick* has a photographic parallel that is more allegorical in its features; so that, even by the fourth sentence of *Moby-Dick*, Cowan tells us, we can realize Ishmael "words" comment on how they are a repetition of the world–

structured syntactically with the unmistakable stamp of the allegorist, who has begun to experience all events only as typical instances of a repeated series and who therefore distances himself from immediate experience in order to draw significance from it. (68)

This 'photographic-consciousness,' so to speak, reflected in both the 'separating' content and in the 'pasted-together' form of *Moby-Dick*, speaks to opposing attitudes toward photographic media during the late-19th-century: one in which a photograph is objective "proof"; another in which it is the mythical patron of painting. In Cowan's words, Ishmael encounters "two kinds of crucial moments: one in which he is forced to acknowledge the illusoriness of a quest for an autonomous act of imagination (as in his chapter on masthead-sitting); and one in which he must acknowledge the presence of an earlier text or tradition in order to perform the unitary act of imagination he has longed for". (69) "Ishmael" –that line which appears between a man and an archive of records – we could say, is the line between myth and allegory.

But how can we even refer to a 'photographic-consciousness,' except as an idiom that refers to an uncanny ability to remember in detail? How can we prove its existence – in other words, what discourse do we have available to us, which allows us to apply a photographic frame to *Moby-Dick*? To give a discourse back to photography, after detailing its specific effects on the viewer, is precisely the goal of Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*.

Barthes' study appears particularly useful for us because it discusses photography in terms of myth, and the "simultaneous totality" which myth promises; also because he describes 'photographic-consciousness' as an uncanny "co-presence" of opposites. Most importantly for our study, Barthes implicitly describes this "co-presence" according to allegorical logic.

On the first page of his study, Barthes states the difficulties of his goal: "My interest in Photography took a cultural turn. I decided I liked Photography in opposition to the Cinema, from which I nevertheless failed to separate it." (3) Barthes wants to describe the *potential* behind a photographic experience, which, in *actuality*, seemed to just be a material, 'existential repetition,' a kind of "tautology".

Barthes believes that *any* photograph is part of a larger archive he refers to as "Photography," because each material instance allegorically tells of the potential for

many truths: "This fatality (no photograph without *something* or *someone*) involves Photography in the vast disorder of objects –of all the objects in the world: why choose (why photograph) this object, this moment, rather than some other? Photography is unclassifiable because there is no reason to *mark* this or that of its occurrences." (6; emphasis in original)

Thus, in his own terms, Barthes has described how we will understand "the Archive": as a concept by which we designate the impossibility of a simultaneous totality. Totality enunciates itself disjunctively, at least through the allegorical mode, and this does not preclude the quality of immediacy, which we should not conflate with simultaneity. Barthes chooses to use his own, newly discursive, duality: the mythically blank *studium* and the puncutating *punctum* of allegorical logic.

The allegorical supplement to mythic symbols appears through the consumer of photography, who does not decode a signifier in order to read a signified. Photography simply posits two features in tension and in "co-presence" with each other, according to Barthes. When a viewer consumes photography, they share the dividing line with an ideal "Law," which clearly delineates the binary. "This disturbance is one of ownership," Barthes explains of the "uncanny" experience of consuming one's own photographic portrait. "Law has expressed it in its way: to whom does the photograph belong?" (13)

Barthes claims he first noticed the feature of a *studium*, which refers to a mythic totality encompassing the viewer, turning historical particulars into an enchanting 'milieu'; it requires a "kind of human interest," or at least "the rational intermediary of an ethical and political culture." (26) The *studium*, Barthes asserts, does not separate history and myth –it stimulates historical signs into playing parts of a consistent grand narrative, inpsiring a "taste for someone, a kind of general, enthusiastic commitment, of course, but without speical acuity." (26)

The *punctum*, on the other hand, does refer to acuity, as in puncture, punctual, punctuate. This is not to convey that the *punctum* is alphabetic or grammatical, necessarily –but it is certainly temporal, entertaining with the *studium* a kind of *archival relation*. More specifically, the *punctum* is "accidental" and contingent; as a temporal mark, it appears as something spontaneous and aleatoric, a "synethesia" by which totality unfolds disjunctively versus simultaneously. Barthes mentions a few instances of the *punctum*: a buckle, an imperfect tooth, a pair of fashionable shoes. The *punctum* is *partial*, the supplement to the *studium*'s all-encompassing quality. We could even say that this *partiality*, which is collected archivally in a totality, is that which mediates the totality in time. The *punctum* is the allegorical supplement –a complementary "fact" –to the *studium*'s myth.

The acuity of Barthes' term *punctum* allows us to understand that a material artifact can produce an immediate experience, but not necessarily a simultaneous experience, because *simultaneity precludes a temporal position* from which a conscious agency can proceed. After attaining the simultaneous eternity of the Signified, which merges consciousness with itself, the agent can only attain –more eternity, a mimetic future. Under allegory, a *position* requires that time must elapse. Photography, according to Barthes' fine description, accepts this distance/disjunction, thanks to the supplement of the *punctum*: "This time it is not I who seek it out (as I invest the field of the *studium* with my sovereign consciousness), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me." (26)

When the *studium* appears exclusively of the *punctum*, it produces what Barthes refers to as "the unary photograph": "In generative grammar, a transformation is unary if, through it, a single series is generated by the base." (40) We recognize this process from the mythic symbol and the Signified. As a result, no allegorical repetition occurs, by which any generated sign can become the base for a new generation (allegory is thus polysemic and "inter-textual," not "symbolic"). This "perversion" of an image without *punctum* produces "banal" images, in the sense that they are too immediately Romantic and predisposed to appear as a symbol –Barthes mentions the journalistic photograph and the pornographic photograph as examples. (41)

Technically, the reverse *could* occur, when the *punctum* appears exclusively of the mythic *studium*; for Barthes, that might approximate a "purely" informative sequence, something like a close-ups catalog of tools or a "how-to" manual –an instance that appears as absurd as it is useful, not unlike Ishmael's "cetological" records. (45) Overall, the *punctum* serves as a *potential*, immediately *actualized* by a mythic influence (in the sense that any given myth actualizes an order of facts). The two terms work on either side of a *hinge*. The *punctum* requires no "human interest"; it works disjunctively against that which encompasses; to Barthes and for us, the *punctum* acts as the regulating "death drive," a function "where the detial is offered by chance and for nothing; the scene is in no way 'composed' according to creative logic; the photograph is doubtless dual, but this duality is the motor of no 'development,' as happens in classical discourse." (42)

"Regulation" does not refer to a pre-conceived design, or even a linear, chronological order; still, "the death drive" supports the classificatory impulse of all archives, because it is the seat of mediation. Ishmael's "cetological" records classify themselves according to various discourses, but they do not have to appear in the order in which they do; it is merely important that they punctuate Ahab's drama, and do so to a superlative degree, in order to prevent the reader from accessing the 'white whale' myth under the prejudice that it is an untouched, blank, "white" truth.

When Barthes states that "reference" is "the founding order of photography," he refers to the allegorical process by which any generated sign can become a generative base. (77) The body of facts, which myth attempts to transcend, associate spontaneously and aleatorically with each other, not according to a direct genealogy with a Signified. (80) This isn't to say that "codes" elude "the Archive": in actuality, the Archive wants "codes" and codified myth –when it can share a "co-presence" with contingency. (51) We can even go so far as to say that contigency is the quality of tragedy, and that symbolic myth projects Romantic predestination.

This explanation might seem confusing, in light of the common, conventional definition of allegory as a dualistic "code" –a "lower" and a "higher" layer. In actuality, much research shows that allegory is defined by a temporal duration, i.e. repetition; we spent time with an early definition of allegory in order to justify this perspective. Allegory supplements myth with the *punctum* of "facts," which generate new facts from each other. Allegorical characters follow a flow, they don't necessarily "decode". They represent the *communal* –versus individual –quest to negotiate disjunction on its own terms.

Barthes' criticism even helps us to understand the historical fascination with "the frontier," and in the next section we'll explore the Victorian interest with landscape photographs of the early American West. For now, it is enough to mention that landscape

photographs, of course, involve generating impressions of a "home," mixing fantasy and memory. Past and future blend in desirable landscapes, projecting a "motherland" as familiar as it seems foreign (and "uncanny" for that very reason). "Looking at these landscapes of predilection," Barthes says with reference to his own collection of photographs, "it is as if *I were certain* of having been there or of going there." (40; emphasis in original)

We know that the American West gave rise to "the frontier," a predestined "home," and allegory attempts to supplement this myth by focusing on the *duration* inherent in "predestiny". Duration cannot bring the simultaneous actualization of a myth, even if you hold the photograph in your hands. Again we'll discuss this quality closely in the next section, when we explore Walter Benjamin's definition of the "aura" of modern images as 'the projection of a distance, however close the objects appear'.

Speaking about the role of myth in pre-modern socities, Barthes argues that, previously, "societies managed so that memory, the substitute for life, was eternal and that at least the thing which spoke Death itself should be immortal: this was the Monument. But by making the (mortal) Photograph into the general and somehow natural witness of 'what has been,' modern society has renounced the Monument." (93) It is this uncanny act of preservation through destruction that the whale hunter knows –especially when he occupies the masts of the ship.

One of the most significant scenes in *Moby-Dick*, from the chapter on masthead-sitting, plays on the figure of "the frontier," and is supplemented by a "literal" horizon. With access to a "backdrop" –the metaphysical "background" supposed by Western philosophy in order to set down binary opposites– Ishmael begins to register Romantic "flashes," which he can organize only according to their disjunction and their inability to bring him a truth that is not contradicted by the next. *A priori*, the Romantic perch embraces allegory. Ishmael finally achieves "allegorical contemplation" during this scene in which the ship, an archetypal symbol of the church, serves as his secular means for realizing *many* truths, embodied by the panorama of "savages" aboard. The mythic individual accepts the allegorical community.

Because the reader also witnesses this process, *Moby-Dick* the material book becomes multi-layered, especially because this particular record does not clearly separate the drama of the crew from Ishmael's "marks" –we realize that *Moby-Dick* is an archive comprised of both, and that *we*, not Melville or "Ishmael," are the archivists. A "return of the repressed" occurs, and, according to Cowan, the consciousness of the allegorical reader could register "archive fever": "Ishmael's narrative is, as we have said, retrospective; there are always two Ishmaels…the writing Ishmael and the acting Ishmael….the thoughts of the earlier Ishmael are sometimes given without any diacritical marks such as inverted commas or a parenthetical 'I thought' that would separate the comment from the language shaping the narrative." (70)

It seems extraordinary to imagine that Melville would have attempted a complex mechanism that brings certain parts of a text toward an uncanny state of absolute print, i.e. an artifact intended to be read but with no apparent community in mind. This complexity, and apparent self-sufficiency, is perhaps what has previously defined the "Great American Novel". Who could navigate between the two Ishmaels always in the "correct" way, if not even Melville himself?

Still, it is clear that an oppositional identity *does* occur in *Moby-Dick*, and in a manner that makes us wonder at the medium: a very weighty book full of rhapsodic prose, yes –and also a lot of "facts". Cowan's own response to this complexity, without recourse to specific concepts, expresses that even cursory encounters with *Moby-Dick* produce this feverish effect: "All this play with temporal perspectives is not merely frivolous…it is the only way Ishmael has of being faithful to the enormous discovery he has made that unself-conscious action and overarching design are intimately intermingled." (75)

Still, we do have some proof that *Moby-Dick* cultivates an allegorical reader, versus sitting upon obscure attempts to appear as mythic as its subject. To argue this perspective, we can contrast Ishmael's pre-voyage encounter with the chapel, another of the most significant chapters from *Moby-Dick*. Ishmael encounters allegory not through dissatisfaction with relevatory, photographic flashes; he encounters allegory as a "hypomnesia," as marble tablets impressed with text: "The proper term for these marble tablets is cenotaphs, because they commemorate someone *whose remains are not interred there*," Cowan explains. "On them the written word is inscribed in its fullest differentiation from the spoken word." (77, italics added)

Of course, we can expect the tablets to function allegorically on many registers; Melville reaches beyond expectations and allows them to function, allegorically, as the allegorical impulse itself that supplements the myth of a return to origins. Cowan defends our argument by further explaining that

[i]t is perhaps a signal from the text, *one of those self-contradictions* that Philo saw as imperative for allegory, that Ishmael claims to remember the text of the inscriptions only partially…but then spaces them out *as if he were giving an accurate copy of them. The typographic reproduction of the marble tablets on the page suggests that the visible form of the words is inseparable from their linguistic content.* The spacing of the letters is transferred into the book medium as if the hypnotic effect were to be transferred to the reader of these pages. (79-80, italics added)

The importance of this memorable scene, and Cowan's explanation of it, *does* result from Melville's amazing comprehension of allegory's power, and its relation to printed language. Melville clearly understands the process by which language can serve as a substitute monument for a relevatory "origin," and allegory's role as the dividing line between materials and ideas, not just myth and fact. Most importantly, Melville demonstrates that a reader can register a kind of *punctum*, and that an archive is defined by its ability to mediate a *simultaneous totality*.

The tablets in the chapel, Cowan continues, make "unavoidable an awareness of the frames within which signification functions; but the eternal immutability of the text blots out the awareness of frames and petrifies the reader." (88) We, the reader, are the "foreign" other, hostile to the book because we apparently threaten to give it *multiple*, even contradictory, meanings. But Melville does not want to petrify the reader permanently by projecting an aggressive author-ego; we recall that "Ishmael" is not even the narrator's actual name, and that he notices his new acquaintance –Queequeg, the illiterate "foreign" savage, i.e. we readers –in the chapel audience.

"Ishmael" carries into the chapel a *stolen* name that implies a separation from inherited History, first due to the direct meaning of the son of Abraham whose "hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him" (Gen. 16:12) and secondarily due to the act of theft-as-naming, a serious offense against the concept of the Signifier;

"Ishmael" meets his apparent contradiction through the tattooed "savage" Queequeg, whose actual body is covered with text –but Queequeg also becomes his "bed-fellow" who swears to sail out with him, and so "Ishmael," Cowan points out, commences "the unification of the split in sacred history implied by the first sentence of the novel" (88).

Reader and author make an allegorical pact. It is perhaps part of the "greatness" of *Moby-Dick* to supply as a following scene how a tattooed savage who cannot write his own name except as an obscure "mark" (Melville actually uses this term), and a character with a stolen namesake, both sign the same contract to board the *Pequod*: thus, both author and reader commit their own kind of forgery.

Even on the level of characters in *Moby-Dick*, we realize that allegory refers to a *deferred* or *disjunctive* process which plays off the metaphysical prejudices of Western metaphysics, and provides a way of deconstructing those prejudices when used subtly: all of *Moby-Dick* involves some kind of "horizon" made "literal," from the receding vision of a white whale to a captain's continually deferred search for unity (he has "phantom pains" in his missing leg); Ishmael longs at his masthead-sitting, and finally notes that modernized time is an "ungraspable phantom"; the characters aboard the ship all possess qualities which the others do not, and which "supplement" those missing qualities.

Thus, Melville traces form onto content and *vice-versa*, managing allegory as a deconstruction of Western metaphysical prejudices; the material book serves as a "partial" element in this exchange (*punctum*): it uses the relations of characters to unfold a greater allegory of reader and author at work, and Cowan notes that by "turning *toward* a bearer of 'heathen' culture, Ishmael performs the reversal or troping characteristic of his allegory." (88, emphasis in text) In addition, the "tableau" involving Father Mapple – the chapters of "Chapel," "Pulpit," and "Sermon" –serves as a great marble tablet, another inscription left behind, as with the introductory "Etymology" and "Extracts" sections. Cowan argues, and we fully agree, that the "tableau" serves as part of Melville's continual deferral of meaning:

During this hypnotic scene, Ishmael has gradually dropped from view. As a character he disappears after stepping into the chapel; as narrator he follows suit once [Father] Mapple begins to speak, and Mapple's words are transcribed directly…He leaves the chapel without any paraphrasing of the scene or its effect on him…this episode makes the rest of the novel its explicative commentary (85)

With this subtle attention to allegory, Melville can extend beyond the Romantic self, which he addresses directly, in the famous chapter titled "The Whiteness of the Whale," perhaps the most memorable and most discussed of Ishmael's records. Ishmael mentions an encounter with a white albatross, and recalls Coleridge's albatross. Cowan suggests that we should focus on the peculiar form of Ishmael's description, to gain a better understanding of this dense chapter: "The rapture before the albatross is only a recollection contained in a footnote to 'The Whiteness of the Whale,' a chapter which in its totality may be said to refer to *a total anti-relevatory order* of being. The 'palsied universe' of this vision reveals the impossibility of finding a text *organically written on the body of nature…It* [nature] *is both a blank page and a screen transmitting information overload to an infinite degree*." (91, emphasis added)

We argue that a later sentence from *Moby-Dick* could have easily appeared in this chapter: "all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot". (170) Again, as

demonstrated earlier, "the death drive" is destructive to "the Archive," *except if* it puts on a "disguise," becomes "made-up, painted, printed".

The chapter titled "The Whiteness of the Whale" also has value because it proves Melville's process has allegorical imperatives. Cowan's own thesis posits that the character of Ishmael alone performs this process, serving as the hinge between form and content, both of which receive allegorical treatment in order for Melville to unfold his multi-layered argument about readers: "Ishmael has moved toward a direct encounter with a nature of the kind the Romantic symbol supposed, a unification of subject with object in one discovery of overarching harmony. What he finds instead, however, is that the quest that began with a declaration of the sovereign self, establishing 'an original relation to the universe,' ends with the annihilation of the self." (92)

As Ishmael continues to stay aboard the ship, he understands that the religious and poetic manifestations of Western metaphysics have as their apotheosis a new system – "science," which claims it will exact mastery over "Nature". This extends Melville's continuing negotiation with and deconstruction of Western consciousness, and he uses Ahab's obsession with cartography to make his argument. Ahab wishes to use an archive of maps and the history of whaling knowledge, to encounter one 'white whale' in what Ishmael continually refers to as 'two-thirds of the globe'. Cowan directs us to notice why Ishmael marvels at the hubris of Ahab's endeavor: "Science abstracts the event from its particularity only in order to fold it back into an immanent framework that will make it determinable and, ideally, *predeterminable*." (92, emphasis added)

We highlight "predeterminable" in this quote to signal that the project of the American frontier was not separate from the goals of science and modernity; additionally, Cowan defends us when we assume Melville would have been aware of such connections, because Melville extensively develops Ahab's relationship with his maps, and Ishmael's observation of this relationship: "It [science] opposes allegory in refusing to posit a disjunction between the immanent realm of events and the transcendant realm where meaning, or 'true being,'exists." (92) Science, too, it seems, needs Romantic myth

In one of the mid-twentieth-century studies on *Moby-Dick*, titled *The Limits of Metaphor*, James Guetti articulates one of the most commonly repeated arguments about Melville's novel: he calls Ahab's journey a "simple struggle for revenge". (41) By extension, many scholars of *Moby-Dick* would like to describe the overarching "plot" as a "revenge drama". When we pay close attention to Guetti's rhetoric, we realize that *Moby-Dick*, and Ahab, re-present more than vengeance. In other words, if Guetti says of Ahab's journey that "as a vision it is limited to one revelation, one *symbol*," we can take the position that Melville supplied Ishmael as a *different* figural relation to the world, i.e. *allegory*. (41, emphasis added) Thus, with this multi-layered character interaction, we really understand *Moby-Dick* as a text inter-acting with its own existence as a *printed artifact*.

K.L. Evans' *Whale!*, which appeared in 2003, represents the most advanced argument against the early evaluations of *Moby-Dick* as a "revenge drama," and of Ahab as a character 'struggling for revenge'. Evans' thesis is that Melville's novel does not project itself *merely* as a *symbol*. He argues that *Moby-Dick* also functions *allegorically*, and uses symbols to further an inclusive project. (*xiv*) He also rallies against the perspective of Ishmael exclusively using *symbolic* language, to argue instead for the unique appearance of *Moby-Dick* as a text aware of its status as a printed artifact.

The "commentary" (as many scholars of *Moby-Dick* refer to Ishmael's records) actually functions, in Evans' argument, as a 'defacement of ruins' –a kind of self-effacement, "the way graffiti defaces an already demolished surface." (1) This function describes an *allegorical* mode, and is in agreement with Cowan's thesis that allegory serves as a way for communities to address disjunction and ruin.

We claim an agreement between Evans and Cowan, because of what the former suggests can happen when a novel cobbles together "commentary" and symbols:

Defacement of the artistic variety *speaks out of two mouths*, at once asking for help and attention even while promising that the noted wrecks are spoken for… If the injury to which *Moby-Dick* furiously addresses itself is a public matter (as only a public matter would prompt a communal address), it suggests that what drives the novel is not a private hurt [Ahab's] but some more common or shared grievance. Private hurts inspire world-consuming revenge, but public hurts call for something else, more readily in the vicinity of repair, or restoration." (1 – 2, emphasis added)

In this extensive quote, Evan defends our thesis that an allegory of reader and author can emerge from tropes that appear both partial and totally petrifying: the chapel's "cenotaphs" and Ahab's false leg, yes, but also the relation between masthead-sitting "Ishmael" and the "savage" crew that vacillates between complicity and mutiny (just as all the words and pages request, and evade, meaning).

Modernity, and the continual process of violent change that it inspires through modernization, produces the community's experience of loss, even while it benefits from "progress". (Evans, 2) When the discourses cultivated by modernity attempt to speak for the public, to offer representation, the effect appears largely incongruous with the "historicity of actual lived time". Newtonian laws, or the technique of discerning "criminal motive," seem to be "self-evident" measures, but they also age quickly – modernization inspires such rapid change.

Modernity's discourses, individually and in aggregate, can ultimately only offer a *symbolic* representation of the community, and *Moby-Dick* responds to that with its *allegorical* approach, making *symbol* perform a transparent "literary" role through its influence of Ahab's dramatic journey: "[W]hat is attacked is philosophy's wish to prove beyond reasonable doubt the existence of a gulf separating fact (the existence of things) from value (or the freedom to determine the meaning of those things)," Evans argues. "Thus *Moby-Dick* is a tale of attachment, disguised as vengeance, about a search for connection, camouflaged to resemble estrangement." (2)

When moral agency develops in these conditions, it does so through a metaphysical violence that alienates an identity into contradictory opposites (for example, the separation of "ego" and "conscience," which we explored through Freud's study). The "identity" then projects opposition to an "outside," and gains its false sense of unity. Ironically, the "ego" feels a longing for some kind of "re-union" with a greater whole. The investment of the democratic project attempts to reconcile this problem, and as it continues to do so, it struggles with its means, i.e. consensus on an official discourse and its truth-value.

This tension inspired by modernity –the same modernity which produced the democratic project –was recorded in early evaluations of moral Western consciousness, Evans claims: "Locke, for example, wonders that if liberty 'is the power to act or not to act, according as the mind directs,' when does this liberty happen?...If liberty, or choice,

is made possible by that indifferent or suspended moment between understanding and determining, how is this moment conceivable, or what kind of being is capable of it?" (8)

We are in agreement with Evans when he extends his argument to claim that the statement "self-evident truth" is the most recognizable example of modern democracy's inherent tension. (14) As for the more "original" modern State (note: not ancient democracy), it supposedly grants freedom on the basis of a "social contract," a discursive pact between the individuals that constitute a community. Evans rightly points to Hobbes' *Leviathan* as the seminal work on this state of affairs. (17-18)

What does all this mean for *Moby-Dick*? That the modern Western metaphysical project –embodied in Locke, Hobbes, and also Descartes, Hegel, Kant– worked upon Melville and influenced his mode of negotiation. Evans proves through extended discussion that Melville desired to deconstruct the consciousness produced by Western metaphysical prejudices –cause and effect, or all identities have an "external" binary opposite, for example –and desired to design his work as a hand-held archive:

Melville assembles the thing under the conditions created in the course of writing, which is the only means by which to give it life. Although his whale cannot be understood by means of a dictionary, Melville's readers, forced to see the same word hundreds of times in continually changing contexts, will learn the meaning of the word in relation to the world…No security can be found in an ocean that refuses to memorialize where man has been. All that work over this one word, *whale*, is accomplished by any number of words, four hundred pages of words, that seem to require no explanation. (24, emphasis in original)

As Evans emphasizes, Melville remained aware of the exclusively *printed* nature of *Moby-Dick* –or, at least, of certain feverish parts of *Moby-Dick*. That *Moby-Dick* makes an argument through its figural choices *and* through its material occurrence as a stack of "records" means that it seeks to allegorize how modernity projects "world" as a signifiable concept. One of Melville's uncanny feats of "greatness" lies with the fact that he can do this while addressing an older symbolic tradition inscribed millennia ago, that is, the figure of a "Book of Nature," which provided instruction on the act of "reading" –a communion of truth bestowed on those sensitive to an encoded landscape. We realize that modernity, i.e. the process associated with the liquidation of tradition in favor of "progress," can "resurrect" the older symbolic tradition, when that works to its favor. The character of Ahab may most represent this process.

In 1955 R.W.B. Lewis released *The American Adam*, a text on the myth of innocence and the corruption of innocence: "For Lewis, this represents *the* fundamental American myth, and is encapsulated in the story of Adam's expulsion from the Garden of Eden." (Selby, 89) For Lewis, corruption of the "newness and hope" projected by early settlers entered a dialectical shift with the appearance of heroic and redeemed "American Adams" whose literary pretensions re-stored the balance of values –Melville, to Lewis, was "the apotheosis of Adam." (90)

Ahab intersects uniquely with this dialectic, because Cowan finds the character aligned with the opposite of "American Adam", with "the death drive": "Ahab is not a man acting in accord with his own will; he feels as if he is ordered…It is a 'nameless, inscrutable' thing that commands him…Does Starbuck think that he *chooses* to chase this whale?" (83, emphasis in text)

That "nameless, inscrutable" thing which effaces all names, even its own –Freud can only label it with a long-dead ancient tongue, naming it "Thanatos" –serves as the

inextricable, necessary shadow to the "the Archive," which wants to comment, through the proliferation of "hypomnesic" marks. "The Archive," however, needs mediation, lest it become a palimpsest of discourses, and so "the death drive" appears as *punctum*: "What Ahab offers is a descriptive anthropology, or a broad method that draws on the full store of everyday human claims…to distribute a kind of intelligibility across the features of reality," Evans explains. "Thus the 'meaning' of the whale is not a property of the whale so much as a way for the people who involve themselves with the whale to come to terms with it". (105) *This* is Ahab's function, Evans argues: not "retribution," not "revenge," but a negotiation with how meaning is made secret and uncovered. Ahab's pact is with "the uncanny," and the 'white whale' is his "coconspirator". (108)

Ahab's high rhetoric depends on more than just 'divine inspiration': his consciousness requires a shadowed procedure, a contract between candidness and disguise. Ishmael's records supply that shadow –or light, Evans notes, depending upon your perspective: "it is impossible for Ahab to escape his own conceptual scheme, which suggests that man and whale impress themselves on each other in ways meaningful to each." (127)

In a supporting essay, "Call Me Ishmael, or How to Make Double-Talk Speak," Carolyn Porter also describes the "shadowed" Ishmael/Ahab relation in *Moby-Dick*. We have explained Ahab as part of a system of mythical, symbolic archetypes, particularly through the sun that becomes consumed by the horizon, and appears to regenerate from the horizon (sun-heroes thus tradtionally appear as partially de-formed). Appropriately, the character who "records" Ahab's mythological drama, "takes up residence *at* the boundary," according to Porter, and so Ishmael-the-frontier/horizon becomes an allegorical trope for witness *and* "mover" of the "plot": "In other words, Melville twins the boundary itself into the locus of Ishmael's voice." (80)

By "residing" at the "horizon," Porter does not mean *merely* a literary frontier – she considers the various discourses that Ishmael the "cetologist" makes use of, for his archive. Because of Ishmael's own "exiled" condition, which Melville counterposes with Ahab's "exile" and even the condition of the "savages" exiled from modern civilization, his archival project examines discursive prejudices. For Ishmael, argues Porter, it becomes a matter of which discourses can claim the most "right" to truth-value: "The discourse of savages and sailors remain alien and unauthorized, whereas those authorized by his own culture are necessarily subjected to an alienation effect that distances them and renders them suspect." (84)

Ishmael may keep "the raw and the cooked" in the state that he receives them in, though he will push that binary to its logical conclusion to support his re-balancing project; it is Ahab, Porter believes, who "seizes all authority for himself…in relation to the reader, he does so *by a discourse purified by amnesia* of any 'mortal inter-indebtedness' to others (Chap. 108)." (103-4, emphasis added)

If Porter claims that Ishmael's "talent" for residing at the frontier/horizon "lies…in his double-voiced discourse," she wants to use specific instances to prove this claim, like the chapter titled, "The Affidavit". In these instances, Ishmael negotiates his exile status in order to become "social spokesman," by motivating various discourses – scientific, legalistic, literary –in the service of the marginal discourse of the whaling industry, Porter argues. (102) The "genre" of a "legal brief" in "The Affidavit" does not make for a strict reversal, by which the peripheral or the marginal gains truth-value, and

the center loses entitlement; actually, Porter explains, Ishmael enters himself allegorically, in the blank space *between* discourses, in the commentary that punctuates two discourses as different from each other and sorts out truth-value. This is still a reversal, though more subtle than the inversion of a hierarchy; a reversal, we might say, that explores the nature of "the Archive":

Rather than regarding his evidence as doubtful, we begin to feel that the truth does not sound like evidence… Consequently, Ishmael's voice is authorized ironically, by its capacity to expose the limits of the authorized discourse in which he is compelled to speak. (96)

And, we might add, Ishmael's voice is authorized by its capacity to *become exposed*, as disjunction, as allegorical *punctum* (not wholly unlike the exchange between camera and film, an exchange that produces its own "truthful" *exposures*).

Chapter Two

It seems uncanny: through the history of film, we can understand Melville's relation to creating a "Great American Novel". As mentioned in the introduction, we can address film (cinema and photography) from an archival perspective. Specifically, film constitutes an *ideational* Archive uncannily rooted or in reference to a material artifact – the hand-held photograph, or the exposed film loaded into the projector. Cinema performs this almost paradoxical duality to a great degree, because traditionally it is a luminous projection; with regard to still photography, we mentioned that it was Roland Barthes who pointed to the "co-presence" of a *studium* ('myth') and *punctum* ('fact') as "proof" of this archival dimension.

At the same time, the introduction also alluded to how certain American novels constitute a *material* Archive uncannily rooted or in reference to an ideational figure – and for this study, that figure is *allegory*. Melville's (and Pynchon's) catalogued record of facts appeals to its lower function as gravity-bound matter, as a sheaf of papers, a literal, material archive: this synchronizes with their drive to represent or record history through various discourses, and they manage their drive by comprehending the 'reversibility' or interchangeability of *content* and *form*.

In other words, from this second, "literary" perspective, the transmission of History (ideational discourse) always-already interconnects with the means of materializing that History (printing press, movie camera), thus allowing narrative technique to simulate the medium's dimensions. "Idea" supplements "material," as a kind of ideal *potential* that "punctuates" and "forms" *actual* matter. This relation between the ideational and the material (specifically the industrial machine's reproduction of matter) we have termed "the Archive," on the basis of research conducted by Freud, Foucault, Derrida, Roland Barthes, and Walter Benjamin.

We want to argue that *both* the mediums of "Great American Novel" and cinema operate as manifestations of "the Archive": further, because both rely on "mechanical reproduction," that both, as a result, produce *allegorical* representations. The power of allegory was, for Benjamin, the power to mediate the timeless (often associated with myth, "art") and the timely (which we associate with material historical conditions). Specifically, his argument implied that allegory mediates this temporality as a *disjunction*, as a way to relieve the social "crisis" resulting from modernization's effects on time. Rationally, it appears that the same modernity which gives the modern community redemptive images, always-already puts the material referent under erasure, making the *actualization* of a redemptive reunion between sign and referent impossible.

By positing a continuously deferred future, allegory not only simulates the effects of modernity: its process of mediation can provide relief from modernity, because its "lessons" are about *duration*. Used exclusively, "myth" (and the Romantic symbol), projects totality as a *simultaneous experience*; its process suggests that the individual consciousness which successfully "decodes" the signifiers of a self-obscured "Nature," experiences reunion with a Signified (from which signifiers emanate), becoming undifferentiated from totality. (Thus, communities suffering in the present learn of the mythic individuals who have 'gone on'.) The mythic symbol, in effect, posits redemptive reunion as the annihilation of an individual consciousness through the erasure of temporal duration: its principle is timelessness, *eternity*.

Some might argue that simultaneity is simply a romanticized apocalypse that precludes the opportunity for community growth through awareness of its own collective unconscious. Modernization, or the material processes of modernity, which we typically refer to as industrial history, creates temporal disjunctions that, Jacques Derrida and Bainard Cowan argue, potentially alienate the community from its collective unconscious (how it produces and consumes representations). As a consequence, the community projects an alien "other," which it must avoid or defeat at all costs, in order to preserve its identity. (Cf. discussion of Cowan's *Exiled Waters* and Derrida's *Archive Fever* in the previous section, for a full defintion of a community's relation to modernity).

Myth itself does not necessarily exacerbate this communal process. It is the *modern* use of myth, in the wake of industrial history, which *politicizes* myth, to create an oppositional "other" as the basis of identity. Modern myth becomes preoccupied with territory, as a result, and so the idea of a frontier, a *tabula rasa*, is for the community the most redemptive and recurring symbol of all industrial representations: "Mass reproduction enables a culture as a whole to experience history as a series of immediate and unconnected presents," Megan Rowley Williams writes in her study on film and 19th-century American literature. (181)

Williams refers to the necessity of the mythic individual to "decode" those "unconnected" signs that "Nature" emanates. (We should note that she uses the term "mass reproduction" in place of Walter Benjamin's "mechanical reproduction": "mass" gets at some of Benjamin's meaning, but completely misses the industrial and technological focus of "mechanical"). She continues her argument:

[Walter] Benjamin brings to fruition Melville's warning that the photograph allows the viewer to elide questions of personal and national responsibility; for Benjamin, celluloid carries no history. If it is not used to reveal 'entirely new structural formations of the subject,' *it risks being turned into a medium of indoctrination that does not need to be placed in dialogue with other images or with a history of western representation*. (181, emphasis added)

We fully agree with Williams' thesis and further propose that the American West embodies this condition of modernity to an almost quintessential degree. Throughout the course of its publicity, images of "the frontier" placed the material referent under erasure. In this section, we'll discuss exactly what that means, and the different ways in which it occurred.

Late 19th-century American communities in the Eastern states –inspired by a sense of "predestination" –believed "the frontier" could provide transcendence of modernization's effects. "The frontier" was a myth; retrospectively, it appears to us as an *allegory of modernization*, i.e. an industrial play about modernity's search for classifiable knowledge. Against the grain, Melville sought to address that allegory according to the medium of a "Great American Novel"; Melville commenced with an equally levianthanic endeavor when he attempted to describe the interchangeability between *form* and *content* inaugurated by modernization. We would like to posit that Melville does this in order to perform (or simulate) the temporal disjunction effected by modernization, with goal of potential communal relief. We would also like to posit that Eadweard Muybridge, the "father of motion pictures," shares this goal, and shares other features with Melville. By placing the two in correspondence, we can increase our understanding of what it means for modernity to place under erasure the material referent of "the frontier".

To begin with, we can inquire: If form and content can enjoy an interchangeable *relation*, i.e. a 'reversible' and non-hierarchical influence over an artifact, how does this relation facilitate, in late modernity, the use of allegory, for artists and scientists alike? We have attempted to explore this in the previous discussion on allegory and "photographic consciousness" in *Moby-Dick*. Now we would like to draw on the "origins" of American "motion pictures" as a source of knoweldge.

Felicitously, motion pictures have their birth –and their growth –in the American West. In their origin, through their "father" Eadweard Muybridge, motion pictures sought an awareness of their role in the frontier narrative, by putting *content* in dialogue with the *form* of the camera. From this perspective, "motion pictures" aren't "like" a frontier – movies *become* a frontier. Exploring the origins of motion pictures will allow us to perceive such binaries as mythic and misleading.

Muybridge, in allegorical fashion, made his mark by filming "Occident," Leland Stanford's horse (the quintessential frontier animal), against a stark white background topped with a row of black sequential numbers (the same Stanford, by the way, who founded Stanford University). Muybridge shared an endeavor with Melville's "Great American Novel" by bringing to light how form/content, ideational/material binaries are non-hierarchical. We might argue that the endeavor of these two individuals is "archival". "The Archive" describes modernity's preoccupying non-hierarchical wish: the Enlightenment dream of giving a discourse to all potential subjects, and then encompassing those discourses under the totalizing project of "progress".

The affinity between the goals of Muybridge and Melville synergistically reveals itself as the more ultimate goal of describing how a body of *facts* gives rise to a *myth*, which those facts threaten to deconstruct. Thus, across the discursive frontiers of literature and cinema, we have a guiding thread. Allegory is the key to their description.

Both motion pictures and the "Great American Novel" project allegory primarily by a machine: "frames" of reading appear as the literal frames of a film strip, or, in literary terms, the pages and chapter divisions. The material component of an industrial machine in this allegorical process ensures that totality is *disjunctive* versus simultaneous: in other words, "mechanical reproduction" subdivides and de-composes. The consuming audience is never present with the means of production, according to this argument.

In his famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin explains this process in-depth: he finds that the de-compositional effects of "mechanical reproduction" can be directed toward the creation of "mass culture". Images produced during industrial history still retain an "aura," Benjamin believes, even though this aura no longer pertains to an authenticity based in tradition. Instead, the image's "aura" is an appeal to a "mass culture" without history and that culture's confused desire to make distant that which it wants to be close to. This is mass culture's attempt at investing a commodity with "authenticity". In sum, Benjamin describes the "aura" of a "mechanically reproduced" image as a kind of frontier, which effects the "unique phenomenon of distance however close it may be". (245)

Film critic Andre Bazin draws on Benjamin's argument to explain how "mechanical reproduction" can have a respectable outcome, by facilitating allegory in a representation. Bazin believes that cinema has "reversed" modernity's myth of cause and effect. "[A]ll the definitive stages of the invention of the cinema had been reached before

the requisite conditions had been fulfilled," he claims. "Every new development added to the cinema must, paradoxically, take it nearer and nearer to its origins." (21) In precise terms, Bazin refers to this process as a "reversal of…the concrete order of causality". (21) Cinema gives allegory back to a "mechanically reproduced" image; in deconstructing myth, it projects an Ur-myth, which Bazin calls "the myth of total cinema".

Derrida and Foucault, it seems, used more playful wording during their research on the temporal effects of modernization on communities. Foucault, in fact, refers to an "archive" in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and we know from the previous section that Derrida released a study titled *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Still, they too want to address how allegory appears in "mechanically reproduced" representations: they felt that ideational discourses were myths "deconstructed" when we examine the play between their material referents. For Derrida and Foucault, it was a matter of finding a flexible methodology for exploring how representations become produced and consumed. A starting point for them was referring to this production and consumption as a "collective unconscious"; thus, they used components from Freud's antecedent methodology.

What Benjamin and Bazin give to us is a greater specific focus on film media. The industrial, material processes of photography and cinema, which produce and archive representations, become capable of transmitting myth to a "mass culture," and Benjamin and Bazin refer specifically to that occurrence. To anticipate the discussion ahead, a most blatant example is this: landscape photographs of the American West were shipped in mass quantities to the Eastern U.S., and so in individual homes you could find "the frontier". Seemingly influenced by Benjamin's writings, Rebecca Solnit's biography of Muybridge, *River of Shadows*, describes for us in detail this peculiar trend. Let's review her rich study, in order to reinforce our thesis that Muybridge and Melville shared the goal of understanding what modernity was doing to images, and, by extension, to communities.

Artistic achievement or science project, Muybridge's "motion study" of "Occident" appears to us as an *archive*, a record that organized materials *and* ideas for the future. The motion study gives us material facts: 'Stanford's ranch; Spring 1877; a horse named Occident; a skilled photographer named Muybridge; a stark white wall topped with a series of black numbers in sequential order; and a linear series of trip wires connected to cameras capable of instantaneous photography'. Muybridge's experiment also gives us *reconstructed motion* –the *representation of* speed.

By Spring 1877, the desire for a redemptive and primal *tabula rasa* had long found an outlet through the "Wild West". The "Wild West" was the American frontier *reconstructed*, a mythic representation of the speed enacted by standardized time zones and trans-national transportation. Of course, this representation continued to invest modernization –more instantaneous photography and faster, more far-reaching transportation to bring the distant myth closer– just as these process erased the American Indian way of life that the myth unconsciously relied upon.

In 1851, Melville released *Moby-Dick*, a sheaf of paper about the Nantucket whaling industry. Page by page the myth of the White Whale emerges: an ideal American "state," the experience of a territory describable only in temporal terms, as the future, as "the frontier". Melville, too, created an *archive*, a record that balances material and ideational elements, scientific and artistic elements. Scholarly criticism allows us to

understand that *Moby-Dick*'s appearance as a material novel carries as much importance as its ideational message: or, we should say, *Moby-Dick* argues that both are of equal importance in order to fully read the text. Melville, like Muybridge, mythologized his subject, and allegorically deconstructed that myth through "factual" documentation. In both historical instances, through both of these individuals, we receive witnesses of modernization.

A couple of decades before the official Victorians –"proto-Victorians," if you will –an emergent intellectual debate which interested scholars, religious figures, and even citizenry, was this: "Exactly how old is the Earth?" Intersecting with the rapid development of instantaneous photography, this interest was creating a milieu obsessed with the observation of speed; by extension, this interest was conducive to the establishment of "history" as a "discourse" in its own right. Modernity was, through modernization, always-already an *archival* operation.

To observe speed, a subject needs something to measure it against, or at least a different speed to compare it to. Rebecca Solnit, who produced a biographical portrait of Muybridge in *River of Shadows* points us in the direction of the most Romantic of concepts for measurement: "Nature itself was the limit of speed: humans could only harness water, wind, birds, and beasts." (9)

With geology serving as "the key science of the Victorian era," with instantaneous photography and trans-national transportation serving as the key technological advances leading up to that era, one could expect the effect of observing speed, on the American community, to be world-historical. Like in *Moby-Dick*, when Father Mapple sermonizes about the belly of 'the whale,' religious figures represented the effects of observing amplified speed in terms of a temporal crisis. This crisis, as Solnit puts it, reverberated throughout communities, who felt "[e]xpelled from the cozy millennia of biblical time". (13)

As previously discussed, "The Whaleman's Chapel" scene represents a rare moment in *Moby-Dick*, because it constitutes a *tableau*, a technique not used in any of the other scenes of that novel. The static dimension of this scene contrasts with the hyperkinetic hunting scenes –in fact, it shares more with Ishmael's records, which punctuate the drama of the *Pequod*, than with anything else in the novel. Significantly, the scene suggests Melville's opinion that the American church engages a struggle of re-defining its role with the advent of modernization. Before the standardization of time zones, Solnit points out, the American church served as the mediator of "local time": "Only prayer had been precisely scheduled in the old society, and church bells had been the primary source of time measurement." (19) At sea, sailors find no foundations for institutions that could "keep time".

"The frontier" provided a myth, the potential for totalizing experience as a predestined reunion, a promised and simultaneous wholeness standing "outside time". This "wholeness" would be reconstructed from the pieces of the old order. Myth cannot, at the same time, actually offer *simultaneity*, without promoting the annihilation of individual consciousness (simultaneity is the merging of sign and referent, signifiers and Signfied, individual and "Nature"). Allegory, we understood from Bainard Cowan's *Exiled Waters*, intends to regenerate a *community*, and thus, when it supplements the individualizing mode of symbols, we receive balance through a different temporal principle: *duration*, or *disjunction*. Together, myth and allegory can become vehicle for

understanding how representations affect our perception of time: this "supplementary" relation excels through the medium of printed text, and its most essential lesson is about "reading".

Of course, the production and consumption of "the frontier" wasn't always accompanied by pioneer fearlessness: a feverish anxiety influenced and invested that concept. "The frontier" was more than a bit "unhomely," or, to use the actual translation of Freud's term, a bit "uncanny". It generated a feeling of security, a promise of transcendence in the form of *knowing* (it was enough that we could *know* of a *tabula rasa*, and know that it was ours). This *knowing* was a certification of predestiny; at the same time, it generated uneasiness, because of the frontier's un-classifiable state, somehwere 'between garden and wilderness'.

That "the frontier" could have its identity in an impossible attainment (impossible to "classify" and "know," at least, like "the whale") meant that it, and the Western consciousness associated with "the frontier," was part of a historical process indebted to archiving contradiction: "They craved landscape with an intensity no one has had before or since," Solnit describes of the earlyVictorian Americans. "They filled their houses with pictures of places, but even the close-ups were often as not of places far away. The ideal landscape seemed formed of a wholeness that was no longer theirs." (22)

The "aura" of the modern photograph, as we mentioned, does not necessarily refer to a "tradition" of the past as much as to a distance perpetually pushing toward the future, even if the image is a close-up. "This is the paradox of Muybridge's work," Solnit relevantly points out. (22-3) Muybridge was not just the "father of motion pictures," we discover: he was one of the foremost "landscape photographers" of the early American West, too, just as that genre was forming. So, just where did this paradoxical figure originate from?

Born in England as Eadweard Muggeridge to a well-off merchant family, he immigrated to the American frontier, in order 'to make a name for himself,' as a bookstore manager and photographer. He and other photographers captured Yosemite, soon captured by the U.S. Government, in an act of preserving the image of the "frontier". These images were disseminated, especially back to the Eastern U.S., fueling the projection of a myth. The side-effects involved the *destruction* of an *indigineous* way of life different temporally from modern civilization, at the same time that a mythic image was *preserved* and disseminated. The "landscape photograph" was, of course, projecting a way of life that it simultaneously put under erasure –a presence through absence. The photographs bred industrial investment, and indigineous communities began to feel the compromise.

The archive of photographs sent to the Eastern U.S. always-already deconstructed the myth it created. They performed the allegory of modernization, which we describe as the rise of "mechanically reproduced" images that put their material referents under erasure. A participant –but also an observer –of this process, Muybridge, caught between photography and cinema, was very much a self-doubled Ishmael, "as though what had been lost as direct experience could be, just as [Oliver Wendell] Holmes dreamed, recovered as imagery." Solnit continues: "The speed of Muybridge's invention allowed real motions to be recovered at their own pace, though watching them meant stepping out of one's own time. If the experience that was vanishing can be summed up as a person

standing alone in a landscape, then photography and, subsequently, film would offer images of that experience." (23)

Muybridge was also, gradually, very much like Ahab: he had advertised himself as a photographer not only of portraits and landscapes –he was also a photographer of animals. Leland Stanford wanted his prize trotting horse, "Occident," photographed in motion; supposedly he wanted this, in part, to settle a dispute about whether all of the horse's hooves, at some point during full gallop, are off the ground *simultaneously*. Since Muybridge was becoming increasingly obsessed with the ability to make an instantaneous photograph –by the hundredth of a second, a fraction worthy of relentless Ahab– and put those photographs together in a sequence of *reconstructed* motion, he readily accepted the assignment.

First, Muybridge's advances had to *de-compose* for the American community what were normally perceived as "everyday gestures". As the necessary supplement to *reconstruction*, the two methods created an "uncanny" technique together. "Those gestures…were unfamiliar and eerie stopped because they showed what had always been present but never seen," Solnit explains. "Set into motion, they were uncanny another way when they undid the familiar distinction between representations, which did not move, and life that did." (24)

Melville's advances achieved, in effect, the same technique for American literature –he 'de-composed gestures' and reconstructed them into a "Great American Novel". Ishmael asserts himself as a "cetologist," a figure who accepts the difficult task of de-composing the gestures of "the whale" (not necessarily as "everyday" an occurrence as witnessing a moving horse, albeit). Ishmael famously describes the task as *impossible* to render, in *any* medium, because the only 'true representation' comes through encountering the whale in its own medium and territory: at sea, alive. In the essay "*Moby-Dick* and the American West," Edwin Fussell poignantly describes the destructive implications of cetologist's project: "Having killed a whale, the dreamer stands 'thoughtfully eyeing the vast corpse he has made.' Such is creation, American style, where a vast corpse equals –in the delightful language of Western historians – continental destiny." (112)

As a consequence, the "cetologist" must also accept that he disseminates *false representations*, and that the material referent has been placed under erasure. The 'total image,' the mythic image of Leviathan contained in the bulk of Ishmael's record, is subject to deconstruction, by the very sheaf of facts that constitute it, and which it seeks to transcend. Ishmael reconstructs his record from fabulated sources and obscure books and "oral anecdote" which the reader rightly guesses may not actually exist, or may not have taken place. For example, consider the anecdote that *he* –by which the reader actually supposes "Melville," not Ishmael –*he* has observed three instances of a harpooned whale who escaped, only to have the same hunter capture that same whale months or years later (this by way of describing Ahab's goal as possible).

The reader has to "supplement" myth with allegory, because Melville does not give him/her any indication whether such claims have a fictional or documentary basis. Moreover, it appears, after multiple instances, that Melville wishes for the reader to develop their own "reading" of "the whale": can "meaning" be simultaneously present to its symbol, or is the text *disjunctive*, suggesting its realization comes through Ishmael's commentary on the process of his construction?

It's as if Melville wants to demonstrate, through the uncanny use of 'fictional facts,' how allegory supplements myth. The interjections made by Ishmael punctuate and 'splice' together the mythic drama of the *Pequod*, investing it with the necessary organization that is mirrored in *Moby-Dick*'s material dimension of pages bound with a spine.

Muybridge knew that he, too, projected "false representations" during his invention of motion pictures. Newspapers famously spoofed his decomposed series of the Occident study, with drawings of the horse's legs in progressively contorted, opposed, and "unnatural" directions. True, the overt proof that the horse was in motion, more than the simultaneous lifting of hooves, was the the black line of progressively higher numbers stretched across the top of the wall. We might say these numerical "facts" were like Ishmael's "facts" that allegorized a mythical beast.We could even say that, with Melville's novel, we achieve orientation through the black "chapter" numbers that serve to punctuate the myriad scenes, across a multitude of stark white pages.

As an aside, both Muybridge's and Melville's preoccupation with the territorial origins of "savages" reflects the core desire of the early Victorians to consume landscape photographs of the American West. The community wanted an archive of territories, and, by definition, archives serve as a point of origin (even if they are *actually* a substitute origin). Consisting of images produced on an industrial scale, this archive of images would invest the 'myth of a return to origins,' a return to a land that would restore a sense of 'wholeness'. The *tabula rasa* would emerge from wiping away the foundation of another community, and reproducing a multitude of images of what it had erased.

The Archive, in a positive sense, retains allegory for communities to address the "crisis" of modernity. To their misfortune, the early Victorians only invested the *mythic* half of the Archive; in effect, they ignored the record of "facts" that could balance the projection of a blank "frontier" with an awareness of its fictional status. This would allow "the frontier" to continue to circulate, of course. Deconstruction is not the same process of destruction; on the contrary, we have just understood that the latter is more associated with modern myth. "What was being lost as the real thing was returning as imagery," Solnit states, "thus nature was almost the dominant subject of the nature-conquering nineteenth-century, and Indians who were chased out of their homeland were finding a shadow home in art and entertainment…Everything spectacular in the West was always being sent East for exhibition." (123)

By 1872, standardized time zones –versus "local, solar time" –were proposed: the crisis between the timely and the timeless had appeared on the national scene (the zones became official in 1883). This modernization of the community's temporal experience was reflected in the set Muybridge built for his motion studies, as Solnit describes it:

Alongside the private racetrack a white wall was built with the distance marked off with lines and numbers at intervals of twenty-one inches. The set –for it was a stage set –was as blank as a sheet of paper… Though the numbers make it clear that the horses are in motion, they always appear at the center of the frame. (190)

Solnit goes on to describe Muybridge's development of this set, into a grid. This choice had as many social implications as it did technical implications: "The grid meant rationality in its regularity and democracy in its equal apportionment of space." (193)

In effect, Melville had followed suit; or, more correctly, we might say Muybridge shared the goal of this unprecedent medium, the "Great American Novel". Ishmael's record does not necessarily have to appear in the exact order that it does for *Moby-Dick* to work, on one level at least: it is merely important that Ishmael *de-composes* and *reconstructs*. In other words, the text, by performing a design-in-process, allegorically unfolds a lesson: how to create a community around a myth.

Democracy, at least *potentially*, allows each individual to be entrusted as a guardian of the Archive: they *constitute* it, after all. But the Archive also legislates (mythic) 'self-evident truths,' in the form a "Law" that is 'greater than the sum of its parts'. "Law" exceeds individual right, as we have previously discussed, during review of the marble tablets in the Whaleman's Chapel; "Law" allocates room for the names of all the citizens who constitute the Archive –but only *it* can authorize authentic property, against the mere fact of "owning" a proper name. (Note: we make a distinction between "Law" and "laws"; the latter implies disposability and the continuous generation of the new, in response to contingency: 'ruling on precedence' would not exist, since "laws" eschew the cumulative quality of property rights; for "laws," imagine something analogous to the use of "potlatch" among tribes).

In effect, democracy rationalizes a "grid," a totalizing myth that transcends the constitutive individuals. Allegory, are gradually understanding, can deconstruct that exclusive use of myth. When Melville has his narrator (with a stolen Biblical name) gradually de-compose the narrative with his record, he does so in a way that does not value one entry over another –which seems as democratic as it is ruthlessly and industrially rational in application. The 'self-evident truth' applies to all. The reader, ultimately, does not comprehend this contradiction without fully completing the text, and so, the allegorical lesson they receive is this: *decomposition plus reconstruction is a technique for preserving the mystery of an origin while recognizing it as a patently false representation; modern myth, apparently "true" because its promises simultaneous re-union, ultimately places its constitutive origin under erasure*. An archival lesson for one and all.

Likewise, Muybridge's invention of motion pictures did more than project the motion of a horse: he filmed deer and other four-legged animals, as if to tell us that the *de-composition* of motion involves amassing a repetitive archive of the same gesture, which all appear differently when they become an archive of *reconstructed* speed. How much whale anatomy, and how much terrestrial anatomy, did Melville and Muybridge need to document? Creating an archive of modernization certainly required an excess on par with the Leviathan and the "Wild West".

After its emergence, motion pictures would at least be described as "a transporting medium" (41). They were announced as a medium that could match –could double, could *reflect* –the processes unleashed by modernization. They extended the reconstructive principle in a way that photography couldn't. The effect produced on American communities was nothing short of world-historical, stimulating, film critic Bazin tells us, the ancient desire for "the creation of an ideal world in the likeness of the real, with its own temporal destiny." (10) The development of millennia has allowed man to *actualize* that ancient *potential* with *mechanical machines*, Bazin believes:

For the first time, between the originating object and its reproduction there intervenes only the instrumentality of a nonliving agent. For the first time, an image of the world is formed automatically, without the creative intervention of man. (12)

When Bazin makes such grand claims, he grounds them in industrial history, not artistic criticism. Thus, when he describes the "transition from baroque to photography" in terms of "completely satisfying our appetite for illusion by a mechanical reproduction in the making of which man plays no part," he does so by first considering why modernization would generate such an appetite. Bazin's conclusion? Very similar to Freud's, and Benjamin's: the appetite sublimates the self-destructive inherent in the simultaneity of symbolic myth, and projects that destruction on the material referent, placing it under erasure with a mechanically reproduced image. Formerly, the ancients had no such formidable means of substitution. "Civilization cannot…entirely cast out the bogy of time," Bazin posits. "It can only sublimate our concern with it to the level of rational thinking." (10)

Let's consider some of the criticism that may have inspired these claims, particularly Benjamin's essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". Benjamin uses the essay to express a concern with the "liquidation" of a "tradition" that based "authenticity" on an inheritance of values. To say it differently, this archive of values drew upon schools and genres, upon an entire 'history of art,' to bestow an "aura" of "authenticity" on art objects. When a synergistic relation appears between the totalitarian impulse and industrialization, it can use "mechanical reproduction" to actualize a "mass culture," whose "most powerful agent is the film," Benjamin claims. (223)

Benjamin was not necessarily concerned by the prospect of 're-creating the world in its own image,' by a means that requires 'no human intervention,' as Bazin terms it. What Benjamin refers to by the term "mechanical reproduction" is an unprecedented historical process that re-organizes the social sphere by means of a *particular application* of machines –not simply the use of machines alone. One particular use involves altering the traditional "aura" that surrounds a representation. Traditionally, the "aura" supplies a representation with "authenticity"; in this regard, it is similar to the *studium* that Barthes described: it inspires an "enthusiasm," a certain kind of "human interest," an impression of mythic significance that extends beyond the frame. On the other hand, Benjamin distinguishes "mass culture's" use of "mechanical reproduction" as the fashioning of an "aura" that is universally the same across artifacts, to merely create the general projection of 'distance, however close the objects appear':

To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose 'sense of the universal equality of things' has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction. (225)

In other words, the original function of a representation's "aura" was to provide a *repetition*, an allegorical *doubling*; the *disjunction* between an artifact and its "absent" tradition was the precondition for consumption, by which the viewer "left" his or her world and "returned" to his or her world. The function of the "aura" for "mass culture" invites politicization, which could expertly mythologize that apparent universality: "The progressive reaction is characterized by the direct, intimate fusion of visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert," Benjamin clarifies. "Such fusion

is of great social significance. The greater the decrease in the social significance of an art form, the sharper the distinction between criticism and enjoyment by the public." (236)

The essay does have an optimistic side, and does describe *other* applications of "mechanical reproduction". Benjamin argues that film's potential is not fixed. He even gives us a definition: cinematic potential "is the manner in which man presents himself to mechanical equipment but also in the manner in which, by means of this apparatus, man can represent his environment." (237) Thus, the repetition of environment through cinematic image is different from the "mechanical reproduction" conveyed by movies for the masses: certain cinema can allegorically reveal itself as a *false representation*, as a *de-composition and a reconstruction*. (We'll explore some "experimental" directors in the next section who may have attained this potential.)

If Benjamin gave political dimension to the "mechanical reproduction" of movies, he did so out of the same attention to myth given by Muybridge and Melville: he perceived that, without the supplement of allegory, the destructive potential of modern myths could upset the social balance between community and leader/expert. Propagated through the emergent medium of mass movies, myth could obscure the allegorical potential of cinema to provide communal relief from temporal shifts occurring with modernization. The same emergent medium which could provide relief could also sink a community into the stagnant perpetuation of a myth that they did not even have a part in constituting, Benjamin was arguing.

So, what would myth supplemented by allegory even *look* like in a film? Andre Bazin might say it looks like "an integral realism". (21) Giving an example of a director and his technique, Bazin might select Orson Welles and his "in-depth shot":

The storytelling of Welles or Wyler is no less explicit than John Ford's but theirs has the advantage over his that it does not sacrifice the specific effects that can be derived from unity of image in space and time…it is a capital gain in the field of direction –a dialectical step forward in the history of film language. (35)

One myth of a return to origins had its basis in an archive of photographs representing the American frontier. What those images didn't represent –what they put under erasure – was the fact that *someone else* had already inhabited the *tabula rasa*. Since this peripheral fact would deconstruct the myth, the American Indian was conscripted into the mass projection of the American frontier as a total "Wild West" scene, complete with cowboys, a narrative antagonist.

In *Moby-Dick*, whales breach against the horizon, and men up on the masts spot them moving across this "frontier". Melville makes more than one analogy between whales and bison (we'll explore this later), and Solnit, in her work on Muybridge, relevantly discusses the allegory of bison in the "Wild West": "The unromantic destiny of most of those hides was factories," Solnit reveals. "Before rubberized drive belts, the belts that drove the Industrial Revolution's factories were made of leather, and buffalo hide was thick and durable." (65) At the same time, bison hunting by the U.S. Government served to reduce another, connected population –the American Indian.

Had the American Indian appeared in the landscape photography of the American West, audiences would not have been so willing to consume a mythic projection of "the timeless": audiences would not be able to find a re-integrated wholeness, through the contradiction of a *tabula rasa* already inhabited. Further, this photographic appearance

would have made the projection of "Indians" in later mass movies unsavory or confusing –a reminder of myth's utterly fictional nature. The prevailing taste in art invested this myth with "authenticity" for the early Victorian-American community, as Solnit describes, in all its uncomfortable detail: "In 1884 Sitting Bull and his entourage exhibited themselves in a wax museum in New York. In 1885 they joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West circus for a season's tour. Sitting Bull didn't participate in the circus's restaging of the Battle of Little Big Horn [in which he had surrendered], but while he was on display he sold signed photographs of himself on the side." (74)

Melville was very aware of this destructive side of "the frontier" through the representations that both mythologized and starkly documented the American West, Edwin Fussell argues, in his essay "*Moby-Dick* and the American West". Fussell wonderfully supplements his essay with numerous, various, and extensive quotes, so that we realize the American West shares an identity with "the whale" in Melville's "Great American Novel". (101) As a result, it is portrayed as both destructive and creative.This fact seems to evade our attention because the correspondence appears figuratively, through the larger context of the novel, as a play between two "frontiersmen," Ishmael (who keeps a record) and Ahab (who expects no one to hear his speech): "Appropriately, his [Ahab's] doom, which Ishmael and Melville barely avoid, is prophesied by an old Gay Head squaw," Fussell writes. (101)

The two together, Ahab/Ishmael, on either side of the "hinge" known as *Moby-Dick*, has its simulation in the material experience of Melville's book: as readers must turn the pages, they hinge between the consciousness of both characters, which literally plays out as a sequence of paper records interspersed with the transcription of comments made by Ahab to a silent but relentless God –and this dual consciousness hinges on the book's spine, its material archive. *Moby-Dick* doesn't work *like* a frontier –it is one. (Of course, in the first section we described the possibility of "Ahab" simply being the projection of the two "Ishmaels").

Fussell proceeds to elaborate on this basic thesis of *Moby-Dick*; for example, how the entry devoted to the "whiteness" of the whale represents the desire for *tabula rasa*. In short, Fussell proves that *Moby-Dick* unfolds allegorically, even unto itself as a material novel: for Melville, the "world is bi-polar; unity in this instance derives from the sun…Thus he Americanizes –imaginatively speaking, he conquers –the world for his novel". (102)

The most lasting contribution of this essay for our understanding of Melville's relation to the American West comes through an elaboration by Fussell on what exactly allegory *does* to relieve the temporal crisis of modernity. Specifically, it does not reconstitute a *symbolic* sign-system, by which a host of signifiers reconnects with a Signified, and which affords individual consciousness a simultaneous experience of totality, through "decoding". Allegory embraces disjunction and the lack of narrative "resolution," addressing modernization on its own terms even as allegory seeks to go beyond modernity, toward post-modernity.

Allegory gives Melville the opportunity to rhapsodize –or in Fussell's terms, "conquer" –the frontier, even as he believes that the frontier destroys the conditions which give birth to it (making of it a version of the oedipal myth). Overall, Fussell's essay reinforces our argument that allegory of the American West affords the reader a different experience of totality, because *de-composition plus reconstruction*, the

allegorical technique, shows myth to be a *false representation*, only a *simulation* of eternity, with no temporal basis in duration:

Melville means 'ocean' *and* he means 'West'; further, he means each as each defines, identifies, and extends the other; finally, he means this interacting extension to include, as imaginative probability, the entire imaginable cosmos. (103)

As the U.S. Government proceeded to stake claims on the frontier, tribes began to perform "The Ghost Dance," intended to counteract the myth invested by the Eastern U.S. The dance projected a future in which those of the past return to the present; it was an allegory of a community's history and destiny, and, as Solnit describes, it "was an effort to make time run backward like a film". (115) If Muybridge encountered this dance during his photography of the Modoc War, he may have recognized the impulse it shared with motion pictures for "defeating the trauma of time itself". (116)

By the time the motion picture medium was attracting the "great directors" of its history, the "movie" was trying to figure out how to make an *authentic story*. D.W. Griffith was part of this milieu, and he was using cinema to promote a new myth: the myth of re-writing History. This myth served as an extension and apotheosis of the myth of a return to origins. After *Birth of a Nation*, Griffith had to negotiate with the archival consequences of attempting to re-write History: criticism. So, Griffith did what seemed most natural: he made an amendment, by magnifying the myth. Taking a group of de-composed and isolated stories across history, and reconstructing them with the motif of a woman rocking a cradle, Griffth directed *Intolerance*, to "exculpate" himself from the historical revisions made by *Birth of a Nation*.

Griffith was not averse to using printed text for expression, either; in fact, he used writing to predict the future of cinema. In an excerpt titled "Tomorrow's Motion Picture," Griffith speaks of when "the screen shall come into its own as a powerful and novel form of *literature*." (68, emphasis added) By giving to cinema the duality of a director-critic, Griffith was already anticipating the *auteur* approach; film critic Andre Bazin would later rhapsodize over that approach: "The stylistic repertory of a director such as Hitchcock, for example, ranged from the power inherent in the basic document as such, to superimpositions, to large close-ups…Today we can say at last the director writes in film." (39)

.   At last? So the director is always-already seeking "literary" qualities? We find something of a response to this possibility when Griffith uses his excerpt to argue that, to bring *story* to the motion picture, a director has to focus on the physical material at his disposal. The number of film reels, Griffith claims, influences how a story unfolds, whether it becomes myth or allegory:

When motion pictures were first seriously admitted to be a medium for presenting a coherent story they were written directly for the screen –and *idea* was all that was necessary…Quickly the day came when a *story* was demanded; this was the day of the daringly inflated 'two-reeler'; after which, with bewildering rapidity came three, four and five reel 'features,' with room for character development". (67, emphasis in original)

A focus on "characterization," for Griffith, constitutes the quintessential literary concern: allow it to influence cinema, and tomorrow "a photoplay may indeed be worthy of the name and classification of 'literature'." (68)

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Significantly, Griffith believes the director of the future will eschew "plot," which represses deferred meaning in favor of a simultaneous reunion between sign and referent; we typically refer to this "reunion" as narrative *resolution*, and it often comes in the form of an individual's revelatory epiphany. "Plot," after all, posits causality and opposites –an ideational form applied to material content, at least. Thus, "plot" is not necessarily the technique for "characterization". In fact, Griffith finds plot hostile to characterization, and he develops a value-system from the belief that "yesterday's picture depended almost entirely on *plot*, the better pictures of today are triumphs of characterization." (68, emphasis in original) Whether Griffith's films fulfilled his own value-system is worthy of another study.

Overall, by this argument, Griffith believed he could actualize his dream of 'writing on the set with a camera'. (Schickel, 290-1) From a critical biography by Richard Schickel, we also learn that Griffith "introduced the principle of stillness in movie acting". Schickel's claim helps us to understand the various ways in which Griffith invented the "syntax" of movies, by extending his direction to the level of performance and not just to the cameraman. (Schickel, 105)

In the critical biography, titled *D.W. Griffith: An American Life,* Schickel reports that the "first full-scale story film" was reconstructed from "twenty 'motion tableaux'" (Melies' *Cinderella*). (95) Before Melies' *Cinderella*, the use of fiction in early film did not involve *de-composition*, and as a consequence, it had no story to *reconstruct*. Cinema was too busy developing according to a strict genealogy from Muybridge's original motion studies, and so "the only fictive form film took was anecdotal," Schickel tells us.

For example, an early "movie" might consist of a single shot form a street corner, documenting traffic and citizens. (94) "Decomposition" eventually overcame this novelty by applying still photography techniques as a basic grammar (Melies' "tableau," for example; and this "photographic" technique has relations to the theater). With a disparate and "de-composed" archive of images, cinema could then reconstruct them into a sequence, as a "story". Basic film grammar evolved as more than the "in-depth shot" or "fades" or "the close-up": as Roland Barthes implies, film's ability to *punctuate* a totality gives it enormous potential. Griffith finds that potential by discerning a reconstructive principle in de-composition.

With this technique, Griffith could express one of his most famous dictums: "Remember, you don't have to do anything –movies are the science of photographing thought." (Schickel, 489) Griffith's influence, and his lucky appearance at the early development of cinema –in the form of a "great director," no less –transformed the direction of motion pictures. "Cinema" was to have features of both documentary and myth.

Griffith does not seem to continue expressing much interest in the allegorical implications of this dual feature. On the contrary, he seems to focus heavily on its potential for expressing mass myth. In *Birth of a Nation*, we witness precisely the kind of expert politicization of myth that Benjamin warned of. Still, Griffith, making huge developments so early on in cinema's history, should be credited with revealing cinema as an archival and inherently dualistic medium. For this reason, we focus on him and will even return to him in the next section.

Griffith had described cinema as an exchange between the material dimension of the film reels and kind of "writing". This may not seem so impressive to us now, but by

his approach Griffith was as "great" a figure as Melville's "Ishmael," and an equal of Muybridge. An early film by Griffith, *Pippa Passes*, stepped forth with the power of his new knowledge. In this extended quote, Schickel tells us why *Pippa Passes* is so significant for film history –it discovered a technique of de-composition plus reconstruction –and how it produced an unprecedent reaction among the news media:

The film had its merits. For example, Griffith used in it for the first time a linking device between sequences. It was a single shot of an actress named Gertrude Robinson singing a song. It recurred at the beginning of each of the film's four sections (Morn, Noon, Evening, Night), each lit in a mood suitable to the hour. It, of course, prefigures the use of Lillian Gish in a similar shot in *Intolerance*… [T]he comments, according to Mrs. Griffith, were 'awed and hushed'…This internal judgment of his film was confirmed by the *New York Times* of October 10, 1909, which, a week after its release, accorded *Pippa Passes* the first review any movie ever received in its pages. Heretofore the newspaper had covered movies as technology but never as art. (140-1)

The review's most important comment, for this study, includes a comparison between the grammar of shots in the *Pippa Passes* to the work of Alfred Stieglitz's "Secessionist Photographers" –a comment deconstructed by the fact that Stieglitz's group was "in revolt" against lighting reminiscent of Rembrandt, the same kind of lighting 'publicized' by Griffith, who wanted to leave behind the "contrasty style that resulted from the early reliance on orthochromatic film." (141)

By bringing "story" to cinema, Griffith was, from one perspective, following a "literary" technique of the "Great American Novelist," Herman Melville: Ishmael punctuates his voyage with his record, and the transcription of Ahab's speeches reconstructs the records into a "story" about Moby-Dick, i.e. the American frontier. Griffith's "masterpiece," *Birth of a Nation*, used the same feverish technique, adapted materially to the requirements of his medium, Schickel points out: "What he had to do was run the picture back and forth through the projector, a buzzer at hand whenever he wanted him [the projectionist] to slip a piece of paper into the machine's uptake reel, a signal to the editor either to begin or end a cut. He in turn, would stand by, taking notes and, in time, literally attack the film with shears, hoping to approximate the director's necessarily approximate instructions." (242) Decomposition is not necessarily an exact process, it is merely important that it happens (Ishmael's records, to make another parallel with Griffith, do not have to appear in the *exact* order in which they do). Decomposition supplements the reconstructive principle, to go beyond the binary we typically refer to as form/content.

It was clear that, with the appearance of D.W. Griffith, Hollywood was developing the capability to project an Ur-Myth of 'rewriting History': could Hollywood adapt the "Great American Novel" to its own medium, though? In the essay "Ahab Gets Girl, or Herman Melville Goes to the Movies," Edward Stone explores the adaptation of *Moby-Dick* to Hollywood cinema. Stone's methodology, in effect, describes both cinema and the "Great American Novel" as archives, assembled of ideational and material parts. His findings prove that the 'co-influence' or 'reversibility' of form/content, after modernization, pertains to the conceptual level (he does not use a particular concept for his argument, but we will explore its claim to conceptual status; of course, we would have decided to use "the Archive").

The essay opens with a broad sweep of the implications and consequences of adapting *Moby-Dick* to cinema, and even makes an attempt to describe how Melville

would have reacted. First, the essay addresses a one S.R. Buchman, who had composed a "three-page 'Appreciation'" as a "companion document" to Hollywood's 1925 adaptation, *The Sea Beast*: the document was "a defense of the drastic changes the scenarists had made," Stone tells us. (171) Stone argues that the "Appreciation" serves as an important key for discovering "how such a surprising conversion resulted." (171)

By attempting the method of direct adaptation, Hollywood encountered difficulties, starting with the mode of characterization –the most important element of a story-film, according to Griffith. It seems that the camera could not properly "record" Ahab, because he was a consciousness transcribed – and punctuated– by a textual simulation, i.e. "Ishmael". (171) Hollywood wanted, and needed, to capture the "greatness" of Ahab: but how could its medium do so directly, without projecting the origin of Ahab's "greatness" as some kind of 'castration complex'? It would seem impossible to *cinematically* capture the "absence" that spurred Ahab on. The cinematic medium, at least at that point in history, depended entirely on the projection of *presences*.

Digging through the novel, the script writer eventually found a means for adaptation, "'in the faintest hint of the text": Melville had mentioned a woman. Before it even reached audiences as absolute cinema, *Moby-Dick* was adapted by Hollywood into a sequence of photographic still-shots with captions, which were placed into a promotional book, and introduced by S.R. Buchman's "apologia". Stone states that this series gives us "an *in media res* glimpse of the most important changes made in Melville's plot." (172) In other words, it suddenly became *materially*, not just theoretically, possible to read Melville's "Great American Novel" *photographically*.

More than that, the thrust of the promotional text encourages the reader to conduct a cinematic operation, that is, to *reconstruct* a story from the *de-composed* frames – something that the reader already has to do, with the original novel of *Moby-Dick*. Stone's description of the promotional book seems incredible, if one has first read Melville's novel:

Photograph #1, the frontispiece of the Grosset and Dunlap edition, shows Ahab, transformed from Melville's 'grey-headed, ungodly old man' of almost sixty into a handsome young sailor, John Barrymore, courting a pretty maid: THE GREAT LOVE IN AHAB'S BREAST UNFOLDS. The caption of Photograph #4, opposite page 200, reads: IN DREAMY JAVA, AHAB MEETS HER IN WHOM HIS HOPES FOR FUTURE HAPPINESS ARE BOUND. (172, emphasis in original)

Hollywood required an archival technique to make the transitions between novel and cinema, which means that its project was ultimately a negotiation between fact and myth. The motion picture industry realized that Melville's novel constitutes itself as both a material, print-based record and the record of a collective myth, transmitted through "history": Melville's characters are "'merely the pen and ink…necessary to that record,'" Stone says. (173) To project this unusual myth, at the exclusion of allegory, Hollywood had to more than parade exaggerated archetypes. Hollywood had to commit the taboo: *rewrite the ending.* As the marble tablets stored in "The Whaleman's Chapel" suggest, Melville, as much as any other American writer, knew that some kind of "Law" presided over the printed word's "permanency".

Melville's novel actually ends with one of Ishmael's records, literally and figuratively a piece of driftwood in the wake of the *Pequod*'s destruction. But Hollywood could not directly adapt "Ishmael," just as it could not directly adapt Ahab. As we have

been arguing, "Ishmael" is the uncanny *opposite* of "drama": it is his records which punctuate the *Pequod*'s drama. According to Stone's reasoning, it was perhaps even more difficult to adapt Ishmael than Ahab to *The Sea Beast*: "Because Melville's biological chapters on whales and historical and statistical chapters on the whaling industry are not susceptible to transference to the medium of drama, it was inevitable that the film-makers would discard, as well, the philosophical grace notes with which he ends such chapters". (181) And this includes the subtlest grace note of the entire novel: Ishmael's one-page ending, stating that he "alone survived.

The tragic conclusion of *Moby-Dick* did not appeal to his publishers, and Stone's essay argues that it did not totally please Melville either. From this perspective, the original ending "supplements" the new ending, to a degree that "even Herman Melville would have had reason to find fascinating," Stone claims. (171) Hollywood did what was most "uncanny," by substituting for tragedy its contradictory opposite: a romantic ending.

Chapter Three

Why paranoia? In other words, what is it about paranoia as a "condition" that allows it to work so well as an allegory of the mid-twentieth-century in general? It appears that paranoia gets to the heart of *archive fever*, the proliferation of signs under threat of their permanent destruction. Thomas Pynchon's "Great American Novel" on WWII, *Gravity's Rainbow*, performs this little monologue –or is it an uncanny dialogue, with a reader? –over hundreds of pages: "How can we capture all the details of the *zeitgeist* –and how can we reconcile its contradictory opposites! What to do about the lurking suspicion that those opposites –actually share an identity!"

Pynchon's most recurring "trope" in *Gravity's Rainbow* is the chorus-line/spontaneous musical, a "late-late show" figure that critic Thomas Moore describes with discomfort: "How can anything so singleminded and simpleminded not really have other purposes in its soul?" (36) In this section, we'll explore paranoia's relation to allegory as archive fever; and, true to the comparative basis of this study, we'll discuss Pynchon's novel in the context of film's archive fever, as well as how his novel, like Melville's, is an allegory of modern community negotiating with modern myths (for this latter concern we'll continue to focus on "the frontier" and "predestination").

The arch-paranoia that bugs the reader, upon completion of Pynchon's massive book, is: "Have I just read a written transcription of a sensational *film*?" In his study titled *The Style of Connectedness*, Thomas Moore proposes that thesis exactly, when he opens the chapter, "*Gravity's Rainbow* as the Incredible Moving Film," with a compelling conjecture: "The 1973 Viking edition of the novel features an odd design element: between each two adjacent blocks of narrative is a row of seven precise little squares, these suggesting movie frames, and the rows in turn suggesting sprocketed separations between successive frames of the novel/film." (30)

Even the footnote to Moore's first sentence describes Roland Barthes' *punctum*, that basic unit of a filmed image that *punctuates* myth with the stamp of contignecy: perhaps, this critic suggests, "the word *catch*, as it punctuates the narration of Gottfried's final Ascent on the next-to-last page, is meant to imply just such a catching and jerking before the film's final break after the last word of the book." (30) He refers to the last sentence, which stands alone as its own paragraph, "Now everybody –". An abrupt blank space follows the hyphen.

What bugs us, ultimately, is wondering "what Pynchon means" by this pervasive "framing," Moore argues. (31) He concludes that Pynchon means that a kind of clandestine affinity exists between cinema and literature, based on a shared archive fever: "For any novel that so aspires to be filmic, the first corollary of what is said about film-frames must necessarily be linguistic: the Word, as evoked in many connections by Pynchon, is also understood as a way of ordering chaos by subdividing it, naming the void." (31) To Moore, this archive fever implies a paranoid condition, and even when we "discover" such a connection between film and literature called "framing," we cannot escape "Trick Number One" and "Trick Number Two": "[T]he arrangement of discrete events seems just random enough to suggest Trick Number One about apparently coherent plots: they may not be there at all, except as crypto-paranoiac fantasy by novelist or reader. Trick Number Two, of course, is that they may be, after all." (32)

This quality of 'reversibile meaning' we have discussed in relation to allegory and to "the Archive," during the first section; Moore, in his own terms, defends the technique of allegory as we have described it, as a process: he mentions allegory's "will to order and systematize, which both divides and unites, separates and links subject and object, inside and outside." (33) In translation, this is the "uncanny" observation we made in the second section, by claiming a technique of *de-composition plus reconstruction*, shared by both literature and cinema.

Further, Moore would agree with this study's hypothesis that allegory supplements modern myth, in an act of balancing myth's potential to become politicized through mass culture. He notes that mythographer Mircea Eliade was an influence on Pynchon, and she suggested "that the kind of time we pass in watching a film is really a wedge of Great Time in an ancient mythological sense –a permanent and timeless time". (32) On the other hand, Pynchon represents mass cinema as a paranoiac concern because he "implies that movies are a kind of dream-framing of archetypes within a culture," as Moore puts it, "especially when those include Hollywood dreams." (35)

To Pynchon, Hollywood excels at fostering a "co-presence" between fantasy and reality. Pynchon appears to notice a certain "archive fever" that affects the movie camera, so that even if the "expert" –whether a "Great Director," a subsidizing producer, company, or government –politicizes a modern myth, the technological means to do so already tells us something about the fabric of the entire community. The "feverishness" of the movie camera to archive every possible image speaks to us, Pynchon feels, of the "mechanical reproduction" of images, and how this creates a mass culture, or what he refers to as "the Preterite".

Pynchon does not always criticize "the Preterite"; he sympathizes with "the Preterite" and how "the Elect" manipulate archetypes to "Their" own ends, not the higher goal of tradition. "The Elect" –or, more frequently, "They" –are thus agents of modernity, conscripting the rest under a process of "dominating nature".

Speaking of images, it almost seems unusual, considering all the references in *Gravity's Rainbow*, that Pynchon does not give any elaborate sketch of Hollywood, which was established in its present locale because of the immaculate climate (at least for filming movies) and the sense of "predestination" that it geographically conveyed (early on, only filming was conducted at Hollywood, with the other necessary departments based back East). Instead, Pynchon focuses on the "Raketen-Stadt," or "Rocket State," the ruined post-war Europe still manipulated by the interwoven "cartels" –chemical companies, psycho-analytic research firms, rocket-testing facilities.

The questing characters who move through the "Raketen-Stadt" struggle to "read" the meaning of their experience in the ruins, which have transformed familiar "signs" – familiar architecture, the everyday habits of citizens –into signs that appear "un-homely," "uncanny". Their guiding modern myth is the "Rocket 00000," an awesome modern scientific and military invention. Pynchon intends the "Raketen-Stadt" precisely as that allegorical "white metropolis" –and we realize, with Moore's explication, that this 'reverse' aspect shares an identity with its spotless, intact opposite:

The doctrine of providential history in which the English Puritans framed their American 'errand' is attached, of course, to the movie-borne myth of (elect) cowboys and (preterite) Indians, the country having been seen at first as a demesne of Satan, the savage place foreordained to be won (as good guys always win) by the Puritan Saints, the elect of the blessed theocracy. Original Puritans sometimes liked to conceive

of the American openness as the setting in which certain prophecies of *Revelation* were to be fulfilled. (51-52)

Returning to Quilligan's project of defining allegory as a "genre," we may consider the history of criticism in English studies for additional insights into why paranoia works so well as an allegorical trope. Quilligan refers us to Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his "strictures against allegory": these "strictures" inspired a later, transformative critical endeavor, "to turn it [allegory] from a label of opprobrium into an honorific title." (15) Did the English poet recognize something *paranoiac* about allegory in general?

Perhaps so, when we consider that Coleridge proposed allegory contained, hidden in it, a kind of suspect outcome, in which "meaning may be no more than their [the reader's] translation of the reading experience into an articulate scheme that makes sense to them". (Quilligan, 15) Allegory, we might say, is "uncanny": it produces a kind of *archive fever*, a kind of "paranoid condition" in the reader to collect the various signs into an "articulate scheme," against the possibility that the text may have no meaningful scheme at all.

Thus, Quilligan, and others, argue that Pynchon uses paranoia in *Gravity's Rainbow* as an allegory of the archive fever taking hold in an emergent world order. We agree with her approach when Quilligan decides she will first refer to the material dimension of Pynchon's project –"for it is large, as allegories must be" –then proceed to discuss *Gravity's Rainbow* as an allegory of the political myths generated during WWII: "Part of the quest is a search for the cause(s) of damnation which, at his most specific…Pynchon calls a 'rocket cartel," Quilligan explains. "That is, our damnation derives from the operation of a businesslike multinational corporation of the 'elect' whose purpose is to keep the preterite imprisoned in a dehumanizing lack of communication." (204) It's part of Pynchon's allegory to use *other* allegories – specifically, the Fall of Man –to elaborate on the control of archetypal images.

For example, when Lieutenant Tyrone Slothrop –the ostensible "quest hero" and point of reader identification –perceives 'church towers as rockets,' Pynchon's style complicates the quest by also allowing us to understand that 'rockets seem like church towers'. (Quilligan, 217) Slothrop is a mythic individual, until we realize he has a "double" on a similarly feverish rocket-quest: the half-brothers Enzian/Tchitcherine –yes, Pynchon doubles the double. This is a definitive example of Pynchon's allegory of allegory: he highlights the exaggerations of modern myth to the point of absurdity, and yet his choices seem as familiar as B-Film conventions.

On the other hand, his choices also seem as familiar as high-budget Hollywood conventions; when he punctuates this with "high literature" or descriptions fit for "hard science" journals, we witness "archive fever," an allegory of our situation as allegorical readers, as Quilligan might say: "It is not just that the 'hard' sciences offer systems of metaphors not usually found in modern novels, but that the book broaches the question of the interrelationship between disparate value systems." (217)

Such an elaborate allegory leads Quilligan to conclude that, while paraonia inhibits the progress of a character like Slothrop, eventually signs for the paranoiac character become inconclusive –more than that, they become *reversible*, like puns –and so "[p]aranoia may be dictionary-defined as insanity, but it is a 'sickness' which appears to speak the only hope of salvation." (218) "Archive fever": Pynchon is sometimes paradoxically *literal* in his expressions about political control emerging during WWII, as

in the part about Tchitcherine's development of a written language for a tribe's oral language.

An archive such as an alphabet produces a kind of bureaucratic effect, Pynchon believes, on the "archive" of the tribe's language –an archive which encompasses more than just a spoken *logos* to include song, dance, and the un-representable "Kirghiz Light," which is a frontier between the written and the spoken. Thus, Pynchon is not arguing in favor of Plato, who warned against the "hypomnesic archive"; he argues against the removal of that archive from democratic contexts by "Elect" and bureaucratic control. The "Kirghiz Light" appears gradually, like a sunrise casting long and terrifying "Brocken-specters" and "god-shadows"; it does not appear suddenly, with a simultaneous and apocalyptic bang, as in the epiphanic episodes of myth. Still, Tchitcherine attempts to transcribe the event, Quilligan points out, despite the fact that "[t]he Aqyn's song is itself about wordlessness". (205-7)

Thus, "Slothrop's Russian counterpart" is requested to serve on a committee setting this oral language into "a New Turkic Alphabet". (Quilligan, 205) Pynchon is demonstrating what happens when myth gets excluded from allegory: that even modern, and "god-less" communities begin to develop their own modern myths, to the misfortune of traditional myths. In this case, language becomes a "mechanically reproduceable" substance. What happens through modern myth, in its exclusive presence, is politicization by an "expert," or in Pynchon's terms, the control of an "Elect" over "the Preterite"; in this, Pynchon is much allied to the criticism described in Walter Benjamin's essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," which we previously discussed.

It's Pynchon's allegorical task to describe that "mechanical reproduction" actually does extend beyond mass movies and mass culture to "language," so that, as Quilligan puts it, "through alphabetization, the means of human communication get bureaucratized." (206) We'll go ahead and let Pynchon speak in *his* own language about this process, quoting a small part of the same passage that Quilligan includes in her study (for different reasons), because it appears so exemplary for our topic:

Tchitcherine one morning finds all the pencils in his conference room have mysteriously vanished. In revenge, he and Radnichy sneak in Blobadjian's conference room next night with hacksaws, files and torches, and reform the alphabet on his typewriter. (Pynchon, 353)

For our thesis at hand, it is significant to us that Quilligan discovers 'material facts' that support the "New Turkic Alphabet" scenes: it seems that Pynchon took the project from an actual "scholarly journal," and the minute details are too frequent and exact to make the case otherwise. As a result, Quilligan notes that a kind of "paranoia" takes hold of the reader who comes down with archive fever and goes in search of Pynchon's sources: "Pynchon's reader often finds himself feeling paranoid long after reading the book when he stumbles on some fact he had thought was part of the (wildly improbable) fiction. It is as if these discoveries were meant to be part of the reader's experience of the book." (209)

Since Pynchon himself, at least in part, relies on a bureaucracy of signs to develop his interwoven narrative, he establishes the *pun* as his most recurring and useful tool, next to the spontaneous musicals. Puns double language upon itself; further, the *sound* of a phonetically written word can pun on its written appearance, or the error of omitting a

diacritical mark, a *punctum*, can make the word swerve wildly in a completely different direction, taking with it, Quilligan notes, the entire narrative:

Such idiot's delights as these can give way to more elaborate parodies of the usual methods of allegorical narrative, whereby Pynchon appears to have set up a whole story so he can make a pun; thus 'hubsch rauber' can mean either 'helicopter,' or, without the umlauts a lady cannot pronounce, 'cute robber.' And this entire story appears as a mere aside in an otherwise recondite discussion of the meaning of 'ass backwards'. (210)

Puns are developed as a kind of "arch-writing" for crossing discursive frontiers; it gives Pynchon the opportunity for finding some "redemption" in bureaucratized language, because he discovers that certain authorized signs preclude definitive semiotic closure.

If allegory breeds paranoia, or "archive fever," as Coleridge feared, it is important to note that the "archive fever" which consumes Pynchon's characters is intended to be instructive. Pynchon's most relevant characters in this latter respect are the Herero tribespeople, who collect and archive pieces of V-2 rockets –whether scavenged from exploded rockets, "duds," or otherwise –in order to construct a "Counterforce" to "Rocket 00000," that is, a "Rocket 00001". The archive fever breeds a factionalism, and members fall on either side of a frontier: those who fall on the side of Enzian's myth of an "Eternal Center," which is a kind of industrialized "Khirgiz Light," and which the launched counter-rocket will actualize; and those who fall on the side of "the Empty Ones," who invest all of their libinal energy in the rocket, leaving none for biological reproduction, thus committing themselves to a kind of redeemed "tribal suicide".

Significantly, a member of the cartel network, Gerhard von Goll, who participates in developing the German V-2 rocket, is also a documentary filmmaker who creates a counter-intelligence document about "black rocket troops" who operate a launch pad in some obscure forest; Goll's men even deliberately torch the "set," leaving behind half-charred documents specially prepared to seem "authentic". Even the sex-slave of Captain Blicero, a one Gottfried, appears in this counter-intelligence film wearing "black-face" –a kind of allegorical mockery of the passages poeticizing the immaculate "whiteness" of his "Northern" skin and his "golden" hair. (Later, at the book's conclusion, Gottfried is "married" to "Rocket 00000," literally, when Blicero "ties" him (pun intended) to the rocket.)

Pynchon allows for Goll's document to serve as allegorical commentary on Blicero's "other love," the young Herero *Enzian*, whom the Captain had met while stationed in Africa. Hilariously, the filmmaker gradually begins to believe that he has created the actual "Counterforce," the actual "Schwarzkommando" –Goll believes he has brought something ideational "into being," through his film. And Quilligan points out that Enzian, during the latter part of his quest through the "Zone," gradually realizes that the "holy Text" may *not* be the material "Rocket 00001." Enzian confronts his mythic search, Quilligan tells us, "only to realize fairly late that not the rocket, but postwar ruined Europe is the text". (213)

It appears that the "They" have manipulated Enzian's "reading" of his quest, and Slothrop's too, by projecting the rocket archetype as desirable and worth attaining, much like the projection of certain movie stars by Hollywood. By this allegory, Pynchon examines the promise of "the froniter" as "white metropolis," "city on the hill," "the American West" or otherwise. His most direct examinations can be found in the last

section of *Gravity's Rainbow*, which is titled "The Counterforce": it interweaves Enzian's "disillusionment," Slothrop's "disappearance," and Gottfried's "Ascent," with disparate stories, including a biography of "Byron, the immortal bulb" –an industrial counterpart to the "Khirgiz Light" on a more civilian level than Enzian's "Rocket 00001". We agree with Quilligan that these disparate stories push Pynchon's allegory about allegorical reading to the forefront. (266)

We also agree with Quilligan that Pynchon makes even more overt references to Hollywood in order to allegorize the political control of archetypal images; we feel that the scene Quilligan has chosen to prove her point is so exemplary, that we have decided to reproduce her analysis and the quote from *Gravity's Rainbow*. Quilligan chooses a scene involving "the narrator," Enzian, and Katje; we'll discuss "the narrator" in more detail later, and Katje, too, again in terms of Hollywood movies:

In one of the cinematic climaxes of the plot, Enzian meets Katje, who is hunting for Slothrop as some sort of expiation for her sins against him. They converse about him, exchange crpytic evaluations of each other's natures. Caricaturing the girl-spy survivor that she is, Katje begins to flirt with Enzian:

'Flirt if you want,' Enzian now just as smooth as that Cary Grant, 'but expect to be taken seriously.' Oh, *ho*. Here's whatcha came for, folks. [P. 661]

We agree with Quilligan that the narrator's arch tone encourages readers to explore how their own responses may have been conditioned by a mass culture, because, at least initially, we may expect a seduction scene to follow –and one doesn't: "Has Pynchon caught us agape with all our voyeuristic tendencies showing," she wonders. "Or is it that, so programmed by the signals, basing our responses on our previous experience with similar cues, we all react to 'that' Cary Grant in the same way?" (270)

Another cinematic example shows up near the conclusion of the novel, one of the last instances in which we *do* encounter the increasingly absent Slothrop. It concerns the FBI assassination of John Dillinger which, we are told, occurred as Dillinger was exiting the Biograph Theater in Chicago. Apparently, a crowd stormed the fallen figure, and, seized by an uncanny fever, began using whatever they could to soak up his blood, to create "souvenirs". A character in *Gravity's Rainbow*, "Seaman Bodine," gives Slothrop a shirt with this blood, and Quilligan notes the cinematic dimensions of *this* exchange: "Tinged with the rhetoric of a sentimental war picture, just as all Pynchon's revelatory moments are protected against their own seriousness by a self-conscious infection with the diction of film (that repository of our American mythic consciousness)". (272) We might also read this scene as Pynchon's suggestion of a growing influence between Hollywood and the news media "event".

This "printed text" –blood/shirt, letter/page –given to Slothrop, creates an allegory; it comments on how mythic, epiphanic revelation becomes, in modern orders, a thing of "mobs" (pun intended), and is associated with the manipulation of feverish masses by celebrity images. Paradoxically, no one seems to be after Slothrop at this point, unless it is some absurd archetype, like the Stetson-wearing cowboy who believes Slothrop has caused him an injury. In actuality, it is Slothrop's double, Enzian, who caused it.

The author of *The Postmodernist Allegories of Thomas Pynchon*, Deborah Madsen, states her indebtedness to Maureen Quilligan's project of defining allegory as a genre. Madsen defines *Gravity's Rainbow* as a "postmodern allegory," and own project is

to explore this distinguishing historical mark –"postmodern" –to a degree which Quilligan cannot, because of her goal to acknowledge what remains "allegorical" across various epochs. What marks, Madsen wonders, Pynchon's "Great American Novel" as unique from an earlier appearance of allegory? Madsen wants to suggest that *the allegory of myth* –the "supplementation" of one "genre" by another –gives Pynchon's work a completely novel appearance.

In agreeance with Quilligan, and many other Pynchon critics, Madsen believes that *Gravity's Rainbow* represents the "archive fever" of a community and its leader(s) in negotiation over the control of "discourses," those bodies of knowledge which modernity says are available to us as units of "truth-value": "[I]ndividual allegoric texts are able to present a self-conscious account of the way cultural discourses seek social validation and also the way in which these cultural discourses authorize certain configurations of cultural power," Madsen clarifies. (3) Again, Pynchon allegorically represents this negotiation generally through "the Elect" and "the Preterite," and particularly through a continual instrusion of Hollywood movie references into the narrative; his novel makes a distinction between truth-value, as embodied by disparate (and competing) discourses, and a mythical, epiphanic "Truth" (which certain characters seek on their typical quest). (3)

Madsen notes that ideologies play a part of the exaggerated and exclusive use of myth. (4) In modern communities, this exlusive use breeds the spectacle of mass Hollywood films, with its "star system" of celebrity archetypes. Pynchon expresses that all ideologies totalize, whether in the service of a cinematic, literary, religious, political, military, business or scientific organization: in *Gravity's Rainbow*, it's a matter of how that totality unfolds. For instance, does it unfold disjunctively, according to duration, or does it appear simultaneously, in an ephiphanic revelation; does it unfold to an (elect) individual or to a (preterite) community? For this "Great American Novel," it's not a matter of wondering, "What is 'Truth'?": it's a matter of examining what represents truth-value and when, how much and to whose benefit.

The sheer range implied by this archival task is, for Madsen, what makes postmodern allegory postmodernist. (5) Such a task precludes definitive narrative closure, or "resolution," at least without the will of the reader, leaving Pynchon to produce "an unregulated proliferation of signs". (8) It's a task marked by "archive fever," and we were already briefed on this fact during our review of Quilligan, who mentioned the emergence of a "cognitive gap" in *Gravity's Rainbow*.

What Madsen brings to us is an explanation of how allegorical "disjunction" evolved from an ancient meditation on "cognitive gaps": the Greeks had developed an attitude which "did not consider either the moral appended to the fable (*epimythios*), or personification (*conformatio*) to be allegoric because these tropes explicitly state their referents." (7) In other words, Madsen tells us that a return to ancient considerations allows Pynchon to define symbols as "tropes that explicitly state their own reference," and postmodern allegory as an "archaeology". Postmodern allegory relies on a kind of "figuralism," an archival excavation of values from the past and their juxtaposition with modern signs, creating a paranoiac "condition" in which the reader wonders if the "narrative" is just an uncanny projection of a "scheme" or a "pattern" that makes sense to them only, just as Coleridge warned. "[I]s the perceived figural pattern projected by the mind or does it reside in reality," Madsen wonders. "[A]nd, in either case, how can we

know with certainty?" (10) The archival task of allegory is, we can say, a negotiation over truth-value.

By supplementing myth, allegory proceeds, Madsen tells us, much in the way of commentary on "an insufficient, antecedent meaning" –allegory "doubles" the text. (8) The supplement serves as a distinction between two (apparently) contradictory temporal states: the timely, and the timeless realm of myth. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, Madsen urges that it's important to recognize a larger allegorical level, by which we perceive a manipulation of this contradiction by those who seek to "control" the use of discourses, like those members of the "rocket cartel": "This disjunction between 'now' and 'eternity' is exaggerated in Pynchon's allegories, where characters are caught between an incomplete system of temporal signs and the suggestion of a continuous meta-realm of meaning." (11)

Slothrop, as he gropes for meaning during his quest through the "Zone," often encounters isolated situations saturated with meaning, a response conditioned by their unconscious association with Hollywood narratives or celebrities (even, and especially if, the celebrity seems "innocent," as in the character Bianca, whom for Slothrop represents Shirley Temple).

Pynchon's argument, in this case, has been informed as much by Jungian psychoanalysis as Pavlovian psychoanalysis: after all, isn't this the mixed discourse that Hollywood relies upon? Whether you believe the claim about Hollywood or not, Madsen points out that poliltical manipulation of this mixed discourse *can*, at least potentially, result in the projection of "an archetypal 'One' that exists within the multiplicity of material historical and linguistic signs." (11) If either the characters in, or the readers of, *Gravity's Rainbow* want to find "meaning," Pynchon suggests that the "finding" is probably not the mythical, epiphanic revelation of "a truth" that is seeded inside various discourses, or that has even survived industrial history intact –at least not in *every* instance of meaning.

Postmodern allegory offers no narrative "resolution," nor does it promise that re-union with all potential meaning will unconditionally occur, and Pynchon represents this environment through his proliferation of discourses –including "scientific," "non-literary" discourses –each of which could potentially serve as the community's commentary on the absence of a temporal "wholeness". It's the projection of an archetypal "One" that could dispense with a grand narrative for the community that bothers Pynchon, even as he seeks to argue for spiritual orders of experience. It's just that the mythic symbol can't speak for itself, and this opens it to broad manipulation when mass audiences appear. Basically put, the symbol always-already allows for a referent that is present to itself, Madsen tells us:

The Romantic concept of the symbol, however, denies its function as a conventional epistemological sign and constructs of it instead a mystical bridge between the imagination and a transcendent unit…The *symboliste* conceives of the world as an emanation of a divine One, and the symbol as an avenue for direct, non-discursive knowledge of the 'One'. (11-12)

In the previous sections, we described "disjunction" as an ideational process brought on by modernity: find a subject, and, through a discourse, give it truth-value ("archive fever"). During *modernization* –the industrial history of modernity – communities start to experience this disjunction on an increasingly material register, and

we spent time discussing how cinema and "mechanical reproduction" plays with this "crisis". *Speed*, we concluded, is modernization's key quality –with the *de-composition and reconstruction of* speed serving as the technique that emerges from modernization. When we also describe this mode as *the allegory of myth*, we mean that communities have potential access to "relief" from this "temporal crisis".

In the postmodern allegory of *Gravity's Rainbow*, it's the proliferation and (paranoiac) inter-weaving of various discourses, which *could* provide relief. At the same time, Madsen wants us to know that Pynchon recognizes his allegory is dangerously close to "entropy" manipulated by certain power relations: "For although the immediate effect of entropy is to produce chaos, this disorder leads finally to stasis: a stagnant order which is total homogeneity; forms and distinctions dissolve into a chaos which emerges finally as lethargic sameness." (19)

For example, Pynchon posits a tension in the discourse of thermodynamics, between 'classical' physics and 'new' physics. Madsen claims that Pynchon describes classical physics in terms of a belief in "the existence of indestructible particles of divine origin" and by belief in a set of Newtonian "immutable laws"; in 'new' physics, the classical mode confronts "probabilities and uncertainties; where nothing, including human consciousness, is distinct and isolated". (17) At this point, Pynchon must avoid creating a myth out of a discourse, lest he give a grand narrative that automatically "homogenizes" thermodynamics, preventing it from becoming different unto itself.

Pynchon's solution is to find an allegorical representation in "Brennschluss," the German word for the process by which fuel is shut off to the V-2 rocket's engine, in mid-flight, after which gravity –and uncertainty –must take over. "Man's" control and calculation –his discursive manipulation– can bring him only halfway along the "rainbow" –after which "the silent Other," the potential for counterargument takes over. Of course, by the phrase "gravity's rainbow," Pynchon suggests that this counterargument may already exist in the discourse *a priori*. For Madsen, this deconstructive suggestion is *the* pretext for postmodern allegory. (19)

On occasion, the presentation of Madsen's description of *Gravity's Rainbow* seems somewhat pessimistic, with "the frontier" becoming a terrifying homogeneity controlled by an Elect on every level, leaving no room for Lieutenant Tyrone Slothrop to exist except as a helpless dupe –so it is important to emphasize that Pynchon is not a pessimist. On the contrary, Pynchon represents "the frontier" as a *fluid* boundary line, a place where the Preterite and the Elect engage in a power relation. In actuality, it's the *paranoiac* "condition" which Pynchon attributes to allegory that makes his 'optimistic side' seem atypically expressed, not least because "paranoia" posits the suspicion that a quester's "pure" motives are controlled, to some degree, by "Them".

Thus, we agree with Madsen's evaluation; we simply note that her presentation *could* mislead. "The frontier," for Pynchon, ultimately represents the negotiation over "totality"; "the frontier" is the possibility for different types of "reading," and it is the possibility for projecting an "archetypal One". We'll even agree, with some stipulations, when Madsen describes Pynchon's allegorical lesson, via the figure of "the frontier," as "the necessity, and extreme difficulty, of distinguishing coincidence from true repetition; the repetition which is entropic stasis from that which is the progressive manifestation of an authentic unity". (24)

Our stipulation is based on the key term which Madsen uses in this quote–"repetition" –and how she uses it differently from how we have used the same term in previous sections. For Madsen, "repetition" is a critical way of referring to "mechanical reproduction". We intend "repetition" to refer to "mechanical reproduction" as well, but we do so in a more neutral fashion, drawing out the overarching resonance with "doubling," and thus an overarching resonance with allegory. Our focus is on a *duration* that punctuates simultaneous totalities because "doubling" precludes a referent from becoming present to a symbol. Of course, we allow that "repetition" may occur through a machine, such as a movie camera, or a projector. Ultimately, "repetition" seems, to us, allegorical and ambiguous, indicative of a lack of definitive closure, not necessarily descriptive of "entropy".

Additionally, Madsen elsewhere defines "paranoia" as a genealogical inheritance, whereas we have defined it as a "cultural inheritance," i.e. an artificially produced "condition" in the present. We do acknowledge that "paranoia" does seem concerned with past tense, in the sense that it feels feverish about the possibility of discovering an identity in opposites, and, as result, archives as much difference as possible. This is the "mediating" and paradoxically "destructive" aspect which we have described according to Freud's "death drive". But "paranoia," to us, does not seem to be the same process as the Puritan "encoding" of "Nature" with mythical symbols, and Madsen appears to conflate the two processes:

The legacy of his [Lieutenant Tyrone Slothrop's] Puritan ancestry is an inherited paranoia, which finds expression in his tendency to transform the world into text and to read from it…What he reads in the city subject to bombardment by German V-2 rockets is a parable of death. Under the pressure exerted by the Blitz his latent paranoia blossoms along with 'a peculiar sensitivity to what is revealed in the sky,' so that his paranoia centres on an obsession with 'the idea of a rocket with his name written on it' (p. 25). Perhaps a pun on the Puritan concept of 'predestination,' his sensitivity to secular explosions is cast in terms of divine revelation. (80)

This particular quote appears to have two arguments about "paranoia," spliced into one. On the one hand, we have coherent series based on the past: "inherited," "latent," "legacy," "ancestry". On the other hand, we have a series based on *the present*: "pressure," "peculiar sensitivity," "obsession," "divine revelation," "blossoms". Madsen seems to occassionally forget that Pynchon integrates the two series, as an allegory of myth. This seems strange to us, because Madsen is clearly capable of discussing how Pynchon allegorizes the manipulation of modern myth: "The Puritan hermeneutic…is based on an essentially metaphoric epistemology. Nature is construed as a sign-system that only indicates, can only point to, the presence of a Deity." (80-81) It's simply using the term "paranoia" in a consistent way that seems to evade her.

The difficulty which Madsen encounters seems all the more noteworthy, because she defines myth in the exact way in which we have, as simultaneity: "From his Puritan ancestry Slothrop has inherited a predisposition to think of meaning as a complete and absolute system, akin to God, and to envisage the discovery of truth as taking the form of an epiphanic revelation." (83) So why does Madsen seem to have the inability to define "paranoia" as a feature of allegory –as a product of *not* being able to receive total meaning in the present? In other words, why does she sometimes equate a Puritan dialectic of "encoding" and "decoding" with allegorical "reading" (by which the "reader"

continually accepts that he/she *doesn't* know if the "narrative" is a projected "scheme," and so continues to allow signs to proliferate mulitple narratives)?

Pynchon obviously does not construe "encoding" and "decoding" with allegorical "reading". Paradoxically, certain parts of Madsen's argument help us to realize this! When Madsen moves on to a discussion of Enzian, she describes him as a mythic "frontiersman," leader of the "Revolutionaries of the Zero," factionally opposed to "the Empty Ones," who are committed to tribal suicide.

But we've also clearly demonstrated that Enzian is an *allegorical* character, subsisting in a series that Pynchon almost subdivides *ad infinitum*, in keeping with the allegorical mode: he is the "doubled" double of the "hero" Slothrop, because his "half brother" Tchitcherine shares that title, too; Enzian is also the "double" of Gottfried, the "anti-hero" of *Gravity's Rainbow*. Pynchon would like for us to understand Enzian as caught *between* the two modes or approaches to totality, mythic "decoding" and allegorical "reading". It is Madsen's own argument that reveals this, strangely enough:

Whereas Slothrop's Puritan ancestry disrupts his ability to differentiate between kinds of meaning, the Herero tradition in which Enzian uneasily locates himself affects his conception of the mystical goal. He is influenced by a Herero hermeneutic that sees nature as a text symbolic of pantheisitic significances. (86)

Caught between "Their" myth of "Rocket 00000" and a "Herero hermeneutic" of "Rocket 00001," Enzian has access to understanding myth on the register of his tribe and on the register of the modern "Raketen-Stadt": eventually, he realizes his tribe has been conscripted into the modern narrative, too, and so cannot "locate" himself under either myth. He accepts the "Zone" as an allegorical "proliferation of signs," but feels disillusioned as a result (Pynchon does not promise a Romantic resolution for allegory; but he does not represent disillusionment as an unconditional outcome of allegory, either).

Either way, Enzian is very much caught on a difficult "frontier": if "decoding" fails as a sustaining revolutionary, pantheistic myth, then "the Empty Ones" will ensure the extermination of his tribe; and if he relies on the other mode, allegorical "reading," without care, he could become a disillusioned leader (in fact, Enzian realizes this latter possibility while reflecting, during a drive through the "Zone"). It appears that Pynchon wants some kind of "reconciliation" (however troublesome that term) between "decoding" and "reading" –between myth and allegory.

We recall that Enzian has a half-brother, Tchitcherine. Because of this relation, Tchitcherine's quest is also a "double" of Slothrop's: his quest follows "the promise of some 'Other,' some excess of meaning that 'Their' explanations cannot encompass," as Madsen puts it. (99) He, too, feels paranoid about which myth to accept –"Theirs" or "his" –and suspects that paranoia "itself" may be subversive mode for a different type of "reading," i.e. allegory. Madsen argues strongly for the "subversive" potential of allegorical modes, and suddenly seems to recover the ability to distinguish between "decoding" and "reading": moreover, her choice of words seems appropriate, because, after all, Tchitcherine is a "revolutionary" character.

In fact, Madsen clearly finds an allegorical impulse in Tchitcherine's "condition": "Paranoia, the discovery that things can be connected in previously unimagined ways." (80) This allows Madsen to state that Tchitcherine uses paranoia to realize a connection between Marxist dialectics and "the Puritan basis of the capitalist cartels" (which peddle

the chemicals necessary for the rocket): while seeming to be opposites, the two narratives share an identity, because they both project the myth of "re-writing History". Instead of "narratives," Madsen prefers to use the term "noumenon" to describe something like Marxist dialectics or a "rocket cartel". We'll soon define this term in full, but for now it's enough to recognize that Madsen considers the "noumenon" to be a controlled system that "masters discourses," in order to archive "History" in a universal way: "From this minimal revelation of the noumenon Tchitcherine realizes the participation of his own Soviet state." (89)

Let us look over this word "noumenon," which Madsen so frequently uses. In *Gravity's Rainbow*, Dr. Lazlo Jamf pursues Pavlovian research and extends that research into chemistry through his invention of "Imipolex-G" –the chemical tested on infant Tyrone Slothrop, to determine its potential effects on humans. This unusual plastic, which Slothrop comes to learn as integral to a coincidental relation between his sexual desire and V-2 rocket bombings, represents a "frontier," on the other side of which the rational Garden appears as the superior of a Pavlovian wilderness (Pavlov described the brain's cortex as a "mosaic of on/off switches").

Between science and the political interests of war, on the one hand, and desire on the other, Madsen argues that the "noumenon" refers an "intelligble" but not "sensible" power relation. She describes the relation as "polysemous," and confesses to have taken it from Kant's philosophy, in which the term separates 'the intelligible' from 'the sensible'. We might say that Madsen's "noumenon" is precisely how we have used "frontier": as the location of a *plastic* power relation between "the Elect" and "the Preterite," as they negotiate over the truth-value of discourses, represented in *Gravity's Rainbow* by Hollywood film, and by the plastic "Imipolex-G": "It is in plasticity that the origin of the cartels –of the noumenon –is located." (91)

When Slothrop becomes "Plasticman" on his quest, Pynchon expresses that the "counterforce" can have its own heroic, and suspect, archetypes; we know this because Pynchon parodies "Plasticman" when Slothrop becomes "Plechazunga," or the "pig-hero" of a small village (we'll discuss this transformation later). "The frontier" or the "noumenon" is not a moral "condition": it is a "cognitive" condition for ordering signs, like paranoia, and allows for the corruption of "virtuous" narratives by their own hand, as we've just seen with Tchitcherine.

"They" use "Imipolex-G" on humans and in the V-2 rockets because they understand "Nature" as requiring "deliberate resurrection," in Madsen's words (Imipolex-G is a plastic that actively "responds" to stimulus).Otherwise, without the application of "Their" discourses, "Nature" just passively degrades under "gravity". Evolving out of the Puritan myth, the "Raketen-Stadt" as Edenic Garden is "a rationalized province of absolute control," as Madsen puts it. (91) Not any kind of topological re-working will suffice for this project. Madsen points out that, among the ruins of the "Raketen-Stadt," a fascination with "surfaces" continues to linger –the masses still gather for movies:

Of all 'Their' constructions, film approaches most nearly the design of the noumenon. Film is created as a continuous, secondary image of 'reality,' that reifies a 'deliberate resurrection' of nature which, like Imipolex-G and the Pavlovian cortex, is amenable to 'Analysis'. (92)

As in the scene involving Katje and Enzian, we are subliminally conditioned to expect a seduction scene to follow their spotaneous introduction –and the reader registers a kind of

"surprise" when Pynchon refuses to give us "that Cary Grant". The reader, allegorically, then has an alternative, by using Pynchon's own style to counter Pynchon: "Oh, *that* Pynchon" (as in "*that* Cary Grant"). The allegorical reader is not required to fit a scene into a greater narrative, whether that's Enzian's or Katje's, and this is instructive of the ultimate drive behind *Gravity's Rainbow*: cinema becomes a means of illuminating literature's "archive fever," the desire to collect and build up to a totality through epiphanic revelation and "resolution".

Gravity's Rainbow is an allegory about instructing "readers" how to "read between the lines," between two seemingly opposite discourses: just as cinema becomes a means of illuminating literature's "archive fever," literature becomes of means of illuminating cinema's "inconclusiveness," its "proliferation of signs" which leads us on to the next scene, continually deferring "resolution". They "supplement" each other: literature and cinema have their own "death drive": in one case the drive "mediates" and precludes simultaneity (literature's archive fever), and in the other, it continually erases the gains of the camera's uncontrollable archive fever (cinema's "inconclusiveness"). Of course, it is Hollywood cinema with its Romantic archetypes that most perverts the camera's archive fever by promising mythic re-union and total "resolution".

Cinema appears so "amenable" to the cartels because of this potential for the manipulation of desire, wielded by Hollywood archetypes (recall how Gerhard von Goll actually believed he had brought "black rocket troops" into being by his own counterintelligence film, which used "fake" black rocket troops). This gives cinema the appearance that it can mythically transcend time –a powerful quality to war-weary communities and servicemen. It's "Nature's" relentless reliance on cyclical temporality that makes it seem to stubborn and "degraded" to the cartels, in need of "deliberate resurrection" –"Nature" seems so *gravity-bound*, unable to transcend time. (Madsen, 93) As previously discussed, modernity's project has always been to transcend time through "mastery" of "Nature": when "modernization" appears with industrial history, we have understood that the key quality of this mastery is *speed* (as if the more rapid liquidation of tradition and traditional knowledge could "transcend" gravity).

We mentioned that even "the good guys" can unconsciously work under the same modern assumptions, as when Slothrop becomes the comic book hero, "Plasticman". Pynchon introduces a postmodern reversal of the modern hero's desire for individual "reconciliation" when Slothrop obtains a copy of the document *On Preterition*: it is a "heretical" and subversive discourse written by his pig-farming ancestor from Puritan New England, William Slothrop. Soon afterwards, the questing Slothrop stumbles his way onto a village festival and is voted to wear the "Plechazunga" costume –a pig costume representing the myth of a community's liberation from its oppresors. The joke is on Slothrop.

By Madsen's estimation, Slothrop begins to shed his "ego" after this scene, and reconciles myth with allegorical "reading": "Slothrop begins to experience time as a series of discrete moments, of 'successive stills,' in the absence of an ultimate subjective grounding." (101) "Cognitive gaps" spring up when he accepts –or merely toleratres –this mythic identity of a "pig-hero" –and so, when he "abandons the active pursuit of signs of an immanent self," Madsen says, Slothrop learns to "read" allegorically, and give up the paranoia that only sees instances of "Their" presence. (101) Of course, he is not then immune to failure.

Slothrop begins to occupy a "frontier" between myth and allegory. At this point in *Gravity's Rainbow*, we know that *some* connection exists between Slothrop's sexual desire and the location of V-2 rocket explosions, and that the connection is based on "Imipolex-G" (the plastic used on infant Slothrop and in the rocket). Pynchon represents Slothrop's "condition" allegorically, in the ever-fertile figure of the "Brennschluss Point" discussed earlier (the mid-point of a rocket's trajectory, when fuel is stopped and gravity takes over). The sexual innuendo is obvious, but Madsen argues that Pynchon is earnestly allegorizing modernity's desire for increasingly rapid vertical transcendence over "Nature's" gravity-bound "cycles" (eventually, modernity's project must encounter a "Brennschluss Point," a point in which its discourses must accept that they inherently contain their own counterarguments).

Significantly, Madsen points out to us how Dr. Jamf derived inspiration for his chemical research from Kekule's dream of a serpent consuming his own tail. Kekule is an actual historical individual, and his dream allowed him to determine the structure of the benzene ring. On gravity-bound Earth, a hurled object simulates half of this eternal round: it moves in a "rainbow" trajectory. Science, when combined with ideological power bases (particularly the political determination of technologically-advanced warfare) will attempt, Madsen reads, to use Kekule's dream to "deliberately resurrect" a degraded "Nature" that seems constrained to its *own* entropic design, i.e. gravity. (91) Under this projection, "science" is only "natural" –a predestined endeavor.

"Science" (ideologically defined) projects that it is "natural" to project "Nature" as a controllable energy: otherwise, it argues, it wastes away under its own law, its own counterargument. What the "Rocket 00000" represents is science's inability to accept that, in this project, it too inherently contains a counterargument to itself. At its "Brennschluss Point," it hangs at the "frontier" of its parabolic trajectory, between *four* world orders –between 'classical' physics and 'new' physics, *and* between the visible, quantifiable world and the 'hidden, silent' "underground" (represented by gravity and the Herero "Schwarzkommando"). With the aid of Madsen's critique, we realize that the "Brennschluss Point" is the allegory of modernity's vertical order encountering its counterargument in a cyclical order (Slothrop notices that the bottom of a V-2 rocket is a circle with four "fins"):

If the Rocket is and discloses an interface between 'orders of being,' it would be an interface between kind and exploitative worlds, controlled and indeterminate pretexts, the noumenon and the numinous. The figural ambivalence of the Rocket that is annexed by oppositional pretexts is reified in the dialectical play of forces that manipulate the Rocket's trajectory. (99)

In the language of this thesis, we might say that the Rocket is "uncanny," an identity based in contradictory opposites that are separated by time. The "Brennschluss Point" is the Rocket's own "return of the repressed," its allegorical hinge.

In fact, again using the language of this thesis, we might say that Slothrop's acceptance of "the frontier" only *increases* his exposure to failure. Slothrop realizes that "the Archive" is actually what escapes "Their" discursive control, whatever punctuates the daily myths and dis-joins them; in effect, he realizes that a quest may be inconclusive, and by this realization we encounter the "greatness" of Pynchon's "Great American Novel" –a "greatness" it shares with Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*: "While Pynchon's and Melville's techniques may differ, the end result of each is the same," Quilligan states.

"The reader is posed a choice and a choice, moreover, which defines the reader, not the book he is reading." (265)

In Michel Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Part III, we find a chapter titled "The historical *a priori* and the archive". This is a dense passage highly relevant to our exploration of *Gravity's Rainbow*, not least because Foucault uses the term "archive," and we would benefit from analyzing its claims. Overall, we understand this passage as part of Foucault's task to articulate why and how discourses appear to perception –why and how, for example, they do not merely become integrated into "everyday" thought, as an inheritance of the past. By extension, Foucault explores what it means to be a reader (a very allegorical type, it seems to us).

We have learned, according to Pynchon's use of the paranoiac "condition" in allegory, that any kind of conceptual "outside" –a "They" or a "we" (as reader) –becomes difficult to articulate according to common written and verbal prejudices. The definition of "outside," Pynchon suggests, always-already seems manipulated by yet *another* "outside," some other systematic and authorized discursive order that we do not perceive, at least potentially. We explained this is why Pynchon likes to use puns.

We also focused on the scene in which Pynchon sketches an 'unspeakable' and mysterious "Khirgiz Light," which he contrasts with the bio-picaresque adventures of "Byron," an industrial electric light bulb that just won't go out. Pynchon seems to have us understand that whether "divine" or machine-made, redemptive or merely convenient, the "illumination" of Man's world co-exists with some 'silent, hidden order,' a gravity that keeps objects –and discourses– in relation to their "uncanny," inherent counterargument..

"The archive," in Foucault's text, describes this frontier state of continuous discursive negotiation. Crucial to his description is the function of 'a totality' and 'partiality'. "Totality," as we have argued, becomes a function of re-covering and re-union under the exaggerated influence of (politicized) modern myth; but "totality" can also unfold disjunctively, when allegory provides a supplement: again, on the frontier, "totality" is a fluid negotiation. As a term useful for exploring the perception of historical discourses, Foucault relates "totality" to what he calls the "positivity" of discourses.

When Foucault claims that discourses have "positivity," he is arguing that discourses are *partial* (pun intended) or have "partiality": a need, in other words, to posit truth-values, however prejudiced, however "partial," and however improbable those values will add up to any universal system, capable of being transmitted intact through time and forming the basic ground for a trans-historical dialogue between scholars. Reading *Gravity's Rainbow*, Foucault might have said that "They" (the "rocket cartel"), in their mythic desire to "deliberately resurrect" an entropic "Nature," automatically commit discourses to their own epistemic entropy, *a priori* –because "They" deny how discourses inherently contain their own counterargument, and Foucault terms this "the historical *a priori*". (Readers may recognize that Derrida shares this observation, with "deconstruction").

Foucault argues that "the historical *a priori*" does not serve as an antecedent text, as "a condition of validity for judgments" –that is how "*They*" would conceive of discursive responsibility, as part and parcel of a teleological progress toward a "white metropolis" of total, perfected knowledge. (127) Rather, it argues that "outside" judgment of truth-value is prejudiced by a discourse's own articulation of –and counterargument against –itself. To speak of "the archive" would be to acknowledge a pervasive condition

for knowledge in postmodernity: that we develop a scheme for judging truth-value in the process of locating truth-value, and thus, our "historical context" appears "*a priori*," as a automatic negotiation between the timeless realm of encompassing judgment and the dispersed, timely discourses of recorded history. In terms of common notions of "history," the postmodern condition sounds like a contradiction in terms, bordering on impossibility of "historical" description, which explains why Foucault uses a phrase that is in tension with itself.

Thus, the "condition" of an historical *a priori* is continually subject to a scrunity over its "historicity": ultimately, Foucault concludes we can only know its "historicity" from the scattered totality of "positivities," the disparate system of truth-values that we continually uncover through research (rather than inherit, "one fine day," in a bulk and final sum). It is the *process* of research which provides "totality" (which is thus not stable, but fluid and evolving). Each posited and partial truth-value can allegorically serve as the commentary on some antecedent text, even and especially when that text is absent to us, a threshold for our further discursive knowledge. "The archive" is marked and punctuated by this "gap," even if it is only a potential gap. (127)

So, when Foucault claims that "positivity plays the role of what might be called a *historical a priori*," he means that the rules of a discursive milieu available to a present historical community are absent, sitting on one side of the "frontier". Foucault claims we cannot know these rules except in translation and adaptation to our discursive prejudices; in terms of "the archive," all discursive rules –including the discourse of the historical *a priori* –are not in any way immutable, self-present, and immune to counterargument:

Moreover, this *a priori* does not elude historicity: it does not constitute, above events, and in an unmoving heaven, an atemporal structure; it is defined as the group of rules that characterize a discursive practice: but these rules are not imposed from the outside on the elements that they relate together; they are caught up in the very things that they connect (127).

By focusing on the conditons for the use and perception of discourses, Foucault wants to prepare us for the concept of "the archive". This concept relies on his argument that modernity has projected its own counterargument, its own limited teleology, and upon realizing this we can enter a "postmodern condition" which must use binaries and teleologies while recongizing their inherent fiction, their prejudice to naturalize themselves into grand narratives, and their tendency to repress their own counterargument through the projection of a "false" Other, i.e. an "opposite".

Archives, Foucault argues, do not apply what we typically refer to as "form" and "content"; for example, archives do not apply formal dialectics, they recognize dialectics as a formal means of projecting truth-value. If they do seem to contain a dialectic, it does not appear through active application but according to a process that Foucault terms "regularity," or the regular proliferation of difference: "the Archive" will deconstruct its own dialectics, *a priori*.

We have understood this process through "allegory" when it proceeds by continous differentiation, commenting on its structure during the process of construction. We have also understood that postmodernity derives its understanding of "the Archive" from a technique inherent in modernity, which we have called the technique of *de-composition plus reconstruction*. It's not that modernity "ended" or that the "postmodern condition" has immutably descended upon us (on the contrary): it's a matter of choice,

and recognizing that contingency has allowed us to perceive conditions which, if accepted, can problematize and negotiate with modernity's goals, even on its own terms.

Thus, Foucault emphasizes that we should not conflate the "barbarous" pun he has created under the phrase "historical *a priori*" with the familiar, "formal *a priori*" or with "a great, unmoving empty figure that irrupted one day on the surface of time, that exercised over men's thought a tyranny that none could escape, and which then suddenly disappeared in a totally unexpected, totally unprecedented eclipse." (128)

We might imagine that Foucault is defining "the archive" by what it isn't; and that assumption may not be entirely misguided, because "the archive" registers and records discourses *allegorically*, in *reference to* some absent anterior text. This also explains why archives, *a priori*, avoid the exaggerated, exclusive use of myth, because such political manipulation cannot explain why discoures "are not simply the signalization, at the level of verbal performances, of what could be deployed in the order of the mind or in the order of things". (129) Discourses are "positivities," a unit of truth-value indissociable from a "network" of truth-values (and that "network" is not immutable; neither is it universal and symmetrical).

An archival condition gives to discourses the possibility of commenting on their own construction; in this, archives are extremely allegorical. Pynchon would have us note that, by consequence, archives give us a "choice" over "the outside": with truth-value, we readers negotiate a relation to "totality," whether that is a simultaneous or a disjunctive relation.

Foucault, just like Derrida (in his text *Archive Fever*), also describes the archive as the relation between a community and its leader(s). Again, we know that this relation depends, to a degree, on attitudes toward myth and the transparency given to any kind of construction-in-process. Foucault wants us, as readers, to understand that this relation can occur on the level of knowledge production and knowledge consumption, with discourses as the actors. The tension between an author's "intended" meaning and our "paranoiac" tramp through *Gravity's Rainbow* is ultimately, Foucault might say, the possibility of witnessing how a discourse encounters its own truth-value, and how that encounter speaks to the *a priori* condition of an "archive":

The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity…Far from being that which unifies everything that has been said in the great confused murmur of a discourse, far from being only that which ensures that we exist in the midst of preserved discourse, it is that which differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in their own duration. (129)

The very last phrase –"specifies them in their own duration" –appears of utmost importance and relevance for our study: we have noted that duration is precisely a function of mediating simultaneity. Duration is allegory's key component, descriptive of its disjunctive process; duration punctuates (*punctum*) the mythic "aura" of a modern, "mechanically reproduced" image. That Foucault defines "duration" as a function of 'differentiation' and 'specification' makes us say he would tend to agree with our thesis. As a key component of archives, duration argues in favor of Foucault's assertion that binaries positing a "content" present to "form" are the politically and artificially imposed, *a posteriori* "condition" of discourses. Might we even go so far as to say that allegory is the "condition" of "the Archive"?

By focusing on his next line of argument, we will expect that Foucault's own critical language will outline for our study that archives are a process of discursive commentary that could be akin to the literary "genre" of allegory. This focus will also give us the necessary tools for conducting a close-reading of a particular passage in *Gravity's Rainbow* that again refers to Kekule's serpent and modernity's projection of vertical transcendance over "Nature's" entropic, gravity-bound cycles.

Foucault has demonstrated that archives are to some degree axiomatic and that axiomatic systems cannot encompass or "totalize" all the collected axioms –at least not simultaneously. The "positivity" of axioms ensures that truth-value "disperses," that it is "partial"; Foucault claims that what is emergently available to us is a description of the *conditions* for this dispersal ("the historical *a priori*"). He argues that immutable laws do not give any given discourse the appearance of consistency: rather, any "consistency" derives from this network negotiating with its "totality". Further, "the archive" is a concept for arguing against the equation of a discourse with its progenitors: "these various figures and individuals do not communicate solely by the logical succession of propositions that they advance, nor by the recurrence of themes," Foucault states (126-7). It's the "positivity" of discourses which gives them duration, which marks the "gaps" between each of them, and which positions the "frontier" between the past and a "postmodern condition":

The archive cannot be described in its totality; and in its presence it is unavoidable. It emerges in fragments, regions, and levels, more fully, no doubt, and with greater sharpness, the greater the time that separates us from it…The description of the archive deploys its possibilities (and the mastery of its possibilites) on the basis of the very discourses that have just ceased to be ours; its threshold of existence is established by the discontinuity that separates us from what we can no longer say, and from that which falls outside our discursive practice (130-31)

We take as a point of intersection with these critical arguments a passage in *Gravity's Rainbow* which seems to us exemplary of allegory's relation to myth and to "the Archive". The passage concerns the actual, "historical" Friedrich August Kekule von Stradonitz –referred to simply in the passage as "Kekule" –and his dream of a serpent consuming its own tail. As mentioned, this dream was significant for his chemical research on the benezene ring; and this research influences the fictional character Dr. Lazlo Jamf, who experimented with the chemical "Imipolex-G" on infant Slothrop, and which seems to have initiated a cycle connecting Slothrop's sexual desire to the explosion of V-2 rockets, which also use Imipolex-G to "ascend".

Particularly, this passage allows Pynchon to explore the archive of dreams, as formulated by Jung's "archetypes," and how "scientific" discourses (like Pavolvian psychology) mix with the former to describe a new state of ideological control (Hollywood celebrities as redemptive, mythic archetypes, for example). The passage partly focuses on the character Leni Pokler, an "innocent" who works for the "rocket cartel": he has just been worrying over the myth describing "seas of the Moon" and what to tell his young daughter, who wants to visit those seas. His daughter has just re-united with him, and as the time between visits grows exponentially, he begins to suspect she is a planted 'counterfeit double' (he could not know with certainty otherwise, because she is in the period of her most natural transformative growth). Pokler decides to rest, and as his dreaming begins, the narrator wonders why Kekule had the famous dream, and not some other inventor, or even some "helpless" figure like Leni Pokler:

It was nice of Jung to gives us the idea of an ancestral pool in which everybody shares the same dream material. But how is it we are each visited as individuals, each by exactly and only what he needs? Doesn't that imply a switching-path of some kind? a bureaucracy? (410)

Immediately, the narrator has suggested "paranoia" as a way of reading dreams: doesn't Jung's discourse already imply its counterargument, i.e. a Pavolvian discourse (which harshly projects the brain's cortex as a "mosaic of on/off switches")? Pynchon has set the conditions for an allegorical reading: dreaming Pokler is an allegory of discursive Man and "the Archive".

Considering Jung's "archetypes" as a "totality," the narrator wonders if some kind of *political* mediation could govern that "totality". If so, we are not protected from a negotation that works in favor of a "simultaneous" totality and a manipulable "switching-path": in fact, we become greatly exposed to "simultaneity," as if "the Archive," under a "bureaucratic" control, automatically registered all the necessary discourses in one encompassing mode, bypassing "cognitive gaps" and the "differentiation" which Foucault mentioned. The narrator continues with a background on Kekule, and his work for the chemical company "IG Farben" (referred to simply as "IG"):

Here, here's the rundown on Kekule's problem. Started out to become an architect, turned out instead to be one of the Atlantes to chemistry, most of the organic wing of that useful edifice bearing down on top of his head forever –not just under the aspect of IG, but of World, assuming that's a distinction you observe, heh, heh. (411)

The temperature of our "archive fever" increases with this calculated, punctuated laugh planted at the end of an informative briefing. To imply that "IG Farben" has become "World," through its participation in a multinational business cartel, seems truly sinister. As readers, we not only feel paranoiad: we also feel a bit "preterite" after this didactic exaggeration on the part of our "elect," know-it-all narrator. We even begin to suspect that the narrator teases us when he teases those fresh employees in the 'dream bureaucracy'first reporting to work: those "new hires, the seersucker crowd come in the first day, 'Wow! Hey –that's th-th' *Tree o' Creation!* Huh? Ain't it! Je-eepers!'" (411) Lest we as readers believe Pynchon is being as unmerciful as the "World" he describes, the narrator tosses in a sarcastic and humorous allegorical signal, mentioning that "they calm down fast enough, pick up the reflexes for Intent to Gawk, you know self-criticism's an amazing technique, it shouldn't work but it does. . . ." (411)

Pynchon brings an awareness of the "historical *a priori*" to his own text: he encourages the reader to wonder what happens when a discourse is commented on by another discourse which registers only as an "absent pretext" (archetypal psychoanalysis as the absent "supplement" to organic chemistry, in this example). It's as if by this methodology we could "read" the suggestion of a 'dream bureuacracy' as more than just humorous: it signals, potentially, how we have conditioned responses to symbols, which governs our reading, and sends it off on "predestined" channels, toward "resolved" narratives (Pynchon's choice of the "Tree o' Creation" is apt, in this regard, because from its "meaning" we derive "the Book of Nature," that macro/microcosmic artifact).

The narrator has us understand how Kekule's background in architecture allowed him to "visualize" the necessary chemical connections he needed to make, and how he "went looking among the molecules of the time for the hidden shapes he knew were

there." (412) The narrator then seems to imply that it was Kekule's shift to a disjunctive relation with discourses that allowed him to conduct research at an intersection and to receive his dream (rather than "discover" what 'he knew was already there,' in a myth of the inventor-individual).At the same time, we understand that if Kekule took a different relation to his work, he cannot "see" his own "historical *a priori*," as Foucault pointed out, and so he "reads" molecules not "as real physical structures, but as 'rational formulas,' showing the relationships that went on in 'metamorphoses,' his quaint 19th-century way of saying 'chemical reactions.'" (412)

For the narrator to claim Kekule had a "quaint 19th-century way" because he used the term "metamorphoses," indicates two points: first, that "metamorphoses" seems, to a "real" (specialized) chemist, too poetic and Ovidian to apply to the discourse of chemistry, which "should" employ the term "chemical reactions" (this ensures the propagation of its own discursive truth-value); second, that a natural "World" not bound to entropy, through gravity, seems "quaint" and "19th-century" to a 20th-century V-2 rocket cartel: "metamorphoses" implies a self-transforming "World" that does not require "deliberate resurrection" through applied "reactions". The narrator in this instance "assumes" the guise of various discursive "guardians," to make his allegorical argument.

"Metamorphoses" imply the kind of disjunctions that a mythic "chemical reaction" would seek to repress. Myth would prefer instead to focus on the explosive epiphany. The narrator begins to relent, and wonders if this mythic exaggeration could be used to the favor of a small, "elect" group that represses the counterargument inherent in its own self-aggrandizing organization: "But the meanness, the cynicism with which this dream is to be used. The Serpent that announces, 'The World is a closed thing, cyclical, resonant, eternally-returning,' is to be delivered into a system whose only aim is to *violate* the Cycle." (412)

Pokler, as we've suggested, seems to rest on the "frontier" between these two views, remaining an allegorical character. His research connects him to the rocket cartel; and yet, his advanced skills during wartime could not employ him in an "uncontamined" context. Besides, his superior gives him access to his daughter, who is not in his custody. He waits, every year, for the return of the warm season, when his daughter is delivered to him and they can commence their annual travel vacation.

When we entered the dream sequence, Pokler had just been worrying over the "seas of the Moon" and the possibility that his returned daughter may, "this time," be a spy "resembling" his daughter (for Pokler, it is always "this time" and not "this time"). As the passage closes, the narrator shifts to the near past (nearer that Kekule's 1865), with Pokler and his "old prof, Lazslo Jamf". Jamf is lecturing with a line of "'we used what we found in Nature, unquestioning, shamefully perhaps –but the Serpent whispered, '*They can be changed*, and new molecules assembled from the debris of the given. . . .'". (413, emphasis in original)

We leave the dream sequence with a doubling-up –much like the doubled-up Serpent itself –with intimations of a "frontier" and a lack of resolution. But we also leave the dream sequence with insight into the novel's key lesson, that is, to accept the "cognitive gaps" that appear when we "read between the lines". *Gravity's Rainbow* encourages us to supplement archetypal symbol with the allegory that tells us we may have only *projected* the narrative's total meaning:

No: what the Serpent means is –how's this –that the six carbon atoms of benzene are in fact curled around into a closed ring, *just like that snake with its tail in its mouth*. GET IT? (413, all emphasis in original)

So what about the historical "discourse" of cinema? What can its "truth-value" tell us about *Gravity's Rainbow*? When Deborah Madsen elaborated on Maureen Quilligan's defintion of allegory by stating that, "[a]s a genre, allegory calls into question the logic of its own construction," she expressed the ethic of the "New Wave" cinema that appeared after WWII. The New Wave was embodied, arguably, by French director Jean-Luc Godard.

We mentioned that Pynchon does not describe the actual locality of Hollywood in *Gravity's Rainbow*, even though he makes numerous references to Hollywood films. In fact, it seems that *no* action occurs in America in the present tense, in *Gravity's Rainbow*. As far as America goes, our attention is directed to Slothrop's "Puritan ancestry," and the New England inhabited by those ancestors does receive some lyrical description. And yet, *Gravity's Rainbow* is praised as a "Great American Novel". By exploring Godard's cinematic situation, and his historical context, we might begin to understand how *Gravity's Rainbow* can retain such a particular literary title.

We could suggest that, as a novel, *Gravity's Rainbow* "exports America". On a similar note, we could say that Godard "exported America," too –back to America (he was influenced by Hollywood directors). We'll review Godard's influence on American independent cinema, and his relation to literary modes. This will give perspective on some of Pynchon's more experimental techniques. In the end, we'll have to go back to D.W. Griffith and early Hollywood, tracing its evolution through the WWII Hollywood that catered to servicemen. This will supply perspective on a rich backstory and how Hollywood "metamorphosed" into a strategic institution; as much as some cinema influences Pynchon's daring qualities, its less "virtuous" appearance informs his massive critique of a "cultural inheritance".

In the discourse of film criticism, some might say that "post-war cinema" designates a "new era" for cinema, which even the term "*Nouvelle* Vague" captures ("*New* Wave"). Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*, while not technically "post-war" by date of its release, serves as a point of transition –and a point of inspiration –for this "new era": as film scholar Richard Roud writes, "It was not until Orson Welles that we find an important director who was born *after* the invention of the cinema." (9)

Indeed, *Citizen Kane*, from our study's perspective, seems full of allegorical potential, with its documentary/fiction frontier dynamic (Kane represents the Hearst media dynasty); with its use of the "newsreel" genre to allegorize the mass moviegoing experience; and with its famous technique of the "in-depth shot," which gave to cinema, for the first time, a mythic simultaneity on the technical register.

Just as important, Roud argues, is the historical context: the fact that Welles' birth coincides with the rise of film libraries and film archives and "cinematheques". For Roud, the implications of this are vast, because now "the history of the cinema is no longer encompassed by the memory of the young filmmaker." (9) It was a "great director" like D.W. Griffith, Roud explains, or even John Ford, whose childhood and artistic maturation coincided with the development of mass movies.

Now, with the advent of "post-war cinema," the filmmaker becomes as much as of a "critic" and an "archivist" as a director, argues Roud. The director has access to a great, levianthanic body of work, which becomes manifest materially through the

cinematheques or film library/archive. "Cinema" becomes a historical discourse; more, it can inter-connect with other historical discourses, such as literature. As a result, the post-war New Wave director may *supplement* his cinematic expression with critical essays and reviews, adding yet another literary dimension to his already "referential" and "allusive" films.

The New Wave is often referred to in the same discourse as the "*auteur*" approach to cinema, under which a director puts his "signature" on his film, and thus creates a distinct body of work, much like an author. Film critics that emerged during this era were making grand claims, such as Andre Bazin in his *What Is Cinema?*, when he says that the director was finally becoming "the equal of the novelist"; and we can note that before directing, Godard was primarily a critic, appearing in the famous *Cahiers du cinema*, along with other early New Wave directors like Francois Truffaut. (40)

Roud wonders if this "new" relation to cinema, and the figure of the *auteur*, makes an "attempt at an indexing system, an attempt to bring some order to the enormous corpus of films". (9)We might describe this "attempt" –this "indexing system" –as the archival relation between allegory and "the myth of immachination" (we previousy discussed this myth with reference to *Gravity's Rainbow*). The "allusive" and "referential" quality of Godard's films will involve him in researching, collecting, "reproducing," and commenting on images. To us, this methodology does not seem wholly dissimilar from Pynchon's, in *Gravity's Rainbow*.

Before discussing Godard's relation to Pynchon in-depth, we should probably consider how the technique of collecting, reproducing, and commenting on images influenced Godard's consumption of films. Ultimately, we will consider this technique from the perspective of Roud's "indexing system"; we expect this approach will give us insight into the way the *auteur*'s technique can "copy" an image, even if that image has no "original".

Take Godard's critical notes from 1959, for example. Truffaut, Resnais, Bresson, and Agnes Varda all released important "New Wave" films that year. Godard's seminal New Wave film, *Breathless*, was to be filmed during August and September of that year. The critical notes were made during January through July, and reveal the germ of Godard's soon-to-become famous techniques, such as the "jump cut" (the literary equivalent of the "jump cut" is Pynchon's sudden and unapologetic shift of narrative attention).

In his 1959 notes, Godard focuses on what he calls a "step forward" for the "superWestern," in Anthony Mann's *Man of the West* (Andre Bazin was responsible for that term, when he labeled *High Noon* and *Shane* as "superWesterns," by the way). Specifically, Godard was affected by the film's "extreme simplification" and "the systematically more and more linear dramatic construction". (117) How exactly this film represents a "step forward," Godard explains through a comparison with D.W. Griffith: "Just as the director of *Birth of a Nation* gave one the impression that he was inventing the cinema with every shot, each shot of *Man of the West* gives one the impression that Anthony Mann is reinventing the Western." (117) Godard defines re-invention as a director who both "innovates and copies, criticizes and creates. *Man of the West*, in short, is both course and discourse". (117)

Godard also explains what he means by "step forward" through comparison with another major "pre-war" director of great influence to him, John Ford. He compared

Ford's and Mann's approach to the *mise en scene*, and discerned an element in Mann's film which he will use in *Breathless*: "So the *mise en scene* of *Man of the West* will consist…of discovering and defining *at the same time*". (119, emphasis in original) Godard, contrasting Ford's "plastic" approach, says that Mann's technique evokes a "*vegetal* beauty". This unusual adjective seems particularly appropriate for another reason: the book of his critical notes juxtaposes still shots from *Man of the West* and the film Godard made after *Breathless*, titled *Band of Outsiders*. In this context, we can immediately understand how the *auteur* works with an "indexing system," by "copying" and "referencing" an image which has no "original". It's as if Godard allegorically "doubles" an antecedent image, while that "original" remains "absent".

Specifically, the two juxtaposed images are: a still-shot from Mann's *Man of the West*, capturing a kind of "cowboy" outlaw at the moment of being felled in a duel: pistol raised, arched backwards, and surrounded by a "barren" landscape. On the opposite page, we see a still-shot from Godard's *Band of Outsiders*. The lead-in to this image has been a scene in which two young "outsiders" discuss their shared interest in a girl, and as they walk back to their car, one announces, in a news reporter tone, the location and date on which Billy the Kid lost a duel. Suddenly, the pair re-enact the duel, and "Billy the Kid" re-enacts his loss with humorous hyperbole. The still-shot has captured Godard's actor *in the same pose as Mann's actor* –arched backwards, in a "barren" landscape of Parisian suburbs, with his "pistol" (curled hand) pointed to the sky. (118-19)

It is a taste of Godard's talent that he uses humor when representing his "anxiety of influence," as literary critic Harold Bloom might say. Obviously, Godard has done his archival research, and "reproduced" an image, allusively, in his own film; further, he has commented on this process, by way of also commenting on the exaggerated –and "responsible" –use of mythic archetypes (Hollywood's "cowboy" versus Mann's "cowboy"). Godard was developing an "allegory of myth" through a kind of "collage" technique, and we find that the non-linearity of *Gravity's Rainbow* relies upon a similar "collage" technique.

To defend our claim that "allegorical commentary" pervades Godard's films, we could recall an essay by Peter Wollen titled "Godard and Counter Cinema: *Vent D'Est*," which describes that "Godard, like Eisenstein before him, is more concerned with 'image-building' as a kind of *pictography*". For Wollen, an archival pictography functions by a "genuine iconic code" which "can only take place if it is glossed and commented upon in the process of construction." (421) When Mann's film becomes "iconic" for Godard, it must also become part of an allegorical proliferation of signs: in other words, the felled duellist appears as a mythical, archetypal symbol, but Godard allegorizes the same duellist as a copy of a copy, a myth with no "original" or "origin" to return to. This, of course, does not mean that Godard is antagonistic to "the American frontier," just as Pynchon is not: they both are allegorical and archival in their approach.

We have mentioned that "mechanical reproduction" raised concerns for Benjamin because it "liquidated" tradition; what was more concerning, he felt, was the amplification of its effect through mass movies, which can manipulate collective desire with mythic archetypes.Godard seems sympathetic to this attitude, when he deliberately reproduces certain archetypes, and comments on how those symbols, or "icons," have no "original," and are thus negotiable in their meaning. It seems that the "positivity" of New

Wave cinema relies on its use of "mechanical reproduction" in a totally different way from Hollywood cinema.

If Godard proceeds to expose the influence of "mechanical reproduction" on his own films, he does so in order to comment on modern American myths –the myth of a return to origins, the myth of re-writing History, the myth of authenticity. Even the "great" Western filmmaker John Ford, an influence for Godard, tried to expose the transcendent values of America as problematic: his films can express an uncertainty about the myth of "bringing the garden out of the wilderness".

But Ford did not develop a concern with the consumer culture that emerged after the war, as Godard did. Of course, as Roud suggested, this is due in part to the time of Godard's birth. In *Breathless*, it is the interview, media technology, and contemporary iconography (movie posters) that condition the camera's "archive fever". This may have been influenced by Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* –after all, Godard had requested Barthes to appear in *Alphaville*; and the complementary director to Godard, Francois Truffaut, who sketched the outline for *Breathless*, was rumored to have been greatly influenced by *Mythologies*. In this small text, Barthes suggested that the post-war consumer society projected an immaculate "Nature" that lacked any "historicity": ads promised as much. Even the city of Paris became part of this "natural" landscape, a "white metropolis" versus a war-rocked urban entity with a history.

From one perspective, we could argue that *Breathless* addresses *Mythologies* by allowing *the city* to play a character; similarly, Pynchon follows suit by allowing the "Raketen-Stadt" serve as a character (much to Enzian's chagrin, we noted). If Pynchon made this move in order to comment on the political mythologization of the rocket by both Enzian and the larger "rocket cartel," we could say that Godard was allegorizing his own historical milieu to comment on Hollywood archetypes: witness the protagonist in *Breathless* and his obsession with Humphrey Bogart (who, for all that, was a kind of subversive, "existential" archetype in *Casablanca*).

Whether this idea of "city as character" influenced the other techniques of *Breathless* is difficult to say with certainty. We also cannot say with certainy whether this idea influenced Pynchon's focus on a global "Raketen-Stadt," versus an American locale, in order to argue that initially "neutral" America had, under WWII, "exported itself" (its values, its traditions, etc.) We know that the cameraman for *Breathless*, Raoul Coutard, had recently served as a documentary cameraman in Indochina for the French army's information service. Godard realized the potential that such experiences could have on the style of a fictional film. (Brown, 32 and 117) Thus, throughout, Coutard uses a hand-held newsreel camera; despite this, Godard used minimal added lighting, and even filmed the night scenes using 35mm still photography film, which meant that the material reels used were not the standard 400 feet but a mere *45 feet* –allowing for just 30 seconds of filming for each spool, before having to re-load again.

Godard also persuaded his producer to give the film a 'special bath' at the developing lab, in order to increase its sensitivity to light; his reasoning was to take the film stock to the point of exhaustion, deconstructing the material component of "mechanical reproduction" –literally, as he put it, making the film seem "breathless". (Brown, 161) In addition, during days of filming, Godard kept the technical crew and script supervisor away (a script supervisor would note how many takes per scene, what takes to print, etc.) By allowing the characters to comment on their own discursive

conditions, "facts" such as the "actual" player's vacation, or his pay for the film, irrupted into the dialogue. The effect is not entirely dissimilar to the "New Turkic Alphabet" scene in *Gravity's Rainbow*, when described by Quilligan, who was shocked at discovering, in the stacks, that the most 'wildly improbable' items were, in fact, *not* fictional.

It is, perhaps, the "jump cut" that was Godard's most famous technique in *Breathless*. In editing the film to a length more appropriate to a mass market, Godard said he decided to keep what he felt was most vigorous –"regardless of dramatic import". The *punctum*, so to speak, punctuates the mythic *studium* of an outlaw archetype in *Breathless* to such a degree that we, as viewers, recognize the ways in which the cinematic discourse can exaggerate myth. Godard uses this technqiue most humorously with "jump cuts" to the protagonist mimicking the pensiveness of Humphrey Bogart, at one point in front of a movie poster of Bogart.

Likewise, Pynchon makes use of "jump cuts" during the quest narrative of Tyrone Slothrop. Consider, for example, when Slothrop, on orders to leave London and relocate to France, where he will stay with other officers at Hermann Goering's casino. Slothrop relaxes on the beach with his "partners" (potential defectors), only to suddenly notice that a giant octopus has crawled on shore, in an attempt to steal an "innocent" bystander (we soon learn that *she*, too, is part of "Their" operation). Pynchon obviously references such films as *King Kong* and other Grade-B duds in this process (which are based on an even more familiar and antecedent cinematic myth of the "virgin theft," as seen in cowboys-'n-Indians Westerns).

Overall, by his technique of literary "jump cuts," Pynchon allegorizes the symbolic archetypes that are used by Hollywood cinema. As with *Breathless*, the consumer of *Gravity's Rainbow* is encouraged to approach the narrative "jump-cuts" across "genres" and discourses as a commentary on the construction/authorization of certain myths. Later, we'll do a close reading of 'the octopus scene' in *Gravity's Rainbow*.

"Doubling," "parody," and "mimicry" are important techniques shared by Godard and Pynchon, according to Scott Simmon, in his essay, "Beyond the Theater of War: *Gravity's Rainbow* as Film": take, for example, 'the octopus scene' and the scene in *Breathless* of Belmondo earnestly mimicking in front of a Bogart movie poster. For Simmon, New Wave cinema has a defining feature, "in which characterization and *mise-en-scene* refer us continually to other films." (125)

Similar to Roud's earlier comment about an "attempt at an indexing system," this feature unfolds as a technique of collecting, reproducing, and commenting on an inherited archive of (cinematic) images. Simmon notes, like Andre Bazin and Walter Benjamin before him, that the implications of this critical technique ultimately refer us to the organization of a mass culture through the political employment of archetypes.

The term used from Madsen's study, instead of "myth," was "deliberate ressurection," and at any rate, both terms convey the essential message from *Gravity's Rainbow* that WWII was about seeking an authorized origin ("superior race") and re-writing History (multinational business becomes the seat of politics): war itself was only a distraction from the these "real" developments of WWII, an entire re-organization of the *civilian*, i.e. "Preterite," population on the basis of certain fantasies about destiny. Godard, too, is keenly aware of this process: "In the opening shot of Godard's *Contempt*

a camera tracks toward us until a quote from Andre Bazin is flashed on the screen: 'The cinema gives us a substitute world which fits our desires,'" Simmon points out. "One way of seeing that intimidating camera eye is as Godard's suggestion that we in the audience also live so as to fantasize that substitute world of desires." (136)

We cannot decisively prove that Godard was an influence for Pynchon. We do know that, historically, Godard was an influence on one of the "progenitors" of American "independent" cinema, John Cassavetes, who at least shares some of the countercultural *ethos* that Pynchon occassionally reveals. Thus, we might say: American independent cinema "imported America," from France –just as *Gravity's Rainbow* "imports America" from a Hollywood that mythologized America *for the world* (King Kong, after all, ascending the Empire State Building is more of a *global* icon than a specifically *American* icon). Soon, when we review the USO tours of Bob Hope, we'll reinforce this argument by understanding that WWII "Hollywood" became as much a global "establishment" as a business located in the Western United States.

Cassavetes, we'll note, ran the Variety Arts workshop, teaching his students according to the "improvisational" technique. He was not a director, and had no experience as one –he had only appeared in feature films and on TV. His seminal film for "independent" American cinema, *Shadows*, started as a workshop sketch about racial tension, involving a sister and her two musician brothers (a singer and a jazz trumpeter). To use Cassavetes' somewhat uncomfortable phrase, the film was about the difficulties encountered by the girl, who "passes for white". He mentioned to his students that 'it would make a great movie'. (32-3, Carney)

During an appearance by Cassavetes on Jean Shepherd's Night People, an early morning radio show, Cassavetes mentioned to Shepherd his idea for the movie. Provoked by Shepherd's banter on how he could fund such a project, Cassavetes replied that the public might fund it, if they wanted to see such a radical new film. Shepherd announced the address of the Variety Arts workshop, and Cassavetes, as soon as the next day, was receiving envelopes containing one to two dollars. (29, Carney)

Inspired like Godard to do away with a script supervisor, Cassavetes took an even further step toward "independent" status by using only a hand-held microphone; neither did he secure filming permits, giving to certain scenes a kind of "guerilla" style. Most importantly, Cassavetes, in *Shadows*, shares with Godard the technique of the "jump cut". The style of *Shadows* was so raw and full of "frontier originality," that even "cultured" viewers scoffed. It would be an understatement to say that Cassavete's technqiue in *Shadows* was so dogged and unaplogetic that the film was entirely un-marketable to a mass culture hungry for the myth of the "true" Hollywood star. (Carney, 51)And yet, it is now considered high-karat American film. Pynchon might know something about that, too.

How did we get to the desire for "true" Hollywood stars, from a sequence of images involving Leland Stanford's galloping horse? Muybridge's experiment was about combining allegory and myth, creating a hinge between them: to win the argument of all the hooves of the horse being off the ground *simultaneously*, Muybridge had to supplement his myth of sequential instantaneous photography with reconstructed motion, i.e. *duration*. But it seems Hollywood cinema wants to remain on the level of myth only. As mentioned, one of the major messages of *Gravity's Rainbow* is that war itself during

WWII was peripheral to the "real" process of re-organizing a mass culture on the basis of fantastic images.

With a small amount of research, we realize that the "Hollywood star" was intimately connected with Hollywood's "origins" –though not yet connected with a war narrative in "real time," with celebrities making publicity moves to greet servicemen.Of the "great directors" associated with early Hollywood, we have decided that D.W. Griffith is the most relevant to our study because of his interest in literary narrative, and because of his interest in the particular locale of Hollywood. Earlier, we came to understand that D.W. Griffith defined cinema's *syntax*, producing fades, crosscuts, close-ups, and so on. By returning to Griffith we can explore the "origin" of Hollywood, and how that business evolves during WWII; we can use this research to understand Pynchon's argument about mass culture and film.

We'll use two important texts for historical background, both of which are part of an esteemed multi-volume series on California history: Kevin Starr's *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* and *Embattled Dreams: California in War and Peace, 1940 – 1950*. We begin with the former, and will focus particularly on the chapter titled, "Stories and Dreams: The Movies Come to Southern California".

Starr describes the various "soujourns" that young Kentuckian –and "Shakesperean" –Griffith makes to Southern California around the first decade of the twentieth-century. The historical context is a region suffused with "the mission myth" about an "Old California" ("missions" were missionary buildings). The uncanny effect of modernization on this myth is that it *reverses* the "original" goal, placing the material referent under erasure in the process: the "pastoral" becomes "industrial". (85)

Starr traces this "mission myth" to the popular novel *Ramona*, by Helen Hunt Jackson, released near the turn of the twentieth-century – 1884 to be exact. Starr also recognizes that the primary trope of *Ramona* is the symbol, which gives to the mythic narrative a romantic design, and this makes for a work that affects an ideational register, beyond the literate community that put their hands on the material novel: "No other act of symbolic expression affected the imagination of nineteenth-century Southern California so forcibly," Starr claims. "This tale of star-crossed Indian lovers and Spanish ranch life as it lingered on into the 1870s cast a spell on Southern Californians. They appropriated the characters, mood, and plot of *Ramona* as the basis of a public myth which conferred romance upon a new American region." (55)

A particular individual who appropriated this narrative for his own life, Starr points out, was Charles Fletcher Lummis. In the late-1880s, Los Angeles was suffering economically, in a post-boom condition. The need to align future development with a greater destiny made the region ripe for romantic myth, and for individuals who could provide it with such. And so Starr points us to Lummis, who in mythic fashion, was world-historical, both individual and part of a larger trend: "Lummis was one of thousands of health-seekers pouring into Southern California in the mid-1880s. While serving as editor of the *Scioto Gazette* in Chillicothe, Ohio, Lummis had come down with malaria. It left him weakened. Desperate to regain his strength, Lummis conceived of the idea of walking overland to Los Angeles." (75) Lummis had contacted the *Los Angeles Times* before leaving, and his efforts earned him a post as city editor.

Lummis threw himself into his new work, and, Starr tells us, by 1887, two years after his arrival to the American West, he had to retreat to San Mateo, New Mexico, to a

ranch owned by Don Manuel Antonio Chaves, a "borderland patriarch". Lummis had compromised his health through overwork. (81-2) Over his three-year recovery, Lummis altered "the mission myth" that was adopted by the elite, from the *Ramona* narrative. The elite journalists associated with the *Los Angeles Times* had promoted an *image* for the region, an image supporting, according to Starr, "boosterism and oligarchy. The mission myth was the keystone of this booster ideology." (76) Ultimately, the myth expressed a re-unified 'wholeness'; Starr describes its promise as "a society that mediated between American efficiency and Latin *dolce far niente*, a society having time for both productivity and leisure". (77)

Lummis's convalesence on a frontier ranch gave him the inspiration to cultivate a new dimension of "the mission myth": re-unify with the absent *historical* past, develop a deeper vision beyond reveling in the"Mediterranean topography". Another impetus for this, Starr argues, may have been Lummis's education at Harvard under Charles Eliot Norton, who professed "the ability of art…to shape and sustain emerging social patterns and institutions through moral uplift…Art, if you will, was the genetic code of history." (81) Indeed, this background may have made Lummis into a kind of amateur archivist: he was responsible for founding the city librarianship of Los Angeles and the Southwest Museum; he would, according to Starr, "pionner the use of photography in the service of cultural anthropology," advocate for Indian rights, make anthropological field recordings "on an old Edison wax cylinder machine," and conduct archealogical research in the field. (84-5)

One of Lummis's most important contributions, Starr argues, was his study titled *The Spanish Pioneers*, released in 1893, and which describes "[t]the austerity of Spanish frontier civilization –its internalization of complex ideals, together with its spareness of external detail". (82) A fascination with an ideational/material hinge manifested in Lummis's habitual actions, as when "[h]e rolled his own cigarettes, lighting them with a flint and a rag treated with gunpowder, as did the Spanish vaqueros of old." (84) Lummis's realizations enjoyed wider circulation through the *Land of Sunshine/Out West*, originally a news-based publication "subsidized by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce":

It was sent into the Midwest and the East as promotional literature, and no doubt helped to stimulate migration into the Southland. In advertising terms, Lummis was giving Southern California an image, a brand name, to promote sales…In more ways than one, Lummis's life and point of view were shot through with paradox. His Spanish myth, for instance, was incipiently pastoral; it celebrated a simple, feudal society. Yet as a promotional device, the Spanish myth fostered the opposite: mass society and industrialization. (Starr, 85)

Though Lummis's "brand" was "rugged frontier" versus the "pastel" of *Ramona*, it was still an industrial brand, and this modernization of myth is what we typically refer to as "the Sunbelt theory," Starr claims: "a shift of social, cultural, and economic vigor of the Atlantic East…Los Angeles, he [Lummis] exulted, would become the capital city of this emerging American empire." (83)

Hollywood's "embryo," in Starr's account, was cultivated from this myth and its itinerant dynamic. Griffith's own troupe had been "bohemian" and "improvisational" in its beginnings. (291) Actress Mary Pickford was part of Griffith's 'chosen ones,' and Starr claims that "[t]hanks in large part to Douglas [Fairbanks] and Mary, the Hollywood movie star –which was to say, the Hollywood movie star as representative Southern

Californian –became the representative mid-American." (caption, opposite 187) The myth that nurtured the "embryo" of early Hollywood –Griffith had even produced an adaptation of *Ramona* –was experiencing an erasure of its material referent: the missions that evoked an "Old California" were replaced by the "mission-style bungalow" inhabited by "the Hollywood movie star". The re-organization of mass desire through mass fantasy had begun.

Starr highlights that *Thread of Destiny* was Griffith's "first all-California film" (production and editing), which starred Mary Pickford in "Old California". In fact, this movie was followed by another titled "*In Old California*, [filmed] in the hills bordering Hollywood". (292) For our study, Griffith's use of existing architecture during *Thread of Destiny* is significant; he would, of course, serve as director on one of the most expensive and lavish sets in movie history, for *Intolerance*. In *Thread of Destiny*, Griffith continued his work of developing movies as a "story," employing the cinematic "syntax" he was busy defining.

The surface projection of a mission scene during this film places the material referent under erasure, as it mythologizes the mission through "mechanical reproduction," which effectively "liquidates" a heritage of traditional value. The mission's "aura" recedes into a mythological, romantic "distance". Starr, too, finds that Griffith's decision is somewhat complicated:

From the point of view of Southern California's development during this period, Griffith's use of an eighteenth-century mission reengergized by the early twentieth-century mission myth to explore and demonstrate the possibilities of a new art medium is in itself symbolic…That film, being developed by Griffith into a medium capable of appealing so directly to dream life…linked Southern California and film together at a common point of symbolic beginning. (292)

True to the original "frontier," a *location* could become the star.

In the essay "'Making the Unreel Reel: Film in *Gravity's Rainbow*," David Cowart does point out that Pynchon derives as much influence from Griffith's development of a cinematic "syntax" as he does from what Griffith's Hollywood meant for mass culture. Particularly, Pynchon uses parody, that high literary mode of homage (which would have pleased the would-be writer D.W., it seems) to organize the concluding passages of his "Great American Novel"

Cowart tells us, supplying quotes from Griffith's wife, even, that Griffith's use of "crosscutting" between two simultaneously occurring events (as in *Intolerance*) was so popular that the notion of a Griffith film with a conclusion that did not present 'a famous Griffith chase scene' became inconceivable. (58) Cowart deftly points out that "Pynchon knows the convention and makes 'Chase Music' the title of a false climax that parodies it". (58)

As insightful as Cowart's observation is, it does not begin to explain Hollywood's evolution as a mass fantasy industry, and its re-organization of a mass culture through turning foreign place into the star. Neither does it explain how this 'geo-celebrity' of WWII Hollywood films influences Pynchon to such a degree that his "Great American Novel" hardly takes place on American soil. To that end, we propose a closer reading of 'the octopus scene,' pages 186-189, in Part 2 of *Gravity's Rainbow*. The scene opens as Slothrop and his fellow "officers" (suspected informants) relax on a beach in France, near their casino accomodations. In mythic fashion, Slothrop fights a giant octopus. A critique

of the kind we propose has not been previously applied to this scene, in studies of *Gravity's Rainbow*.

Through the paranoiac narration that earlier was presented to the reader, we realize that the entire scene is "Their" production, a "test" of Slothrop with cinematic proportions. What the reader *also* realizes in this mirroring of *King Kong* is that Hollywood has done the same with mass fantasy, making of "war cinema" a thin production that organizes a larger "test" of mass culture. (By the way, the epigraph on the page announcing Part 2 is a comment made to Fay Wray, the actress who played King Kong's victim: "You will have the tallest, darkest leading man in Hollywood". Cue canned laughter.) With allegory and allusion, Pynchon again deconstructs the modernized myth of re-writing history and the manipulation of archetypes. We will corroborate this argument with historical background supplied by Starr's *Embattled Dreams*, particularly the chapter titled "1945 * Hollywood Canteen".

As mentioned, 'the octopus scene' begins with Slothrop, his fellow officers (whom he suspects as informants for "Them"), and a female group of French dancers lounging on the beach: "Breakfast is wine, bread, smiling, sun diffracting through the fine gratings of long dancers' hair, swung, flipped, never still, a dazzle of violet, sorrel, saffron, emerald". (185) A pleasant enough scene, with the typical undercurrents of unsettling suspicion.It is officer Teddy Bloat, the photographer and typical American male, who notices a feminine figure in the distance, and points her out to Lieutenant Slothrop.

The 'figure in the distance' attractively stands like Venus, and carries a classical "aura" (the sub-reference is to a famous classical painting of Venus). But this "virgin" figure is on the verge of becoming captured by some malicious, "foreign" agent, the narrator tells us:

Well. . .she must have come out of the sea... She's looking at Slothrop, all right. He smiles, sort of waves. She only continues to stand, the breeze pushing at her sleeves. He turns back to draw the cork from a wine bottle, and its pop arrives as a grace note for a scream from one of the dancers. Tantivy's already halfway to his feet, Bloat gaping out in the girl's direction, the danseuses snapshot in defense reflexes, hair flying, frocks twisted, thighs flashing – (186)

This familiar cinematic build-up leads to an even more familiar dramatic fight scene. But Pynchon critiques the *King Kong* "genre" with an absurd mix of slapstick (Slothrop unleashes profanities while using the wine bottle as an ineffective weapon) and high literary values (Pynchon weaves in such descriptions as "cloth furrowing in tangents to her terror"). This mixed "positivity," to use Foucault's term, allows Pynchon to supplement the Hollywood myth with an allegorical critique: as an obvious *deus ex machina*, Bloat 'miraculously' discovers a crab and 'suddenly' realizes that the octopus is merely "hungry". Along with Slothrop, we begin to wonder how much of this scene is "real".

We as readers understand, much like the earlier political drawing of Standard Oil Co., that the multi-tentacled creature represents Hollywood –or more precisely, a multi-national politico-business environment, of which Hollywood is merely one tentacle. We know this because Pynchon humorously contrasts the creature's malicious agency and formidable strength with a kind of infantile, Pavlovian reaction in the face of simple satisfaction, i.e. the tiny crab: "Slothrop quickly snatches up the crab again, dangling it so

the octopus can see, and begins to dance the creature away, down the beach, drool streaming from its beak, eyes held by the crab." (187) The terrifying strength of "Their" system is also known through its impotence and dependency on causal logic, Pynchon argues. Slothrop only continues participate in the situation because he is a *tragic* character, not a mythic or romantic individual: he has been conscripted into an undecidable situation, much like we readers have been conscripted into an undecidable narrative situation ("allegory).

Of course, as expected, the scene then moves to the recovering "victim" (another spy for "Them") prostrate on the sand and surrounded by the observers of the heroic victory. Now that dialogue, versus action, can occupy the center, Pynchon takes the opportunity to explore just what is "American" about cinematic scenes of American heroism conducted on foreign shores. He may wonder if such mythic "success" is not actually a modern imperialism. If so, it means that his approach to a "Great American Novel," like *Moby-Dick*, can only take place from the imperial frontier, and that the image of "America" that develops is both critical and rhapsodic.

Slothrop hears the "victim" speak, and notices she is "not German" even though "the accent is Teutonic" –she replies that she is "Dutch," and that she does not "look like a crab," which first elicits flirtation from Bloat, typical American male, followed by some paranoia from Slothrop:

'I guess not. You're a swell-looking young lady.' In the background, delighted Bloat nudges Tantivty. That recklessness transatlantic. Slothrop takes her wrist, finds no problem now reading that ID bracelet. Sez KATJE BORGESIUS. He can feel her pulse booming. Does she know him from someplace?...Oh, that was no 'found' crab, Ace –no random octopus or girl, uh-uh. Structure and detail come later, but the conniving around him he feels instantly, in his heart. (188)

We wouldn't be making an entirely unwarranted comparison with this scene if we suggested the United Service Organization (USO) production of Bob Hope and the attractive Francis Langford, who entertained combat troops. Starr discusses the USO tours in "1945 * Hollywood Canteen," from his book *Embattled Dreams*; he points out certain comments made by Hope to the audiences, like how a "pair of Hollywood legs" helped the troops win in Italy.

Appropriate to our discussion, Hope had released in 1944 a publication titled *I Never Left Home*, which, according to Starr, "comes closest to probing the inner dynamics of Hope's role as avatar *par excellence* of Hollywood as tribune of the people, endowed with a touch of healing royalty: of an entertainment industry that saw itself as a central event of a global conflict that, from Hollywood and Hope's perspective, sometimes seemed to be brokered by and on behalf of celebrity culture." (175)

According to Hope's accounts of his tours in the publication, sometimes the joke was on him, and the paranoiac atmosphere this induced is relevant to the dynamics of 'the octopus scene' that Pynchon has designed. "He is proud of his ability to hold his own," Starr says of Hope in *I Never Left Home*. Then Starr wonders: "[B]ut is there not also in these encounters as well as in his fear a knowledge on Hope's part that he is playing a dangerous game, gagging for men in danger of their lives?" (177) This feverish anxiety over a "return of the repressed" had its "uncanny" irruption when, in Tunisia, someone announced what Hope feared most: someone shouted out to him, wondering why he wasn't "in uniform". (177)

In instances such as these, Hope is exactly the kind of pathetically helpless individual Pynchon likes to characterize (Slothrop, for example), not out of cynicism or pessimism, but because those are the individuals that become "public" for us during that historical period. As with Slothrop, it can be hard to decide if Hope is a pitiful dupe or just too in awe of power to simply walk away from "Their" potential influence of his quest. It's a figure like Darryl F. Zanucks (Twentieth Century –Fox) who is overtly part of "Their" cartel, as Starr tells us: "In the war, film moguls saw the opportunity –and Darryl F. Zanuck spoke openly of this wish –for the entertainment industry to become a fixed and proper part of the national establishment, something akin to Wall Street, the Ivy League, the State Department, the Senate, even the White House." (159) Hollywood was "on par with civilian government" and "mobilized" for American victory in WWII. USO tours were just one part of this mobilization.

Indeed, Bob Hope on tour seems to share Lieutenant Slothrop's situation: the latter becomes stationed at Hermann Goering's casino, feeling that "They" are responsible for what he experiences abroad, yet still capable (at this point in the narrative) of subverting "Their" influence through allegorical understanding. The tension of Slothrop's quest reaches it climax, we have discussed, during his time in "the Zone," a kind of global frontier represented by war-torn Europe. Hope, it seems, never develops the opportunity for allegorical understanding, as Starr narrates his tours abroad:

Touring the combat zones with his well-crafted repertoire of gags…Hope created the genre [Marlene] Dietrich [his touring partner] would help perfect: the presence of Hollywood on the front as the palpable embodiment of home and civilian life, past and future…This was the central message…but the USO tours, the Bob Hope tours above all, also communicated a more subliminal message: the war was important because Hollywood was there, helping keep it a celebrity event in which non-celebrities were doing most of the dying. (172)

Pynchon arranages a critique similar to Starr's in this instance, by describing an "Elect" and a "Preterite," and also by describing "paranoia" as a "condition" that immediately grips the observer of such a process. We have attempted to suggest that Pynchon's use of allegory is his signal to readers that the archetypal symbol restricts the reader to an unproductive paranoiac mode. With the historical account supplied by Starr, we might argue that Pynchon suggests a "Great American Novel" about WWII need not concern itself with American soil, in the present tense at least, because "America" during WWII registers itself on a "global" frontier that is only tenously connected to a geographical referent. "Hollywood" becomes the war front (using celebrity as amnesia, to put the "Zone" under erasure).

That the USO tours describe a subliminal paranoiac layering of Hollywood productions leads us to suggest that Pynchon does not merely parody the early monster blockbusters or even the "virgin theft" narratives of Westerns: he defines Hollywood's organizing efforts as based on the position of a "Preterite" mass culture, especially when servicemen and servicewomen constituted a significant portion of that mass. Starr's description of the "Hollywood Canteen," and the later movie production under that title, emphasizes that, yes, Hollywood was marketing itself to become part of "the American establishment".

The publicity campaign called the "Hollywood Canteen" was intended to counteract the fact that many Americans were becoming, in Starr's term, "increasingly

sophisticated” about who actually benefitted from war, because many were part of the large work force that sustained a “war machine”. At the same time, many “stars” did not enlist, or were “directly commissioned” versus serving in the ranks, which did not escape notice. Further, Hollywood was worrying that their best bet would no longer work: producing the “propaganda” of intensely pro-war (and racist, as in anti-Japanese) films. Hollywood had to re-organize how it made profits. (162-70)

   Bette Davis, and John Garfield, proposed a solution: the “Hollywood Canteen,” near Sunset Boulevard, a 24/7 operation that would provide servicemen with entertainment and even sandwiches prepared by Mrs. John Ford and served by other celebrities. A non-profit organization, the Hollywood Canteen had to organize fundraising events, such as selling to tickets to celebrities for seats in front of the Hollywood Canteen: “sitting in the bleachers,” Starr notes, “they watched three thousand servicemen enter the Canteen on opening night”. (166-8) It seemed this publicity move couldn’t fail: it was, pure and simple, a reversal of roles.

   Starr explains how the subliminal message was that the servicemen should feel “lucky” to encounter the Hollywood celebrities, and so Hollywood had discovered a new strategy for remaining profitable: become part of the American establishment, by drawing the people to it in “real time”. (168) Two years after the initial opening of the Hollywood Canteen, the release of the film *Hollywood Canteen* (based on the actual organization) and the celebrities played themselves. However, the crude, mythic style of the film did not impress audiences. In fact, servicemen reacted strongly to *Hollywood Canteen*. As Starr points out, it might be surprising if they didn’t, because Hollywood had gotten lazy with self-satisfaction:

What was disquieting about all this, beyond the crass self-promotion, was the attitude shown toward servicemen in the picture…Even more offensive, although not mentioned by [*Los Angeles Times* critic] Schallert, was the scene in which a serviceman has to be convinced by Hedy Lamarr that she is the real Hedy Lamarr: the serviceman, a slow-talking country boy, finally cannot believe his luck…*Hollywood Canteen* was not a film, even a sappy film, about how brave these young men were as they headed into harm’s way. *Hollywood Canteen* was, rather, a celebration of how good Hollywood was to be on hand personally to send them off. (178-9)

It does not seem so unusual for Pynchon to write the “Great American Novel” about WWII, and hardly, if at all, cover the American landscape in the present tense, in light of these historical facts. We realize that, even for Hollywood, the America of WWII was always-already elsewhere, foreign, ever the frontier: America was the diaspora of servicemen who, like Slothrop, were sent off to the “Zone” with a celebrity smile, a handshake, a sandwich, and a dose of paranoia about the elaborate “bon voyage”.

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