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**AUTHOR AS ETHNOGRAPHER: THE MERGING OF GENRES
IN RAYMOND CARVER'S AND THOMAS PYNCHON'S TEXTS**

**A
THESIS**

**Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks**

**in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

**By
Megan D. Snyder, B.A., M.A.**

Fairbanks, Alaska

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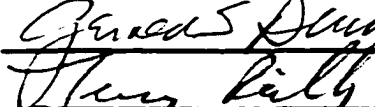
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ABSTRACT

Several of Raymond Carver's short stories and two of Thomas Pynchon's novels are analyzed for their ability to function as ethnography, through which they reveal the dominant and dominated codes in American culture. These texts were approached from an interdisciplinary stance, using theories and concepts from literary criticism, cultural anthropology, and sociology in order to interpret them with a greater degree of accuracy; because the text is treated as an ethnographic representation of a culture, it is possible to turn to it as the sole illustration of cultural elements and, in doing so, to be more open to addressing themes that the text explicates, rather than approaching it with a preconceived agenda of what necessarily constructs American culture. By focusing in this manner on Carver's and Pynchon's texts as accounts of what is to be "American," it is possible to remain closer to what the texts portray and to avoid misreadings as well as misinterpretations of culture. Through these authors' representations of characters who defy mainstream cultural codes, the reader encounters in these authors' works what mainstream America finds most unsettling: characters who are not only alienated, but also aware of their status as outsiders and, more frequently than not, choose to embrace deviance in their self-definitions. Carver and Pynchon, when taken together, afford the reader with a vision of our culture that explores the dissociation and alienation that cuts through our society regardless of class or background. In their varying presentations of reality, they offer complementary views of distinct American subcultures that feature characters who are isolated and who generally denounce mainstream ideals. Conformist society is merely hinted at within the texts; its presence appears through its absence, characters' recognition of what they are denying, and what characters are denied. Both authors feature characters who identify aberrant behavior, for which rule-breaking individuals are labeled. Characters, once labeled, adopt secondary deviance and instigate a deviant career, from which the authors rarely permit a reprieve. The effect of labeling is the creation of a schism in the social fabric of American culture, which is characterized by the societal exclusion of individuals who do not uphold the dominant beliefs. American culture is also characterized by assimilation; as characters in Carver's and Pynchon's texts resist this process, they pose a threat to the social order, which is the prime factor in their labeling.

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CHAPTER ONE: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURE AND THE FIELD OF LITERATURE AS ETHNOGRAPHY

Representations of the "average" American are notably absent in Raymond Carver's and Thomas Pynchon's texts. Rather, the reader encounters in these authors' works what mainstream America finds most unsettling: characters who are not only alienated, but also aware of their status as outsiders and, more frequently than not, choose to embrace deviance in their self-definitions. Deviance is conferred upon characters for their engaging in behaviors conformist society labels unacceptable, such as excessive drinking, supporting unpopular political movements, and adultery; while the infraction committed may vary from one situation to the next, two of the constants that tie the authors and their works together are the presence of non-labeled characters who identify the aberrant behavior and the authors' writing styles, which parallel ethnographies in their ability to persuade readers of the accuracy of the events reported. Before diving into an analysis of the characters and the ways their alienation both reflects the dominant moral code in America and establishes Carver and Pynchon as autoethnographers (Chapters Two through Eight address these issues), it is essential to describe what is meant by the word "culture," how anthropologists and literary critics have attempted to reconcile the seemingly contradictory styles of fiction and ethnography, and from what theoretical basis this dissertation proceeds.

Approaches To "Culture" And Variation Within It

The early American school of anthropology, illustrated under the leadership of Franz Boas and Alfred L. Kroeber, used the term "culture" to refer to that which unifies every human society and which marks its distinction from the animal world (Kroeber,

1948, p. 252). To these anthropologists, culture is defined as the construct that permits ideals, mores, beliefs, and rules to be established in any given society. While it is a force that unites single actors, culture does not destroy individuality; one may retain ethics, ideals, and convictions instilled by the societal culture, yet differ drastically from others who have been raised within the same culture. As an agent that functions both on the levels of societies and individuals, culture's significance to the individual versus the individual's importance to culture presents a point of divergence.

Focusing their analyses on the relations of groups, Bohannan and Kroeber note single actors as a secondary concern. Bohannan emphasizes the "relationships and . . . compound structures of relationships" (1995, p. 24) that form culture. Kroeber similarly explains the impact of culture on people: "they are dependent on it for most of the specific things they do in their lives" (1948, p. 8). Culture is a powerful force that unites individuals and guides societies; while certain insects may live in social groups in which the individual is ultimately of little importance, individuals in human societies can foster great change across the entire cultural scope.

Ellen Corin examines structural heterogeneity within cultures, or the way in which multiple codes organize cultural elements, as a means of revealing difference in individuals from the same culture. Noting anthropology's predilection for emphasizing the unifying factors in cultures, she finds this tendency often overlooks the "structural importance of what does not fit with the coherence built into the system by the analyst" (1995, p. 173). However, refocusing the scope of inquiry on the dominant cultural codes and the structural variation within which they occur "introduces first a level of

play into the dominant codes themselves" (Corin, 1995, p. 176) and is necessary for maintaining the codes both for individuals and cultures. For Corin, every dominant code when denied is present in its absence, as such denial requires a recognition of what the predominating structure is that is being denounced. Cultural dynamics and differences within cultures are two areas that can lead one to better understand not only the ways in which cultures maintain themselves, but also the ways in which they incorporate marginal views into the dominant cultural view. Corin explains the need to look at all cultural elements: "A perspective which concentrates all of its efforts on the 'core' and ignores marginal elements masks important dimensions of the cultural dynamics" (1995, p. 173). As the dynamics of and differences within culture are intertwined, it is reasonable they should be examined together.

Culture, existing both at the societal level, as in greater patterns of beliefs that govern interactions, and at the individual level, as in someone's beliefs and ideals, can be viewed as in a constant state of change. For Bohannan, these changes occur by defining culture as a predicate: "It is change. It encompasses its own capacity for change--it is a sort of hydra, made up of many combined individual human actions and reactions" (1995, p. 47). Cultural change is impacted by difference within culture, which also functions to reveal distinctions between the dominant and dominated classes.

In analyzing the contrast between mainstream and subordinate cultures, it is crucial not to overstate differences so as to exoticize the latter; a parallel to the approach of dominated cultures appears in the approach anthropology once took in examining non-Western cultures. Lila Abu-Lughod argues that culture operates to

"enforce separations that inevitably carry a sense of hierarchy" (1991, p. 138), in which the Western cultures are necessarily superior to others. Roger Keesing (1994) disputes the traditional concept of "Other" as that which is radically different from Western society, and asserts the concept is in dire need of change; he suggests both that anthropologists often overstate Otherness, neglecting to realize that all cultures share certain basic patterns through which the individual acts, and that anthropologists' interpretations of culture are often self-motivated. Furthermore, cross-cultural similarities are ignored by anthropologists, who frequently make generalizations and fail to recognize an individual's resonance on a society, with the result of creating "a radical alterity that does not exist" (Keesing, 1994, p. 305). Conventional anthropologists, according to Keesing, often have a "hidden agenda," or bend their studies to suit their theories; a feminist theorist may overstate the division created by social and gender inequality in order to support a hypothesis. Cultures have become symbols that an anthropologist can appropriate and treat as a commodity (Keesing, 1994). In order to prevent researchers from abusing ideas of culture and Other, Keesing calls for the reinvention of the definition of culture.

Keesing's solution for escaping the hidden agenda of anthropologists is to adopt a new concept of culture that is applicable to both small-scale communities and everyday modern life, thereby preventing the instant treatment of the former as Other. Such a view "would examine the way symbolic production is linked to power and interest" (Keesing, 1994, p. 309), would recognize that systems of belief identify the world in terms of idealized subject positions, and would take into account the reciprocal

effects of dominant on dominated cultures. Additionally, the new view would have to dispel previous conceptions of culture as being contained within set boundaries, which neglect to recognize that cultural meanings transcend fixed limitations.

Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis, and Aaron Wildavsky (1990) criticize the view of nationality as a cultural boundary, finding that regardless of the levels of technology and education, with respect to political culture, there is no single homogenous culture within a given nation. Although research has suggested the spectrum of political views within countries is often wider than between countries, "the tendency to attach culture to nations persists" (Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky, 1990, p. 218). Their discussion of American political subcultures demonstrates not only that difference within American culture exists, but also that the recognition of this difference is central to understanding behaviors. The impact of different political stances on behavior can be seen through the ties between politics and religion, as but one example. Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky reveal, "Whereas Garrisonian abolitionists employed religious conscience as a standard by which to question authority, Whigs looked to religion to uphold authority" (1990, p. 239). Difference in culture may bind groups on the basis of common political affiliation and other perspectives, such as religion, which complement political views.

A Brief History Of Treating Fiction As Ethnography

Arjun Appadurai explains the importance literature holds in revealing culture: "Fiction, like myth, is part of the conceptual repertoire of contemporary societies . . . Prose fiction is the exemplary province of the post-Renaissance imagination, and in this

regard it is central to a more general ethnography of the imagination" (1996, p. 202). Keith Opdahl similarly expresses the relationship between culture and literature, asserting, "Literature is a center of our cultural life because it considers the private and subjective experience of the species" (1983, p. 285). Based, in part, on the parallels that exist between literature and ethnography, one may argue the case for treating literature as ethnography. Indeed, the two fields are not as dissimilar as one may expect. Authors such as Zora Neale Hurston and Nigel Rapport, writing in literature and anthropology, respectively, have bridged the gap separating the fields to demonstrate their parallel modes and to suggest the fields are simply different genres of writing. Recently, several critics have approached fictional works as ethnographies, indicating that perhaps this trend has already started to take hold.

The line separating ethnography and fiction is not as clear as one initially may think; even classic anthropological texts display elements of both genres of writing. Bronislaw Malinowski's Argonauts of the Western Pacific, published in 1922, has been examined for its combining personal narrative with objective description. Mary Louise Pratt (1986) links Malinowski's style to travel writing and, in doing so, classifies the text as literature; James Clifford (1988) is more concerned with the significance of Malinowski's work as it relates to the discursive mode. Pratt and Clifford voice two concerns: the need for the anthropologist to convince his or her readers that the experiences observed and written about in ethnographies have, indeed, occurred, and the requirement that ethnographers write objectively. Clifford asserts ethnography is "enmeshed in writing. This writing includes . . . a translation of experience into textual

form. The process is complicated by the action of multiple subjectivities and political constraints beyond the control of the writer" (1988, p. 25); furthermore, the ethnographer seeks to establish his or her authority as "the purveyor of truth in the text" (1988, p. 25). Clifford explains that Malinowski "was greatly concerned with the rhetorical problem of convincing his readers that the facts he was putting before them were objectively acquired, not subjective creations" (1988, p. 29). That Malinowski's ethnography should be seen by anthropologists as both ethnographic writing and literature demonstrates the extraordinary degree to which the two fields are similar. As Nigel Rapport notes, "an association of the anthropological with the literary reminds us that our writings are as much games of words as are novels: that many central issues of ours do revolve around language games" (1994, p. 9). The extent to which these fields overlap is demonstrated not only through an analysis of their similarities, but also through the perception of literary authors as writers of ethnographic accounts.

Rapport details the parallels between anthropology and literature, asserting they are "*corresponding ways of writing social reality*" (1994, p. 22), while admitting they are distinct from one another in their creation and in their intended audiences. The two fields share a common historical bond, create texts that are written based on observation of the everyday, attempt to persuade their readers of the authenticity of the author's authority, and are both characterized as individual undertakings. Anthropology and literature share a close historical connection, as both forms have been concerned with "social realism"; insofar as novels since the eighteenth century have depicted "a portrayal true to historical, psychological, probabilistic reality" (Rapport, 1994, p. 17),

both fields have tried to persuade readers these accounts are authentic. Rapport explains during a great part of the nineteenth century the novel, rather than social-scientific writing, provided "realistic social commentary" (1994, p. 17). In Britain, as printing costs fell and literacy grew, the novel, not anthropological writing, cornered the market of "ethnographic novels" and brought the exotic Other into Victorian homes. In creating both ethnographic and fictional texts, writers begin their "textualist pursuits" through observation; the task before such writers is to transpose the "experience of what is seen as one world of social convention--exchange of spoken word--into another, less commonsensical, more esoteric such world--arrangement of the written word" (Rapport, 1994, p. 18), while refusing to distort people, places, and events in order to maintain realism. Both types of texts must convince their readers; anthropological writing is believable when it persuades its reader that its author has actually been somewhere else and has interacted with other people. Rapport asserts that literature must convince its readers on the same basis, although it may employ different tactics in order to do so (1994, p. 19). Finally, texts produced in both fields are written, usually, by individuals rather than as collaborative efforts.

A number of critics recently have examined authors' abilities to function as both novelists and ethnographers, suggesting the gap between these two fields is slight. Examining the comparisons and contrasts between literature and anthropology "is to talk of similarities and divergences--perceived, claimed, intended, wished-for--between two modern, Western disciplines of study; also two genres of writing" (Rapport, 1994, p. 15). Just as authors blend genres within literature, as in romantic comedies, historic

tragedies, and the various other amalgams created, authors' texts have transcended the boundary between literature and anthropology to function in both realms as a composite genre of literature-as-ethnography. Clifford (1988) notes two recent anthropologists, Lacoste-Dujardin and Dumont, have formulated postmodern ethnographies through their use of a dialogue between two individuals to constitute a text, merging literature and ethnography. Critics have classified Hurston's and Wharton's texts as ethnographies, Scott and Bal'mont as historical ethnographers, and Kipling as an imperial ethnographer.

As she wrote in both fields and was a student of Franz Boas, Zora Neale Hurston is an appropriate starting point for analyzing authors who have crossed the boundary that separates literature and anthropology. D. A. Boxwell notes that Hurston's first ethnography, Mules and Men, is characterized by her own presence in the text "as a created and asserted self [that] is central and essential, unifying the action it depicts and giving a strong sense of cohesion to the collection's disparate parts and multitudinous story-telling voices" (1992, p. 606). However, this aspect brought criticism from those who believed this altered her objectivity and saw her presence as breaking one of ethnography's rules: the suppression of authorial voice within the text. Boxwell finds that Hurston reinvented anthropology in her text and that Mules and Men stands as Hurston's " 're-interpretation' of ethnography" (1992, p. 609). If this new anthropology permits authorial presence in the text, then it arguably opens the door for a multitude of writers to blend the genres of ethnography and literature.

Edith Wharton's texts The House of Mirth and The Custom of the Country have been examined by Mary Ellis Gibson for their ability to serve as ethnographic texts about New York society. Gibson explores the idea that these novels illustrate the conflict between the old aristocracy and the new capitalists in terms of Wharton's "preoccupation with changing social codes and meanings" (1985, p. 60), which is illustrated through the texts' concerns with promiscuity, pollution, and opposing morals.

Gibson explains Wharton's images of promiscuity and pollution function as emblems for the "high classification society" that draws a distinct line between purity and impurity; it is along this boundary that it develops its responses toward pollution and taboo. The texts can be read as demonstrating the pollution of the old aristocracy by the nouveaux riches through moral decline: "the new order is contaminating because it has no respect for the old boundaries" (Gibson, 1985, p. 63). By writing observations about New York society, Wharton's texts can be treated as ethnographies that reveal class conflict and changing morals.

James Buzard explores Scott's Waverley as a depiction of Scottish culture that he terms a "fictional auto-ethnography" (1995, p. 31). Set during 1745 to 1746, the novel explores Scottish culture not through the eyes of an outsider, but rather through the eyes of the Other, itself. Buzard explains that an Other participating in its own representation had been missing from narratives about how culture is represented; another point Buzard raises is that Scott's Waverley is a translation without an original, through which he refers to Clifford's insistence that one must be aware of that which is distorted or missing in interpretations of culture. Buzard clarifies that Waverley lacks

"an original known as 'Scotland': a cultural unit centered in the Gaelic Highlands and expressed in the Jacobite cause" (1995, p. 33); this translation without an original causes difficulty for the reader, however, as the lack of authenticity becomes apparent.

Even with this shortcoming, the novel stands as an ethnography because it is able to carry the reader into another place, which it achieves through the title character:

"Edward's first impressions of a Scottish town are summed up in a way that illustrates how the double discourse of Lowland self-Englishing plus Highland autoethnography structures and delimits the novel's ethnographic translation" (Buzard, 1995, p. 40). The distinction between the narrator and Edward parallels the role of the ethnographer as it was later expressed in anthropology: participant-observer and fieldworker-theorist (Buzard, 1995).

Bal'mont similarly blurs the line between fiction and ethnography in his Serpent Flowers, which focuses on Mayan culture and includes a translation of its scripture.

Martin Bidney explains that Bal'mont "sees himself solely as imaginative interpreter of Mexico's pre-Hispanic past" (1996, p. 422), which clearly parallels the ethnographer's role as an interpreter and recorder of other cultures; Bal'mont's concern with Mayan culture demonstrates the historical ethnographer's aim, which Javed Majeed explains as "to recover and reconstruct a 'lost' history in order to counteract the crippling effects of that loss, although that loss is itself at once the origin and creation of the historical imagination" (1996, p. 47). Bidney credits Bal'mont as the precursor for other writers, including Lawrence and Huxley, who examined Mexico through travel books and novels. Bal'mont, for Bidney, exemplifies the blurring of ethnography and fiction; when

ethnographers project themselves into the text through "social agendas or textual-aesthetic shapings" (Bidney, 1996, p. 423), the line between these fields disappears. Bal'mont's translation of Mayan scripture, which he passes off as an original text, creates "an ethnographic persona that combines the roles of historian and visionary. It is a richly complex and inclusive poetic-ethnographic persona or 'self' that Bal'mont has fashioned" (Bidney, 1996, p. 431). Bal'mont's merging of ethnography with fiction creates a text that functions in both arenas and is more satisfying than it would be without the inclusion of both fields.

Kipling perhaps represents the greatest degree of blurring fiction with ethnography in Kim, as he integrates fictional ethnographers into the novel. Don Randall explains the text reads as an ethnography from its opening scenes, which establish the novel's setting in such a manner as to convince the reader that Kipling has experienced the India about which he writes. Kim's relationships with a variety of characters, including a Tibetan lama, Randall asserts, have "significant ethnological implications" (1996, p. 80). The novel functions to convince its reader of the accuracy of Kipling's observations not only by establishing a timeless India as a cultural object whose elements can be "located, specified, and classified" independent from "historical contingencies" (Randall, 1996, p. 84), but also through the narrator's ability to use subcontinental languages. The narrator functions to emphasize the static aspect of Indian culture under British rule in such a manner that Kim can be considered an example of imperial ethnography; Randall asserts the text functions to maintain Western hegemony over the Other, yet it does not function solely to profess "the

superiority of European cultural paradigms. It reveals also something of the method and the means by which the illusion of superiority is secured and maintained" (1996, p. 83). Furthermore, Kim functions as a hybrid of Indian and British culture that allows him to negotiate the cross-cultural colonial relationship: he provides an insider's view not only to the colonizing, but also to the colonized; as such, Kim functions both as an agent and as an object of cross-cultural study. A final tool employed by Kipling is the similar construction used by Scott in Waverley: Kipling establishes a relationship between the narrator and Kim that parallels the relationship between the participant-observer and the fieldworker-theorist.

In spite of the similarities existing between literature and ethnography and the ability of novelists to not only cross the disciplines, but also to establish relationships within their texts that parallel the dualistic nature of the ethnographer as a participant-observer and fieldworker-theorist, it is necessary to address the contrasts between the two fields. In exploring the differences between anthropology and literature, Rapport suggests that perhaps the reason distinctions between the fields are focused on is due to the fields' overwhelming similarities and anthropology's desire to establish itself as separate from other disciplines. While literature is approached as writing that is necessarily fictional and imaginative, there is a resistance in anthropology to read ethnographic writings as anything but true. In spite of Bidney's claim that an ethnographer's awareness of stylistic devices can dissolve the line between anthropology and literature, it is important to recognize that it is more frequently the case that ethnographers ignore these influences. When fieldnotes become

ethnographic writing, "narrators become invisible and omniscient, while different situations, contexts, classes of people and event become more or less homogenised, so that there is no particular point of view whence the data is said to emerge" (Rapport, 1994, p. 15). Clearly, the fields may overlap; however, the manner in which they treat their observations of the everyday and the way in which these results are presented to readers differs.

Perhaps the clearest point of divergence in the two fields is that existing between travel writing and ethnography. While those who participate in writing travel books and ethnographies share the activity of visiting locations distinct from the culture in which they were raised, this is, arguably, the most they share. Travel writing is characterized both by a narrative that seeks to accurately describe the place visited to the reader and by a dynamic quality that emphasizes the writer's arrival, travel across a location, and departure; ethnography, in contrast, is characterized by presenting incidents as existing outside of time, or "timeless," while also being "hostile to narrative; it disassembles and abstracts experience and generalizes events" (Wheeler, 1986, p. 56). Valerie Wheeler finds another point of divergence in that authors of travel books make moral judgements about that which they witness in order to entertain the reader and to reinforce the values of the culture from which the author writes, while anthropologists fail to judge, preferring to make moral assessments by embracing the "task of dissolving anomaly into the moral ecology of the society studied" (1986, p. 58). While writers of both genres attempt to persuade the reader that the author has actually been to the place written about, travel books typically use fictional devices that

would undermine the credibility of ethnographers. Ruth Larson demonstrates this difference in her analysis of Leiris's L'Afrique fantôme, commenting that the text acknowledges the author's representation of Africa "might be . . . at worst uninformed, at best poetic, and in any event lacking in authority" (1997, p. 232), in comparison to ethnographies about African cultures. Buzard explains the appeal of the travel novel exists because "Tourism translates the foreign by temporalizing (narrativizing) space and by spatializing (pictorializing) time" (1995, p. 45), allowing readers to comprehend even that which is quite distant from their own culture.

While travel writing falls short of ethnography, this is certainly not to say that other novels are incapable of providing cultural accounts; however, it is important to keep these distinctions in mind when one approaches any text as an ethnography, for it is possible that authors' proclamations of moral judgement will appear in any genre and in any discipline. If one can be aware of the shortcomings faced by travel writing when reading other genres, then one will hopefully be able to critically judge the ability of a text to provide unbiased cultural accounts. As long as authors convince the reader of their authority to write about a culture and they do not obviously violate the code of objectivity, one can be reasonably sure of a text's impartiality. The benefits to examining texts for their cultural accounts are apparent when one considers some of the perceived faults of literary criticism.

Scarcely more than fifteen years ago, Edward Said attacked literary criticism's narrow-mindedness with respect to culture. In The World, the Text, and the Critic, Said proclaims:

we have reached the stage at which specialization and professionalization, allied with cultural dogma, barely sublimated ethnocentrism and nationalism, as well as a surprisingly insistent quasi-religious quietism, have transported the professional and the academic critic of literature--the most focused and intensely trained interpreter of texts produced by culture--into another world altogether . . . contemporary criticism is an institution for publicly affirming the values of our, that is, European, dominant elite culture, and for privately setting loose the unrestrained interpretation of a universe defined in advance as the endless misreading of a misinterpretation. (1983, p. 25)

If the critic approaches a text as ethnography, then there is a demand for the critic to cast off his or her ethnocentric tendencies, for the critic adopts the stance of the fieldworker-theorist, while the text exists as the participant-observer. In such a manner, the critic can then avoid the pitfall of necessarily asserting European values over texts written by or about the Other. Additionally, by adopting an objective, anthropological stance, the literary critic can approach texts about his or her own culture with a greater degree of accuracy; to clarify, if the text is treated as an ethnographic representation of a culture, one may turn to the text as the sole illustration of cultural elements and, in doing so, one may be more open to addressing themes that the text explicates, rather than approaching the text with a preconceived agenda of what necessarily constructs a certain culture. By focusing in this manner on the text as an account of culture, one may seek to remain closer to what the text portrays and avoid misreadings as well as misinterpretations of culture.

Said explains that literary criticism has never been value-free, for it has persistently sought to explain the social, political, and cultural forces in the reading, writing, and transmission of texts. He asserts that criticism has been located between culture and the system, which is "therefore to stand *close to* . . . a concrete reality about which political, moral, and social judgements have to be made and, if not only made, then exposed and demystified" (1983, p. 26). Initially, Said's insistence to make such judgements may appear to run counter to anthropology's objective nature. However, upon closer examination one recognizes that anthropology itself has been motivated by the desire to expose, or to redirect cultural study to recognize, at the very least political and gender differences, as is evident in Marxist and feminist anthropology. In light of Said's statement about literary criticism being ethnocentric, one may argue the judgements he asserts need to be made should be constructed from the point of view of the culture under investigation, rather than a necessarily Eurocentric view. In this way, the interpretations Said calls for would approach the moral assessments that are permissible in anthropology. If such an approach were taken, it would naturally follow that judgements would be exposed, for the goal of ethnographic writing is to transmit information about a culture.

Literature has recently contributed to ethnography the idea of reading culture as a text. Larson asserts that ethnography "in return has offered writers and theorists an arena for cultural critique and an awareness of the political implications of representing culture" (1997, p. 230). Because the issue of what is at stake when culture is represented in a text has already been raised, it seems only natural to follow this

course of thought through to its logical end. The affiliation of the text to society, to its author, and to culture is the manner through which it maintains its authority; Said explains that the interest in this affiliation is not really worth anything unless it arises from historical research and is "ultimately fixed for its goals upon understanding, analyzing, and contending with the management of power and authority within the culture" (1983, p. 175). Feminist literary criticism has already approached the issue of women's roles as they are represented in literature. It seems only reasonable to expand the scope of study to include other vehicles of power and oppression as they occur embedded in cultural objects and elements.

Gibson, Buzard, Bidney, Randall, and Rapport have already put into practice the merging of literature with anthropology and have detached literary criticism's ethnocentrism through the process. In doing so, they seem to have recognized Said's assertion that a text "in its actually *being* a text is a being in the world" (1983, p. 33). It is necessary to discuss Frank Kermode's dilemma of fiction and reality, or the "tension or dissonance between paradigmatic form and contingent reality" (1967, p. 133), for it appears that to treat literature as ethnography raises the problem of characters' behavior, which may differ from reality. Kermode explains fictional characters necessarily display a limitation of freedom that is unparalleled by reality, where people's actions are unconstrained; if characters were free to do whatever they chose, then they could simply walk out of the text, and if they were undefined by character, then readers would not recognize them. This appears to be a stumbling block, but it is arguable that Kermode's statement fails to take into account the effect of culture on real people.

Culture, the beliefs, ideals, and mores that a society passes on to its members, governs, to some extent, the actions of individuals. If one observes the constraints placed on fictional characters, it is possible to read these as imposed not only by the text's author on the characters, but also by culture on the author.

In short, literary criticism stands nothing to lose and everything to gain by approaching literature as ethnography. If the critic is able to approach the text as a cultural account, then perhaps he or she will avoid the ethnocentrism Said so sharply criticized. The fictionality of characters in literature does not serve to make interpretations of culture expressed through texts fraudulent, as ultimately the author and his or her characters are constrained by cultural norms and values in the same manner as are subjects under observation by anthropologists.

Carver, Pynchon, Fiction, And American (Sub)Culture

Given the parallels that exist between fiction and ethnography and the idea that these fields display two different genres of writing that share a purpose to reveal information about a culture, one may argue against specialization and for a more holistic approach. To separate culture from a text, from its inception to its reading, fails to recognize the extent to which culture shapes individuals. However, if one recognizes the impact culture has on the author, the reader, and the text, one gains insight not only into the interplay of cultural elements in the text, but also into the ability of the text, an object firmly grounded by culture, to function as an ethnography.

In approaching Raymond Carver's and Thomas Pynchon's texts, the distinctions cannot be overlooked. If one examines them on the basis of stylistic devices, characters, and even plot, one discovers two drastically different authors. Carver displays the richness of minimalism and the accurate, realistic portrayal of the lower-middle class, while Pynchon presents a fantastic America in which characters' fictionality is stressed. When examining Carver and Pynchon together, as opposed to looking at their placement on opposite ends of the postmodern literary spectrum, one discovers a yin and yang: the former's realism and order offset the latter's surrealism and entropy. Like the disparate Other elements of our culture that, when integrated, provide a whole of American culture that is greater than the individual units, Carver and Pynchon, when taken together, afford the reader with a vision of our culture that explores the disassociation and alienation that cuts through our society regardless of class or background. In their varying presentations of reality, they offer complementary views of distinct American subcultures that feature characters who are isolated and who generally denounce mainstream ideals. Conformist society is merely hinted at within the texts; its presence appears through its absence, characters' recognition of what they are denying, and what characters are denied. Both authors feature characters who identify aberrant behavior, for which rule-breaking individuals are labeled. Characters, once labeled, adopt secondary deviance and instigate a deviant career, from which the authors rarely permit a reprieve; in his earlier collections, even when Carver affords characters the desire to return to conformist society, impediments cannot be overcome. The concerns of Otherness, deviance, and the

maintenance of deviant identity are central to an analysis of Carver's and Pynchon's texts as ethnographies, as these elements illustrate to what degree characters defy mainstream culture. A brief overview of the subsequent chapters clarifies the importance these issues hold.

The second and third chapters of this dissertation focus on Pynchon's Vineland and the ways individuals and groups adopt and maintain deviant identities. Chapter Two, "Frenesi Gates: The Career of a Deviant," traces one of the novel's main characters with respect to why she can be considered deviant, her reaction to being labeled, and how she manages the label. The sociological interactionist perspective on deviance is introduced in this chapter as the theoretical basis for subsequent discussions of labeling and stigma, and it is linked to the anthropological idea of Other, as both concepts seek to name similar circumstances, where actors are stigmatized for their difference from the dominant culture. Chapter Three, "The 24fps as a Subculture," similarly employs the integration of deviance and Otherness in defining one of the subcultures from Vineland as marginalized by mainstream culture. How subcultures provide a means for negotiating and maintaining the Other identity is illustrated by the support the 24fps provides Frenesi, while their adoption of mainstream codes is revealed through both their delabeling and relabeling of individuals.

The fourth chapter, " 'One More Thing,' 'Where I'm Calling From,' and 'Gazebo': The Role of Partners in Determining Alcoholism," examines several of Carver's short stories in terms of the way class is a construction of Otherness. Within these stories, Carver writes about alcoholism not from the perspective of an outsider, but rather from

an insider's viewpoint, thereby providing objective ethnographic accounts. One area that details his objectivity is his inclusion of the products of alcoholism; the inarticulation and death of relationships that result from alcoholism are themes repeated throughout Carver's earlier collections.

The fifth chapter, "Oedipa's Roles as Sensitive and Demon," examines Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49 in regards to its main character, Oedipa Maas, and her ambivalence toward leaving mainstream culture for a subculture. Pynchon writes Oedipa's identity crisis through manipulating the concept of Maxwell's Demon, which he treats as scientific fact, rather than myth, by merging theories of entropy in the fields of thermodynamics and communication in order to have Oedipa oscillate between the roles of Maxwell's demon and sensitive, a fictional construct within the novel. This alternation of non-deviant and deviant identities serves as a model of the challenges faced in managing Other identity.

The sixth through eighth chapters examine several of Carver's works, although the seventh deals with them through Robert Altman's film adaptation. Chapter Six, "Looking at Carver through Kroeber-Tinted Glasses: An Analysis of the Transmission of and Transgressions Against Culture," looks at several of Carver's short stories for their presentations of the creation, re-creation, and change of dominant beliefs and customs; individual practices and the breaching of cultural norms; and the assignation of Other to rule-breakers. Chapter Seven, "Short Cuts As a Reflection of American Culture," examines the film directed by Altman for its representations of models of class and gender conflict, Altman's denial of the dual roles held by Carver's characters as both

wage-earners and mothers, and modernity and fragmentation. Chapter Eight, "Inarticulation, Disassociation, and Alienation in Carver's Stories," examines the source and effects of failed interpersonal communication as it is presented in Carver's earlier stories and the source of successful communication in Carver's Cathedral (his final) collection.

The final chapter offers conclusions on how deviantized, Other characters defy the dominant codes and structures. By focusing on what is absent from the texts, illustrations of "average" America, one can put together the pieces of Carver's and Pynchon's characters and the codes by which they live, as if putting together a jigsaw puzzle to reveal American culture.

CHAPTER TWO

FRENEZI GATES: THE CAREER OF A DEVIANT

Lurking in the back alleys of American culture, behind the seemingly normal facade of mainstream society, are stigmatized, deviantized individuals who are identified on the basis of their difference. These people, labeled for their actual or perceived rule-breaking, find the doors to mainstream culture closed to them and are faced with making the best of their situations by managing an identity that others assign to them. Frenesi Gates, one of the main characters in Pynchon's Vineland, finds herself in such a predicament, as she appropriates the identity of Other through being labeled deviant, a result of involvement with a resistance movement, the 24fps, and of violating the group's solidarity by working for federal agent Brock Vond. A clarification of how deviance can be considered Other is essential to understanding Frenesi's adoption and management of her deviant identity.

Deviance As Other

Parallels exist between the sociological construction of deviance and the anthropological concept *Other*; while it may initially appear inadvisable to substitute one term for the other, if one examines the process through which the labels *deviant* and *Other* emerge, one finds the terms seek to define similar situations in the two fields. One notable difference, however, is that *Other* allows for the examination of the effect of the dominated on the dominant culture.

Lila Abu-Lughod has already extended the relationship of Western to Other to the construct of man to woman or woman as "man's other" (1991, p. 140). In both of

these cases (Western/Other and man/woman), what is considered Other is that which is dominated by another and treated as being distinct for its inferiority and difference. While feminist anthropology has expanded the scope of Otherness to address gender issues, Roger Keesing (1994) warns against overstating or misconstruing Otherness. However, feminist anthropology has not been alone in applying the idea of Other to traditionally non-Other (Western) cultures; Horace Miner and Milton Singer have both explored American culture, itself, as Other. Miner's (1956/1994) account, "Body Ritual Among the Nacerima," reads as a report about the practices of a primitive, Other tribe that obsessively worships temples, in front of which complex, daily rituals are performed. Cleverly written so as to disguise the fact that he is writing about American culture--referring to the tribe as bounded geographically by what, coincidentally, are the United States' borders--the article details the American obsession with personal hygiene; one finds the practices Miner describes to be suggestive of those adhered to by what Western society terms "primitive" cultures. His point is clear: while Western cultures are overly anxious to label cultures unlike their own as Other, when we examine ourselves in a different light, we, too, are Other.

Singer (1991) similarly portrays American culture as Other, finding historical reenactments and the attachment to historical houses and buildings in Yankee City to be indicative of modern culture's damaging desire to maintain a strong connection to its ancestry. Singer proposes "that these residents of Yankee City are trying to communicate with their ancestors, that they are practicing in their reenactments and restorations a 'cult of the dead,' or at least of ancestor worship" (p. 141). Rather than

noting the reenactments as a form of benign homage to people and places that held historic importance, Singer's insistence they should be viewed as indicative of a return to primitive practices is significant; Singer treats the residents of Yankee City as Other, possessing strange rituals that demonstrate the culture's inferiority.

While Other traditionally has been conceived of as both inferior and drastically different from the dominating culture, it is not necessary that the scope of the concept should be limited to the exotic, non-western Other. Being Other, as Singer and Miner demonstrate, is not only a matter of perspective, but it is also already present within American culture.

Similarly, "deviance," according to the interactionist perspective, is a matter of perspective. Primary deviance may occur as a single instance in which an individual's behavior is found to violate a norm, resulting in an audience labeling the offender as deviant, while secondary deviance involves a labeled offender adopting the offending activity as a lifestyle. The audience is central to this stance, as it, rather than the actor or the rule that is broken, determines deviance by labeling an individual. The result of this labeling has implications not only for the individual but also for others who may interact with the labeled actor. The subsequent effects of labeling may involve the progression of a deviant career, the rejection of the deviant label and the return to mainstream society, or a combination of the two.

According to Edwin Schur, deviance "is not simply a function of a person's problematic behavior; rather, it emerges as other people define and react to a behavior as being problematic" (1984, p. 187). Deviance, which is dependent on the reaction by

others to an individual's perceived breaking of a rule, occurs in the interactionist perspective in a three-stage process. Charles Wolfson (1984, p. 54) provides an overview: the first step is that in which a rule is either broken or is perceived to be broken; the second step entails the reaction by an audience wherein a label is assigned to the offender; and the third step is the offender's response to the label. However, the acquisition of a label as deviant is contingent upon a number of factors.

According to Erving Goffman career contingencies determine whether an individual will be labeled. "Career," as Goffman uses the word, refers to the adoption of a deviant lifestyle that parallels the acquisition of a trade or skill, insofar as it requires learned behavior. Factors exist that can either shield individuals from or bare them to the deviant label and that are dependent upon the audience, rather than the accused individual. In exploring the career contingencies of mental patients, considerations such as the individual's "socioeconomic status, visibility of the offense, proximity to a mental hospital, amount of treatment facilities available, [and] community regard for the type of treatment given in available hospitals" (Goffman 1959/1996, p. 113) are all factors weighed into the determination to label an individual. However, these factors are not unique to the deviantization of the mentally ill: in any occurrence of labeling an actor, the audience takes into consideration such elements as the significance of the rule that is broken; the status of the individual who breaks the rule; whether or not the offense is visible and, if it is, who sees the offense; and the response, in the form of labeling the offender, to breaking the rule.

If any of the career contingencies are not met, it is likely the offender will fail to be labeled as deviant. The significance of the rule that is broken bears on the audience's decision to label the actor. Ericson (1975, p. 127) explains that the moral quality of the rule, especially when there is a status difference between the deviant and the audience, greatly influences whether or not labeling will occur. If the person committing the offense holds the same socioeconomic status as the audience, the audience is less likely to label the actor than it would be if the offender holds a lower status. In the case of secret deviance, an offender commits a violation in the absence of an audience, preventing labeling from occurring. However, as Howard Becker (1973) notes, it is possible for an actor to violate a rule in secret and still cause a reaction by an audience. Bernstein, Kelly, and Doyle (1977, p. 751) note that while many burglaries are committed in the absence of witnesses, circumstantial evidence allows for the offenders to be labeled by official control agencies (e.g., police). The audience's reaction to a visible offense is perhaps the most important contingency. If the audience fails to react, then a label will not be assigned and the individual remains "normal." If, however, the audience decides to label and stigmatize the individual, then the offender's response to labeling becomes critical.

Once labeled, an offender must decide on an appropriate reaction to the label. Wolfson explains: "The actor, a primary deviant, has a new set of definitions prescribing his identity thrust upon him with which he must somehow reckon in order to stabilize his life" (1984, p. 70). Labeling functions to require a change in the actor's self-perception, as it forces the individual to choose between rejecting the label, which

involves the return to conformist society, and accepting the deviant identity, in which case a deviant career is started and the label is reinforced by continuing the offending behavior.

Secondary deviance results when the deviantized individual reacts to an audience's response of labeling by embracing and adopting the deviant identity. A deviant career is constituted both by continued deviant behavior that reinforces the deviant label and by the continued negative reaction by an audience to such behavior that stigmatizes the individual. Wolfson (1984) finds the audience's reaction "is one mechanism that can act to stabilize a deviant role and create secondary, or career, deviance" (p. 81). A deviant career, according to Goffman, "allows one to move back and forth between the personal and the public, between the self and its significant society" (1959/1996, p. 111). In secondary deviance, a deviant individual may choose to continue deviant activities alone or in conjunction with others who form a deviant subculture. In both the labels "Other" and "deviant," one discovers that what is referred to is that which is perceived as unusual and varying from accepted cultural behavior. Therefore, marginalization appears to be the requirement for the assignation of both terms. Admittedly, there is variation between the two labels: while Otherness typically is applied to groups that differ from others, deviance is applied to both individuals and groups, as in subcultures. However, if the concept of Other is extended to include deviance, one is able to examine the effect of the dominated (deviant) group upon the dominant (normal) group; by recognizing the reciprocal effects each group has upon the other, one may gain a better understanding of both of these groups as elements

that comprise American culture, rather than merely viewing the dominant cultural form as the sole constituent of American culture.

Frenesi's Appropriation of the Other Identity

Within Vineland, Frenesi becomes Other through her deviance, which is assigned both by conventional society and by a subculture. Mainstream culture first assigns Frenesi the label as Other for joining a resistance movement, the 24fps. Once established as a member of the group, Frenesi becomes Other with respect to the group when she violates its code of solidarity through her association with Brock Vond, a federal agent whose aim is to dismember the group.

The reader is introduced to Frenesi when she has already adopted the first deviant identity: that of resistance fighter. Because the primary source of information about Frenesi is through other characters, such as her ex-husband, Zoyd Wheeler, and her former associates from the 24fps, one can only speculate about the mainstream cultural norms she has violated rather than being able to pinpoint exact moments in the text. Brock Vond, however, as a federal agent, provides insight into mainstream culture's views on the People's Republic of Rock and Roll, a newly formed state that Frenesi and the 24fps support: "It's a laboratory setup . . . a Marxist mini-state, product of mass uprising" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 212). Frenesi's deviantization, at its most basic, results from her involvement in anti-government activity. In conjunction with Frenesi's acculturation, there is evidence she has supported such a stance for a significant length of time.

As Frenesi has been socialized by her parents to be Other, her upbringing is to some degree responsible for her deviance. Because Frenesi's parents were affiliated with the Communists during the McCarthy era, she was raised to accept the status of political Other, regardless of the consequences. Frenesi's childhood

had been full enough of taps on the phone, cars across the street, name-calling and fights in school. Not exactly a red-diaper baby, she'd grown up more on the fringes of the political struggle in Hollywood back in the fifties, but the first rule was still that you didn't talk about anybody else, especially not about their allegiances. . . . As house receptionist, Frenesi'd had to learn to keep straight a whole list of fake names, and who used which to whom. (Pynchon, 1990, p. 74)

It is reasonable to propose that Frenesi, like others who have been socialized to accept different "acceptable" means for success, finds the status of Other as normal. This theory is supported by Jay William's (1997) discussion of the socialization of norms as a means through which individuals resist labels. If an individual has been socialized to accept deviant behavior as "normal," then attempts at labeling the actor deviant are ineffective, for the offender finds those who are applying the label deviant because they do not fit into his or her socialized view of what it is to be normal. While her socialization has led Frenesi to embrace her status as a political minority, her reference groups are not strong enough to completely devalue the label as Other. Reference groups function to shield an individual from labeling by diminishing conformist groups' power; when actors do not respect those who assign the label, they will not be

threatened by it (Williams, 1997). Frenesi, however, is affected by the label, for she embraces the label of Otherness through her rejection of mainstream culture official control agencies: "[Frenesi] was in the federal law-enforcement files now and forever, shared with every last amateur cop groupie in the land, listed as a species her parents had taught her to despise—a Cooperative Person" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 280). Frenesi's displeasure with the idea that others could label her as a member of conformist, normal society illustrates the extent to which her self-labeling as Other constructs her deviant identity. Her deviance, however, is not limited to the scope of mainstream culture.

While Frenesi opposes mainstream society, seeking support from the 24fps in managing her deviant, Other identity, she is deviant even with respect to the group, as she violates its code of solidarity. She is stigmatized both by mainstream culture and by counterculture. Her stigmatization by the 24fps is serious and can be understood by examining Frenesi's career contingencies in conjunction with her circuit of agents. The circuit of agents, as defined by Goffman (1959/1996), are the next-of-relation, who is the person to whom the deviant is closest and on whom he or she can rely; the complainant, who identifies the deviant offense and labels the actor; and the mediator, who functions to try to bring the deviant back to conformity. The relationship between the circuit of agents and the career contingencies is one of cooperation: the two elements "participate fatefully in his [the mental patient's] passage from civilian to patient status" (Goffman, 1959/1996, p. 106). While Goffman's concern is with the mentally deviant, these terms can be applied to any other progression from normal to deviant status.

The first step in understanding Frenesi's infraction is the identification of the significance of solidarity to the 24fps. Ironically, Frenesi, herself, provides the most accurate account of the importance of the group's unity. She explains to a fellow member the ramifications of another's perceived breach of this rule:

You've been living on the same planet as all of us—every night they pick us up, and they beat us, and they fuck us, and sometimes we die. Don't any of you kiddies understand, we either have 100% no-foolin'-around solidarity or it just doesn't work. Weed betrayed that, and it was cowardly because it was easy, 'cause he knew we can't shut anybody out, down the end of that road is fuckin' fascism, so we take 'em all That's what PR³ [the People's Republic of Rock and Roll, another branch of the 24fps] started out as—so did we for that matter, remember? The All-Nite Shelter. The lighted doorway out in the Amerikan dark where nobody gets refused? (Pynchon, 1990, p. 235)

The importance of solidarity is further clarified by the 24fps' response to Weed's perceived offense: it is not only punishable by ostracism but also, accidentally, by death. While it is clear the solidarity of the group is a firm rule that cannot be compromised at any cost, Frenesi is quick to violate this policy through her association with federal agent Brock Vond, who seeks to disarm and dismember the group. Her involvement with him results not only in the serious offense of breaching solidarity, but also in the more grievous violation of removing the leader of the 24fps from power by assassination. Although Frenesi attempts to conceal the visibility of her rule-breaking, several members of the 24fps become aware of her association with Brock.

It is inconsequential that Frenesi actually commits the offense of violating the 24fps' code of solidarity; the essential aspect is that others perceive Frenesi has broken it. Frenesi's act of conspiring with Brock Vond to disarm Weed Ackerman from his position of group leader, which results in his assassination, suits the career contingencies that the violation is both a visible and a serious offense. While it is not Frenesi's intention for Weed's death to occur, it is the result of her infraction: when the group confronts Weed regarding his perceived betrayal of conspiring with Brock, Frenesi hands Rex a loaded gun, which Brock has provided for her. Rex then shoots Weed. It is only after Weed's death that Rex realizes it is actually Frenesi, and not Weed, who has betrayed the group's solidarity. Moments after shooting Weed, Rex cries, "It should have been you, Frenesi. . . . where are you?" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 247). While Rex functions to identify Frenesi's betrayal as both visible and serious, the offense is more grave due to Frenesi's history of letting situations escalate.

Frenesi's status as one who continually fails to control situations heightens the seriousness of her treachery, as this element, in combination with conspiring with Brock, causes Weed's death. Frenesi's mother, Sasha, describes her consistency in engaging in situations she cannot manage; Sasha reacts to Frenesi's failure to set matters straight with her romantic life: "She'd also once again failed to take care of business, and Sasha was angry as she'd ever been at Frenesi's habit, developed early in life, of repeatedly ankling every situation that it should have been her responsibility to keep with and set straight" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 58). Frenesi's betrayal of the group's solidarity constitutes a serious infraction, while her inability to control Rex and Weed's

confrontation results in her second offense against the 24fps--Weed's murder. Had she intervened, rather than simply filming the conflict, she could have prevented Weed's murder and lessened the seriousness of her own betrayal. However, since the murder is only one of a string of instances where she fails to seize control of situations, her offense is even worse than it would have been were this the first instance. Frenesi commits both a serious and a visible offense, to which her circuit of agents respond.

Frenesi's circuit of agents demonstrates others' responses to her offense by labeling the violation and, through the mediator, by trying to restore her to a nondeviant status. Frenesi's next-of-relation is her mother, Sasha; her complainants include Sasha and several members of the 24fps; and her mediator is federal agent Brock Vond, who functions ironically in that while he should aid Frenesi's return to conformity, he instead furthers her deviant career by prompting her secondary deviance.

Sasha, holding the dual roles of next-of-relation and complainant, is unable to give Frenesi the unconditional emotional support that typifies next-of-relations because she disapproves of Frenesi's offense. While the position is usually filled by someone who supports the offender and is "the first to have done everything to save him from the fate which, it transpires, he has been approaching" (Goffman, 1959/1996, p. 106), Sasha cannot condone her daughter's violating the solidarity of the 24fps through her association with Brock: "Frenesi's involvement with Brock, politically, was appalling" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 58). Sasha does not fulfill Frenesi's expectation that she comfort her; rather, her disapproval of Frenesi's actions causes her to fill the conflicting roles of both next-of-relation and complainant, creating an "alienative coalition" (Goffman,

1959/1996, p. 107) against Frenesi. Frenesi's reaction is to distance herself from Sasha, a response Goffman describes as common by offenders faced with such a situation. Most importantly, Sasha, acting as a complainant and responding to Frenesi's offense, labels Frenesi, who progresses along a deviant pathway and establishes secondary deviance.

Frenesi's complainants respond to her violating the 24fps' solidarity both through her involvement with Brock Vond and for her responsibility for Weed's death. Frenesi's daughter, Prairie, responds to the offense with extreme anger: "So my dad and my grandma've been lyin' to me all the time? They told me she was on the side of the people—how could she've ever gone near somebody like this Brock guy?" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 141). Similarly, DL, one of Frenesi's former co-conspirators, friends, and lovers, laments, "I never could figure it either, kid. He was everything we were supposed to be against" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 141). Once the complainants identify Frenesi's offense, she responds with secondary deviance, continuing to break the solidarity of the group by perpetuating her association with Brock.

The cumulative effect Sasha's, DL's, and Rex's responses have on Frenesi is to motivate her to commit other offenses, and a situation of secondary deviance arises. While she has not received a specific label, such as traitor, the effect of the negative responses is the self-fulfilling prophecy: Frenesi has executed the primary deviance of violating the solidarity of the group through her association with Brock, and on the basis of the reactions of the complainants and next-of-relation, she continues to associate with him. The simple act of labeling Frenesi causes her to become a traitor, a label she

has already been assigned. While it is expected that complainants hold the potential to cause secondary deviance, as they label the offender, the mediator is supposed to aid the offender in rejoining normal society.

Brock holds a dual role in Frenesi's deviant career, both as impetus for Frenesi's primary deviance and as mediator. Brock, a representative of conformity and mainstream culture in the guise of the federal government, is a mediator whose role it is to aid Frenesi's readmission to mainstream society. While it initially appears he is in the perfect position to aid Frenesi in her re-entrance to mainstream culture, as he is an agent of conformity, in actuality, his role as an agent of Frenesi's deviant offenses negates any value of the assistance he offers her. Instead of fulfilling his role of mediator and returning Frenesi to conformity, Brock serves not only as the object of Frenesi's primary deviance but also as an agent of Frenesi's deviant career as she continues her association with him after her complainants have voiced their disapproval with her relationship with him.

Pursuant to an individual's designation as deviant, the adoption of a deviant identity may ensue due to the label that others assign on the basis of primary deviance. Responses by others, such as family, friends, and official agencies are crucial in motivating the adoption of a deviant identity. However, the acceptance of a deviant identity is not instantaneous; it is likely that an individual will have to struggle to come to terms with the consequences and the impact of the deviant label before he or she ultimately admits it. Frenesi experiences identity confusion, as she recognizes the extent of her betrayal of the 24fps: "Beginning the night she and Rex had publicly hung

the snitch jacket on Weed, Frenesi understood that she had taken at least one irreversible step to the side of her life" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 237), yet she cannot adopt the label as a "Cooperative Person." This confusion is evident as Frenesi attempts to retain her previously normal status as a member of the 24fps: "Her impulse was to deny his [Brock's] simple formula, to imagine that with the gun in the house, the 24-frame-per-second truth she still believed in would find some new, more intense level of truth, is what she was telling herself" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 241). If Frenesi is to fully commit herself to a deviant role—as informer for Brock—then this uncertainty in her identity must be resolved.

Unwilling to rejoin conformist society as a "Cooperative Person" and unable to maintain her status as a member in good standing in the 24fps, Frenesi finds herself labeled and stigmatized by both groups. Her reaction to being labeled by the members of the 24fps leads her to continue her relationship with Brock Vond, even as her identity confusion plagues her. Managing a deviant identity, especially without the support from others who can help the offender adjust to the label, is a difficult task and one that causes identity confusion for Frenesi.

Maintaining Otherness

After adopting the deviant identity, an individual must choose between managing it in order to retain the new identity, which involves the recognition that a deviant will be involved with multiple audiences—that which is composed of other deviants and that which is composed of non-deviants—or rejecting it and attempting to

return to his or her reference group. In this context one may recall J. L. Simmons' (1969/1996) discussion of the dual worlds in which deviants live. Ultimately, Frenesi is unable to maintain either of her Other identities, as she both violates the solidarity of the 24fps' in order to work for Brock Vond and ultimately rejects her identity as government informer.

Before Frenesi's infraction is discovered by the 24fps, she experiences identity confusion that instigates both an attributional inquiry and an attempt at neutralizing her deviance. Frenesi is aware of the traitorous nature of her relationship with Brock Vond, yet she tries to prove to herself that their relationship is innocent:

Not that she would have said she was working for Brock, exactly. When he took copies of the footage she shot, he paid no more than the lab costs. She told herself she was making movies for everybody, to be shown free anywhere there might be a reflective enough surface. . . . it wasn't secret footage, Brock had as much right as anybody. (Pynchon, 1990, p. 209)

Frenesi's attempt at rationalizing her actions expresses both Brian Monchick's idea that when individuals believe their actions have broken a rule, they will "initiate an attributional inquiry which may result in a self-attribution of a personal disposition" (1978, p. 93) and Williams's (1976) idea that individuals may resist the label through neutralization, either providing excuses for their behavior or denying the flaw in it. However, because self-labeling is contingent upon the individual's revealing the self-attribution to others, an action Frenesi fails to perform, she fails to completely associate with the deviant label. Yet, it appears that Frenesi recognizes the deviance of her

actions as she admits that Brock "was not only seeing the outtakes, but also making suggestions about what to shoot to begin with, and the deeper she got into that, the deeper Brock came into her life" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 209). Frenesi is unable to neutralize the potential damage of being labeled a traitor, which she could perhaps do by negotiating for a label that is less detrimental, because she is unwilling to admit the gravity of her errors even to herself.

Frenesi is relegated to the position of traitor within the 24fps when her discreditable stigma, her employment by Brock Vond, is revealed. To clarify, Goffman's (1963) concept of discreditable stigma explains that deviants who are able to pass for normals carry with them an invisible stigma; should the stigma come to the attention of others, an adverse affect would result, as in the case of labeling that can lead to exclusion. In this case, managing identity becomes crucial: as long as no information is revealed to the audience, then an individual can continue to function in normal society without threat of being stigmatized; however, the moment the discrediting information is exposed, it is likely that the individual will be labeled and will be forced to deal with the consequences of labeling. In the context of Frenesi's situation, it is vital that she hide from other group members her cooperation with Brock Vond in order to pass as a solid member of the 24fps.

Once Frenesi's betrayal is revealed, she becomes an outcast to the 24fps; however, this does not lead her to becoming a member of conventional, mainstream society, for she rejects this identity. Frenesi admits to DL that she could have prevented Weed's death, then blames her cooperation with Brock on drugs that were

administered to her: "He took me behind the Thorazine curtain" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 260). Frenesi, in attempting to justify her cooperation with Brock through drug abuse, medicalizes her deviance. Frenesi is able to reject her label as a cooperative person by blaming it on the Thorazine addiction, just as alcoholics reject their deviance by neutralizing the stigma of alcoholism by equating it with an allergy in which certain individuals possess a hypersensitivity to alcohol "such that their addiction is pre-determined even before they take their first drink" (Trice and Roman, 1970/1996, p. 434). While this tactic is successful for many alcoholics, as the responsibility for their aberrant behavior is removed, Frenesi, ultimately, is unable to return to the 24fps. Pynchon reveals that through the course of Frenesi and DL's conversation, "each new detail, another blow unanswered, brought them that much closer to a decision that much less in doubt" (1990, p. 260)--the need for Frenesi to leave. Although Frenesi attempts to excuse her deviance by removing her responsibility for it, she remains in limbo; she is no longer a member of the 24fps nor is she a member of mainstream culture.

CHAPTER THREE

THE 24FPS AS A SUBCULTURE

Subculture. Even the word, itself, conjures up images of stigma. From the Merry Pranksters to the Black Panthers, subcultures appear throughout American culture, facing ostracization from normals for opposing mainstream ideals. As a step in an individual's deviant career, subcultures function as one of the primary means through which deviants manage their identities. In Thomas Pynchon's Vineland, one of the main characters, Frenesi Gates, temporarily manages her deviant identity by engaging the support of the 24fps. Subcultures provide the deviant with a support network that provides increased access to commodities, knowledge, and relations.

Defining the 24fps as a Deviant Subculture

Labels are assigned to actors in response to a perceived offense, thereby defining individuals' primary deviance. If actors decide to adopt the label and the deviant identity, secondary deviance ensues; it is in this stage that they must decide whether to continue to carry out deviant activities on their own or with the support of a subculture. Motivating factors that may influence this decision to join include the social support offered by the collective and the benefits that are offered in such forms as information and increased access to goods. Subcultures contribute to deviance, Charles McCaghy (1985) explains, in two ways: first, they may be the source of deviant behavior, as in the case of an individual who enters into a subculture and then adopts the behavior of the group that is labeled as deviant; second, they can reinforce an

individual's existing deviant behavior by providing a support system for the individual, which encourages the continuation of the offending behavior.

Not only does a subculture provide the deviant with the opportunity to interact with others who share similar views, but it also furnishes the actor with a somewhat-stable environment in which to continue deviant activities. A subculture forms out of the necessity by deviants to engage in social relationships; J. L. Simmons (1969/1996) explains:

Beyond the ties of similar interests and views which lie at the base of most human associations, deviants find that establishing fairly stable relationships with other deviants does much to ease procurement and coping problems and to provide a more stable and reliable source of direct support and interaction.
(p. 266)

It is precisely this support that attracts Frenesi to the 24fps.

The reader is first introduced to Frenesi through others' recollections about her; as a result, there is no visible moment at which she leaves mainstream culture and is assigned the label "deviant." However, there is support that reveals her progression along her deviant career, as she moves from being a solitary actor to a member of a subculture, the 24-frames-per-second (24fps). Before examining Frenesi's involvement with the 24fps as a stage in her career, it is necessary to establish by what criteria the group can be considered a subculture.

A subculture is generally characterized by four distinguishing features, which include: the use of specialized vocabulary or argot, a set of shared beliefs that contrast

conventional society, interactions between group members through which behavior is learned and group membership is confirmed, and a specialized way of dressing and/or acting that serves both to distinguish group members from conventional society and to identify members to one another (McCaghy, 1985). The members of the 24fps, who speak in cinematic code, believe in the power of film to change a corrupt government and dedicate themselves to risking life and limb to get the perfect shot, clearly distinguishing themselves from mainstream culture.

The vocabulary used by the 24fps contrasts conventional society, serving both to separate group members from nonmembers and to reinforce the group's identity. The 24fps' vocabulary, as with any argot, is something that can only be learned through intimate association with the group. Reflecting the group's primary ambition, to expose injustice on film, the argot is comprised of film terms. The clearest example of the group's use of specialized vocabulary is in its name: 24fps is a cinematic reference to the standard film shooting speed, twenty-four frames per second. In expressing shooting techniques, their other terms similarly disconnect them from mainstream culture, which is likely to be unfamiliar with such words as "pan," referring to the movement of a camera across a line of action and phrases like "eight to one," a reference to a key to fill light ratio termed "low-key," which is a setup characterized by extreme contrast and deep shadows. While the 24fps employs terminology with which any beginning film student would be accustomed, the members further distinguish themselves from mainstream culture through their ideals.

The 24fps holds the belief that injustice is widespread throughout the government, which operates in direct contrast to the belief mainstream culture holds: the American government is sound and trustworthy. However, as parts of Vineland are set during the 1960s, a turbulent era when many young Americans took issue with governmental policies and protested the Vietnam War, this divergence, in itself, is not enough to label the 24fps a subculture. While the 24fps is an offshoot of the hippie movement through their shared ideal of the want for change, it differs from the broader hippie subculture that sought change through protests and sit-ins. Rather than engaging in physical demonstrations, the 24fps emphasizes using film as the medium to expose injustice and to prompt change. Frenesi and the rest of the 24fps believe that film, particularly close-ups, has the power to "reveal and devastate. . . . What viewer could believe in the war, the system, the countless lies about American freedom, looking into these mug shots of the bought and sold?" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 195). Later, when Frenesi leaves the 24fps, she realizes the error in this belief; she professes to DL, "Feel like we were running around like little kids with toy weapons, like the camera was really some kind of gun, gave us that kind of power. . . . How could we lose track like that, about what was real?" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 259). Yet, for the time Frenesi is involved with the 24fps, she and the other members hold an almost fantastic faith in the power of film, alone, to expose lies and instigate change. Frenesi protests to Brock Vond that simply capturing Weed's admission of guilt will be enough to remove him from power: "It's all coming apart. . . . We're going to be filming it. Once we have him [Weed], whether he lies or whether he confesses, he's done for, it doesn't matter"

(Pynchon, 1990, p. 240). In response, Brock questions Frenesi's faith in film, insists that it is not sufficient, and hands her a gun, explaining film can neither remove Weed from power nor guarantee her personal safety.

The 24fps' members' willingness to place themselves in hazardous circumstances for the sake of recording compelling footage contrasts conventional society's lack of desire to seek out dangerous situations. Pynchon explains the group's attitude towards danger: "The informal slogan around 24fps was Che Guevara's phrase 'Wherever death may surprise us.' It didn't have to be big and dramatic, like warfare in the street, it could happen as easily where they chose to take their witness, back in the shadows lighting up things the networks never would" (1990, pp. 202-203). Indeed, their readiness to engage in risky situations is frequently displayed. While filming a confrontation between college students and police, Frenesi becomes trapped between the two groups with no means of escape; when she "came up out of the safety of her viewfinder, Frenesi was alone, halfway between the people and the police, with no side street handy to go dodging down" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 116). Frenesi's commitment to the "shadows," the term the group uses to refer to filmed images, is shared by Ditzah, who asserts, "Film equals sacrifice" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 202). However, there is a minority of the group that is not as dedicated; Sledge contrasts Frenesi's and Ditzah's obsession and declares, "You don't die for no motherfuckin' shadows" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 202). That Frenesi is willing to risk her life simply for some footage illustrates both the extent to which she truly believes in the power of film and the degree to which she is willing to place her personal safety in jeopardy simply to capture the perfect shot.

Pynchon describes Frenesi's failure to recognize danger as naive: "did she really believe that as long as she had it inside her Tubeshaped frame, soaking up liberated halogen rays, nothing out there could harm her?" (1990, p. 202). To Frenesi and the other members of the 24fps, the camera is a weapon as powerful as a gun, yet they fail to acknowledge the lack of personal protection afforded by a Scoopic or an Arriflex.

Because the 24fps members' lives revolve around film and its use as a tool to enlighten others to the injustices occurring around them, cinematic techniques are learned by the group and function to confirm membership. Learning lighting techniques, specifically, is a source of both confirming membership and conflict; while light is a passion shared by all of the 24fps' members, disagreement exists over how it is to be used: "Everybody in 24fps had their own ideas about light, and about all they shared was the obsession. Meetings convened to take care of business would turn into arguments about light that happened so often they came to seem the essence of 24fps" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 201). Frenesi and Howie oppose one another over whether artificial or natural light should be used when filming, which is only one indication of greater problems in the group's unity. Technically, one has greater control over a shot when artificial lighting is used, as by precise selection of the key, fill, and back lights, one can create whatever contrast and shadows are desired. It is only natural that within any group some disagreements will arise; the conflict over lighting techniques does not take away from the shared passion for film and its use as a tool to expose the government's corruption.

There is ample support within Vineland to define the 24fps as a subculture. While there are members, such as Sledge, who are not willing to risk their lives for the cause of enlightening others to corruption, the group is unified in its rejection of mainstream ideals, its belief that through film injustice can be exposed, and its use of cinematic code within conversation. For individuals to feel satisfied with any subculture, there has to be a benefit to membership. With respect to the 24fps, one advantage to belonging to the group is its offer of social support, which can help actors to negotiate and manage the label as deviant.

Subcultures as a Means for Negotiating and Maintaining the Other Identity

As a stage in Frenesi's deviant career, the 24fps prompts her to continue her deviant activities with the support and encouragement of others. Because little is known about Frenesi prior to her involvement with the subculture, it is possible that her most visibly deviant activities occur once she establishes herself as a member of the 24fps. Frenesi first becomes involved with the 24fps through her association with the Pisk sisters, Ditzah and Zipi; they merge with the Pig Nihilist Film Kollektive, through which they enlist the services of other members and from whom they obtain both equipment and their idea of the camera as a weapon. Frenesi holds a key position within the group, as she is one of the two primary camerapeople; as Prairie, Frenesi's daughter, sits reviewing some of the 24fps' archives, she "understood that the person behind the camera most of the time really was her mother" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 199). Frenesi's responsibility to the group is to provide footage that other members, such as

Zipi and Ditzah, then edit. Therefore, Zipi and Ditzah further Frenesi's deviance: if they did not require Frenesi to shoot film, it is possible that she could renounce her deviant activity of engaging in dangerous, anti-government protests simply to meet others' needs. Frenesi is not only obligated to continue shooting, but she is also provided with a support network that encourages her.

Frenesi finds backing from other members of the 24fps in her deviance against the group, which appears in the form of instigating the removal of Weed from power. Receiving support from Rex and Howie, Frenesi puts Brock's plan of undermining Weed's power into action; upon hearing the news that Weed is an FBI informer, Howie initially resists and calls for a group meeting. Frenesi dismisses this suggestion, calling Howie's suggested course of action "little kid games" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 235); Pynchon writes of Frenesi's awareness of Rex's support in conspiring against Weed: "She knew she was messing with Rex, using him against Weed, wasn't sure if she wanted to, knew that Brock wanted her to" (1990, p. 236). With Rex's and Howie's support, Frenesi is able to prompt Weed's downfall: with the pair accompanying her, Frenesi confronts Weed, attempting to reassure him that film provides him with the best medium through which to explain his actions. While Howie provides support as a lighting director for Frenesi, Rex functions to escalate the situation by acting as Frenesi's literal hired gun, ultimately shooting Weed. Without enlisting the support of Rex and Howie, Frenesi would, arguably, be unable to perform either the act of convincing the rest of the group of Weed's betrayal or the subversion of his power.

Support from the 24fps not only encourages her to violate both mainstream culture's and the subculture's rules, but it also provides her with a tool to manage her identity.

Within the 24fps, DL most noticeably aids Frenesi in maintaining her identity. DL temporarily prevents Frenesi from being relabeled as a "Cooperative Person," a tag that would stigmatize her and lead to her expulsion from the group, by providing her with information necessary for Frenesi to perform damage control. DL confronts Frenesi, voicing her suspicions about her involvement in Weed's death. She also provides Frenesi with an account of Rex's actions following Weed's death and advises her the other members of the 24fps hold her responsible for it: "Rumor you set him up. . . . The Prosecutor's name also came up" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 259). While other members of the 24fps speculate about Frenesi's involvement with Brock, DL is the only one to bring this rumor to Frenesi's attention; as such, DL provides Frenesi with advance notice of her delabeling as a dependable member of the group. Frenesi initially downplays her involvement with Brock even to DL, attempting to persuade her it is only rumor; however, she finally appeals, "I'm not some pure creature" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 260), blaming her compliance to Brock's orders on her sexual obsession with him. With respect to the 24fps, Frenesi's social support system permits her to accept the label of Other and to embrace it, which is evident through the threat she feels at being labeled a "Cooperative Person." Just as Frenesi relies on DL to maintain her identity as a trusted member of the 24fps, so do other members of the 24fps use the group to negotiate and maintain their identities.

Even after the disintegration of the 24fps, members maintain their status as deviants and continue to reap the benefits of membership, primarily in the form of increased access to privileged information. Mirage, Ditzah, Zipi, and DL remain in contact after the group disperses, providing them with the means to learn new information about threats from their past, including Brock Vond. Mirage is the primary force behind keeping the information network flowing, as she occasionally reads former 24fps members' astrological charts in order to keep track of their progress "and, if it was really critical, to try and get in touch" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 263). Mirage proves her usefulness, extending more than mere astrological advice, as she serves as the first link in a chain of information; when trying to contact former members to inform them about Howie's recent setup, an arrest for cocaine, "a substance he'd never used" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 263), she discovers "two, possibly three more [former members] had dropped out of sight abruptly, leaving no explanation" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 263). Zipi, in turn, contacts Ditzah who shares the information with DL. The value of maintaining contact with former members of the 24fps serves to not only reinforce the previously held status as deviant, but also to avert potential difficulties with former threats.

Ditzah's status as deviant is reinforced to Prairie, who meets her many years after her anti-governmental activity; Ditzah is described as "your average suburban mom" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 194), a far cry from the rebel DL and Frenesi had known who, along with her sister Zipi, had dressed "in battle fatigues with their hair in matching oversize Jewish Afros" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 194). However, Prairie questions whether

the image of Ditzah as an ordinary member of society is just a disguise, a concern resulting from what she views as Ditzah's unshakable deviant identity that has been fueled by sustained communication with other members of the 24fps. The chronic quality of Ditzah's deviant identity demonstrates Michel de Certeau's (1984) discussion of the lasting nature of political affiliations. People frequently identify with a former affiliation simply because they do not possess a strong enough desire to commit to a new group; political parties count on this "erosion itself of every conviction, since these vestiges indicate both the ebbing-away of what those questioned formerly believed and the absence of a stronger credibility that draws them elsewhere" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 178). While Ditzah's appearance no longer signals her membership in the 24fps, the fact that she has not replaced her distrust of the government with belief in it is enough to sustain her deviance.

The Creation, Re-creation, and Change of Cultural Patterns

In spite of the conflict in Vineland that exists between mainstream culture and subculture, the two groups are alike both in the tools they use to deal with problems and in the instability that threatens their authority. Both Frenesi, key member in the 24fps, and Brock Vond, poster boy for conformity, deny involvement in or knowledge of situations that could jeopardize their credibility. While mainstream culture practices labeling, delabeling, and relabeling to identify those who have broken rules or who have reformed and are ready to re-enter society, the 24fps uses these tactics to instate and remove its leaders and principal members. Finally, the threat the 24fps poses to

the greater culture, in terms of the lack of unity they present, is echoed within the group by the instability of both its leaders and members. In spite of the 24fps' attempt to defy mainstream culture, the group employs approaches similar to those used by mainstream culture in order to deal with the obstacles it faces.

Just as Frenesi attempts to cover up her responsibility for Weed's death, so does the government hide its culpability for the disappearance of protesters. Following an invasion of the PR³ by the American government:

There were scores of injuries, hundreds of arrests, no reported deaths but a handful of persons unaccounted for. In those days it was still unthinkable that any North American agency would kill its own civilians and then lie about it. So the mystery abided, frozen in time, somewhere beyond youthful absences surely bound to be temporary, yet short of planned atrocity. (Pynchon, 1990, p. 248)

At his press conference, Brock assists in covering up the absence of the protesters and prevents anyone's suspicion from being raised by speculating the missing demonstrators have gone underground. Frenesi's conspiracy against the 24fps also functions by denying both her knowledge and responsibility for Weed's death; as such, she employs the methods of control used by the dominant group. Further similarities appear in the ways in which both groups identify deviance.

Delabeling and relabeling, which occur in mainstream culture, appear in the 24fps as power shifts occur. Frenesi and Weed provide clear examples of subjects of these processes: Frenesi is delabeled as a "right" member of the group and relabeled

as a "Cooperative Person," while Weed is initially named as the group's leader, then delabeled as a member of the 24fps and relabeled as an FBI informant. The frequency with which these processes occur suggests both the 24fps' unstable leadership and membership and the volatility of group.

Frenesi's delabeling begins when several members of the 24fps suspect she is romantically involved with Rex. However, the process is delayed when other members shift their focus away from her betrayal and towards Weed's perceived betrayal. While official labeling is not immediate, members of the 24fps are suspicious that Frenesi chooses to spend more time with Rex and very little with the group; they suspect Frenesi poses a threat to them, to the point that her activity needs to be monitored: "After a series of consultations with others in the unit, DL had suggested to Howie . . . that he find a way to keep an eye on Frenesi" (Pynchon, 1990, pp. 233-234). Howie begins spending more time at Rex's apartment in order to spy on Frenesi and Rex, only to have Frenesi reveal Weed's disloyalty. The 24fps fail to label her for some time, focusing their efforts on delabeling and relabeling Weed. However, immediately following Weed's death, Rex realizes Frenesi's betrayal, sobbing, "It should have been you, Frenesi" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 247). The recognition that Frenesi has committed a visible offense is the first step in delabeling her as a trusted member of the 24fps. DL confronts Frenesi with the rumor that she set up Weed's assassination, which threatens Frenesi's status as a member in good standing because her actions fail to comply with 24fps' values. Because Frenesi holds a highly valued position within the group, she stands to lose her credibility more easily than those members of lower status. As Pierre

Bourdieu explains: "The 'great' can least afford to take liberties with the official norms and they have to pay for their outstanding value with exemplary conformity to the values of the group" (1990, p. 129). Frenesi's betrayal results not only in her delabeling, but also in her relabeling. Ironically, Frenesi serves as her own audience, as she is the first person to identify herself as a "Cooperative Person" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 280). Falling out of favor with the group is not restricted to Frenesi; as Weed discovers, it is easy to lose one's status as a trusted member of the 24fps.

Weed is initially labeled as a leader, then experiences rapid delabeling and relabeling as a traitor. Weed's rise to the status of leader is accidental, resulting from his stature. While attending a protest, others ask him what is occurring, as his height allows him to see over the mass of people. In response to his description of the line of armed police, someone standing near Weed demands they find a way out of the conflict. Another voice suggests, "Follow this big dude," (Pynchon, 1990, p. 207) and people respond, forcing Weed into power. In spite of Weed's resistance, "it seemed he'd already been chosen, already too many were going to move exactly the way he did" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 207). Rex reinforces Weed's new label, and his popularity as a leader is demonstrated during a rally: " 'Weed!' they cried, like a sports crowd in another country, the echo just subsiding before the next 'Weed!' " (Pynchon, 1990, p. 210). The rapidity of Weed's rise to power is paralleled only by his delabeling and relabeling as a double-crosser. Frenesi, who hangs the "snitch jacket" on Weed, instigates his downfall. Immediately, others' perceptions of him change, as the group prepares to confront him. When Rex, carrying the gun in his bag, confronts Weed,

"Weed had found himself a classical pigeon" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 233). Weed's awareness of the conspiracy against him occurs too late for him to save himself; others recognize Frenesi's betrayal after the fact, but Weed is unable to prevent the delabeling and relabeling processes that are responsible for his death.

The ease with which Frenesi accomplishes removing Weed from power is an indication of the instability of the group. From the moment that she informs Howie and Rex about Weed's betrayal, his ruin is securely in place. The entire resistance movement is threatened by insecurity; Frenesi reveals to Brock, "It's all coming apart. Suddenly everybody's got a payoff story to tell, total paranoia" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 239). While mainstream culture is threatened by the resistance movement, as is evident by Brock's determination to disperse and disarm it, the 24fps and PR³ face threats to their power both from within the group and from the federal government. In such a manner, lack of stability characterizes both mainstream and Other cultures.

The group's instability exists not only in its leadership, but also in its membership, a quality that is evident from the very inception of the 24fps. While there exists a core membership of Ditzah, Zipi, Frenesi, DL, Rex, Howie, and Sledge, the rest of the organization is described as "An incoherent collection of souls, to look at them, a certain number always having drifted in and out—impatient apprentices, old-movie freex, infiltrators and provocateurs of more than one political stripe" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 196). Frenesi admits the 24fps never shuts anyone out, it accepts "the hypocrites and double agents and summertime outlaws and all that fringe residue nobody else'll touch" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 235); as a result, the members' commitment to the group varies.

Upon returning to Berkeley shortly after Weed's death, DL rejoins "Howie and Sledge, either loyal to the end or just in shock. . . and found they were just about all that was left of the 24fps" (Pynchon, 1990, p. 249). With both the varying commitment of members and the lack of solidity in Weed's leadership as indications of the instability of the group, it is possible to consider the resistance movement as holding similar characteristics to mainstream culture. In attempting to break away from mainstream culture, rather than inventing new forms, the 24fps and the PR³ merely enact structures and behaviors they have learned through their socialization by the larger culture.

While it tries to break away from mainstream culture, the 24fps is haunted by the same problems that face the government. The conflict over interests and the conspiracy against Weed plague the 24fps, yet it attempts to maintain its power by using the precise tools used by mainstream culture: labeling, delabeling, and relabeling. The result is unsuccessful, as the group is ultimately dismembered. However, as there is no indication that former members suddenly commit to that which they used to oppose, it is possible they still identify themselves as members of the resistance. The dominant forms of control appear within the dominated, Other group, yet it is unable to exercise them triumphantly.

CHAPTER FOUR

"ONE MORE THING," "WHERE I'M CALLING FROM," AND "GAZEBO":

THE ROLE OF PARTNERS IN DETERMINING ALCOHOLISM

Critics such as David Boxer, Cassandra Phillips, and Martin Scofield have commented on Raymond Carver's ability to present the ordinary in such a way that it is at once familiar and alarming. Through his portrayal of blue-collar characters who frequently abuse alcohol or other drugs as a means of escaping their problems, Carver's stories read as ethnographic accounts of the Other in America that is comprised of the lower class.

Class As a Construction of Other: The Blue-Collar Alcoholic in Carver's Stories

As a recurrent concern in Carver's stories, the ordinary takes on a disturbing quality, for readers cannot help but sense the presence of something dark lurking beneath a seemingly normal facade. Indeed, there is only a fine line separating the commonplace and the peculiar; Scofield (1994) finds that in Carver's stories "the banality comes to seem as arresting as the strangeness" (p. 245). As Boxer and Phillips comment, Carver creates the disarming from the normal and "forces us to see through the most conventional and habitual experiences of everyday life. It is the familiar, the seemingly 'known,' which is the true mask of the terrifying" (1979, p. 83). The ordinary appears throughout Carver's stories, in various forms such as characters, nondescript setting, dialogue, and everyday events that are recognizable to the reader. It is precisely because Carver uses these common items that his stories are even more disturbing; one expects that which is strange to alienate, but one does not expect

alienation to occur in familiar, comforting settings. In discussing the normality of the subjects of Carver's stories, critics have reviewed both the prevalence of blue-collar characters (Scofield, 1994, p. 243) and the characters' attempts to escape from everyday problems through drugs and alcohol (Downes, 1996, p. 55; Nessel, 1994, p. 117).

As a recurrent element in Carver's stories, the presence of working-class characters holds dual significance: they not only present readers with a character who is familiar to them, someone who is necessarily ordinary, but the characters also, in their familiarity, function to present something strange. In such a manner, Otherness appears in Carver's stories not through a geographically imposed cultural difference, but rather through a class-prescribed cultural difference, which includes such elements as distinct speech and drug or alcohol dependence. Miriam Marty Clark (1991, p. 241) explains Carver's characters' speech is distinct as being working-class; as there is no apparent distinction between male and female speech in most of Carver's stories, class rather than gender, defines characters. Carver also represents lower-class characters through their abuse of drugs and alcohol, which is an attempt to escape the afflictions that disturb them. Gary Williams explains, "A great many of Carver's stories and poems offer a view of life as experienced through an alcohol-induced haze; he is, in fact, one of the finest chroniclers of lives wrecked by booze" (1997, p. 26). Barbara Henning (1989) notes Carver's characters' "anxieties and disappointments are . . . displaced through drug and alcohol use" (p. 690). Drinking and drugs function to insulate characters from problems; as Margaret Downes (1996) explains, the characters'

drinking is frequently an attempt to escape "their self-perceived alienation and subjection" (p. 55). Naomi Matsuoka (1993, p. 430) focuses on the over-indulgence in alcohol as a means of protection. The recurring image in Carver's stories is one of ordinary, blue-collar characters who are paralyzed from taking any action to relieve their conditions, and, as result, seek to escape whatever ordinariness troubles them through excessive use of drugs and/or alcohol.

Alcoholism compounds the characters' difference and further establishes them as *Other*. As *Other* and *deviant* seek to describe similar situations where cultures or actors are labeled for their difference from the dominant code (see Chapter Two), alcoholics, whose behavior differs from the rest of society in terms of the extent of their drinking, suffer from both labels. There is little question that alcoholism can be considered deviant, as there exist not only official programs and support groups that seek to remove the label alcoholic from those who display excessive dependence upon alcohol, but also a clear rule that is violated by the alcoholic--that one should not be intoxicated for long stretches of time. An audience responds to the infringement of this rule by labeling the offender an alcoholic, as the actor's behavior is such that it fails "to coincide temporally with appropriate events" (Reese and Katovich, 1989, p. 171). Recovering alcoholics are readmitted into normal society on the basis of their rejection of the deviant label, a process that is often facilitated by social organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous (A. A.). The delabeling and relabeling processes provide the means for an individual to leave the label of alcoholic and to return to conformist

society. Additionally, the medicalization of alcoholism by A. A. eases the re-entry of the recovered alcoholic into conventional society by neutralizing the stigma of the label.

Carver's Stories As Ethnographic Accounts

The stages through which Carver's characters pass parallel those identified by sociologists who study alcoholism. As such, "One More Thing" and "Where I'm Calling From" function as accounts that detail the struggle endured not only by the alcoholic, but also by his family in attempting either to restructure the family in the absence of the offender or to receive assistance in aiding the alcoholic to adopt the label of "recovering alcoholic," thus easing his return to normal society.

When deviance is conferred upon an individual by a partner in a relationship, it is on the basis of digression from established behaviors. The offender establishes a behavior pattern differing from prior activities, which parallels the act of breaking a rule before an audience of strangers, and the partner responds by either not understanding this behavior or by labeling it as unacceptable. The partner then questions the expectations he or she places on the offender and makes up excuses for the behavior. Following this, the deviant behavior increases either in occurrence or degree until it reaches the partner's level of tolerance for the behavior, at which time the partner's interpretations of the behavior shift back and forth between perceptions of normalcy and deviance. The partner responds to the increased aberrant behavior by inventing ways to cope with it, such as by denying the existence of any abnormality or by diminishing the degree to which the behavior deviates from normal behavior through

making excuses for any changes. Finally, the behavior reaches a point at which it is no longer bearable and the partner seeks some form of outside help to deal with the problem (Yarrow, Schwartz, Murphy, and Deasy, 1955/1996, pp. 29-30). In the case of alcoholism as deviant behavior, the partner's pattern of reaction is slightly different to the model described.

The response of wives to husbands' alcoholism is explored in Joan K. Jackson's (1954/1996) "The Adjustment of the Family to the Crisis of Alcoholism." She notes that because her study focused only on wives' reactions, it is not possible to estimate the behavior patterns of husbands' responses to alcoholic wives because men and women exhibit different drinking patterns and perform different roles in the family. The reactions in Jackson's study followed seven clearly identifiable stages. The first stage is characterized by a husband breaking an established behavior pattern by sporadically drinking to excess. The wife responds to this aberrant behavior by ignoring a problem exists and by focusing on solving problems in the marriage that are not related to drinking. Following the wife's refusal to admit a problem exists, the drinking continues to the point where the couple is socially isolated and rejected by their acquaintances. Focusing on herself, the wife often feels a sense of failure because she is not able to curb her husband's drinking. After time, both she and her husband stop trying to control the drinking, and the wife begins to worry about her inability to stop the aberrant behavior. After this stage, the wife reorganizes the family by putting the husband in the role of the rebellious child, renewing family stability which was previously disrupted; her self-doubt lessens. As the drinking continues, the wife usually opts to separate from

her husband; the family is restructured with the wife and children. The family may be reunited at a later time if the husband ceases drinking. However, in cases where the husband does not stop drinking, the family fails to reunite, instead reorganizing itself with the mother as the head of household.

Raymond Carver's short story "One More Thing" examines the moment a wife refuses to continue to put up with her husband's alcoholism and throws him out in order to restructure the family unit with her daughter. Carver opens the story like this: "L.D.'s wife, Maxine, told him to get out the night she came home from work and found L.D. drunk again and being abusive to Rae, their fifteen-year-old" (1981b, p. 282). It is implied that Maxine, who has put up with L.D.'s continued aberrant behavior, excessive drinking, has reached her tolerance limit and has found the self-confidence necessary to restructure the family without L.D. Maxine clarifies L.D.'s behavior has followed the pattern established by Jackson: his initial excessive drinking, their joint social isolation, her attempts to persuade him to stop, and her taking control of the situation. All of these events have led up to the moment she has decided to separate from L.D. and to reorganize the family. She explains to him that this deviance will no longer be tolerated: "L.D., I've had it. So has Rae. So has everyone who knows you. I've been thinking it over. I want you out of here. Tonight. This minute. Now. Get the hell out of here right now" (Carver, 1981b, p. 283). Maxine's demand is met by initial resistance from L.D. Maxine's words to him as he gathers his things to leave express anger over his drinking destroying the family: "Haven't you done enough damage in this house already? Go on, L.D. Get out of here and leave us in peace . . . You made it [this

home] into a nuthouse" (Carver, 1981b, p. 284). It is clear that Maxine has reached her breaking point of tolerance of L.D.'s behavior and that if he will continue his deviance, then there is no place for him in the family. Because he has failed to try to stop drinking, there is no other solution than for him to leave.

Frequently, alcoholics are unable to cease their deviant activity without some form of professional help. Medical care has been offered as a solution to many forms of deviant behaviors that are seen as medical problems, ranging from hyperactivity in children to alcoholism. Peter Conrad (1975/1996) explains the medicalization of deviants is useful in destigmatizing some behaviors because "there is less condemnation of the deviants (they have an illness, it is not their fault) and perhaps less social stigma. In some cases, even the medical treatment itself is more humanitarian social control than the criminal justice system" (p. 74). The primary motivation for using medical care to treat deviance is its ability to exert a form of social control on the individual to persuade him to cease deviant activity. However, as Conrad (1975/1996) explains, treating deviance as a medical problem is not without drawbacks. By exercising medical care on an alcoholic, for example, the focus shifts from the behavior that is seen as deviant to viewing the behavior merely as a symptom of an underlying illness; because an illness is seen as something only treatable by professional help, only doctors and other qualified professionals are able to treat the individual, denying him access to other means of care from ordinary people (Conrad, 1975/1996, p. 74). Additionally, medical social control results in the individualization of social problems: attention turns from looking for solutions to widespread problems in

society to seeking a solution for the afflicted individual (Conrad, 1975/1996, p. 75). The impact of treating deviance as a medical problem increases as deviance is depoliticized: "we ignore the meaning of behavior in the context of the social system" (Conrad, 1975/1996, p. 75). In spite of the problems associated with treating deviance as a medical, rather than social, problem, it is still a common response.

Raymond Carver's "Where I'm Calling From" focuses on two men in a private rehabilitation center for alcoholics. While there is little discussion of the narrator's behavior of excessive drinking, there is a great deal of detail about the process through which his acquaintance, J.P., arrives at the facility. As is the case in Jackson's study, J.P. undergoes a series of changes in his drinking pattern that results in his need to seek professional help in order to reassume his place in his family. The narrator recounts J.P.'s switch from occasionally drinking beer to more frequently drinking hard alcohol:

He moved his drinking time up to early afternoon, while he was still supposed to be working. He tells me that he was starting off the morning with a couple of drinks. He'd have a belt of the stuff before he brushed his teeth. Then he'd have his coffee. He'd go to work with a thermos bottle of vodka in his lunch pail.

(Carver, 1983d, p. 380)

While his increased drinking is notable because it parallels the first stage of Jackson's research, it is essential to note his wife, Roxy, reacts to the behavior by feeling helpless to change it. While social isolation does not occur in J.P.'s case, the evidence of both his and Roxy's stopping trying to control the drinking, the third identifiable stage in

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response to alcoholism, is clearly visible: "Things got out of hand. But he kept on drinking. He couldn't stop. And nothing could make him stop" (Carver, 1983d, p. 381). The implication that not even Roxy could convince J.P. to stop drinking facilitates their placement in the fourth stage of adjustment to alcoholism: Roxy takes control of the situation. Against the advice of her father and brother to leave J.P., the narrator recounts that Roxy felt "it was her problem. She got herself into it, and she'd solve it" (Carver, 1983d, p. 381). Roxy finds the tool to deal with the aberrant behavior, not by separating from J.P., by cheating on him. There is less of a move to reorganize the family, comprised of Roxy and her two children, than in Jackson's study, but Roxy's choice to seek support from a boyfriend is essentially the same as a separation from J.P. would be. He eventually arrives at the rehabilitation facility voluntarily after he is arrested for drunk driving, which follows a drinking binge. The narrator explains, "He was here at Frank Martin's to dry out and to figure how to get his life back on track" (Carver, 1983d, p. 381). In spite of the deterrents of professional help for treating alcoholism, J.P. is willing to try whatever is necessary to regain control in his wife's eyes to be able to rejoin his family.

While alcoholism is a deviant behavior for which people are labeled, female alcoholics receive greater stigmatization from both conformist and deviant societies for their excessive drinking. Florence Ridlon (1988) examines possible reasons for this heightened stigma, explaining that journalistic and expert opinions, firsthand accounts, quantitative studies, and lack of treatment facilities for female alcoholics all provide support for her claim that "female alcoholics are more heavily stigmatized than male

alcoholics" (p. 59). Experts' opinions, stated in journals and books, find that societal response to the female alcoholic is greater than it is to the male alcoholic for reasons that include the double-standard, in which men's excessive drinking is more socially acceptable than women's, and the idea that being an alcoholic necessarily violates the feminine ideal to which women are held. Firsthand accounts by informants reveal the awareness by female alcoholics of others' criticism of their behavior, while quantitative studies, which fail to directly state greater disapproval of female alcoholics, imply the increased stigma held by women who are alcoholics because "if people consider it worse for a woman to drink heavily [which is something stated in the studies], it would seem to follow that they would be censorious of her" (Ridlon, 1988, p. 61). The limited number of treatment facilities available for female alcoholics, Ridlon (1988) asserts, is due in part to the bias of those who research alcoholism, which has caused an underrepresentation of the true number of female alcoholics; additionally, she speculates there is a correlation between the lack of facilities for women and the gross stigmatization of female alcoholics. Ridlon's research reveals that female alcoholics, themselves, are more condemning of other heavy drinking women than they are of men, emphasizing that even within the smaller divisions of deviant subcultures, societal ideals shape individuals' conceptions of deviance.

Carver's "Gazebo" reveals a relationship on the verge of ending; whether it is caused by Duane's cheating or Holly's drinking is debatable. However, it is possible that Holly's excessive drinking is intensified by Duane's infidelity. "Gazebo" opens with a description of Holly's odd behavior: "That morning she pours Teacher's over my belly

and licks it off. That afternoon she tries to jump out the window" (Carver, 1981a, p. 198). Duane tries to deny Holly's aberrant behavior, at least to her face, responding to her claim that she can't take it anymore with, " 'Take what?' I go, though of course I know" (Carver, 1981a, p. 198). Holly, however, recognizes both her excessive drinking and the threat to their relationship it and Duane's adultery pose, as she confesses she's lost control (Carver, 1981a, p. 198). Holly is willing to admit her deviance to both herself and to Duane, which indicates that she is struggling through self-labeling; Duane, in contrast, initially attempts to resist the label by sustaining an image of normalcy in their relationship and behavior. However, he slowly begins to adjust to the label, examining his and Holly's dependence on alcohol, admitting not only that all of their significant decisions have been made during drinking binges (Carver, 1981a, p. 200), but also that "the truth is we were both hitting it pretty hard. Booze takes a lot of time and effort if you're going to do a good job with it" (Carver, 1981a, p. 201). Duane establishes that his and Holly's excessive drinking is not simply a one-time occurrence, but that it has been an issue for some period of time. The manner in which he describes the couple's dependence on it suggests its use as a coping mechanism. Throughout the story, Duane and Holly's conversation skirts around self-labeling, which Holly openly admits. Duane, while recognizing the overuse, apparently requires it even to cope with the idea that they share a problem with alcohol: "Even when we talked about having to cut back on our drinking, we'd be sitting at the kitchen table or out at the picnic table with a six-pack or whiskey" (Carver, 1981a, p. 200). Holly takes the first step on the road to recovery through her acknowledgement, aloud to Duane, of the

problem; Duane, in contrast, while being able to admit it to himself, cannot admit it even to Holly, suggesting he will need to struggle with the label before he is willing to admit his alcoholism to others in order to get the help he needs.

While labeling usually results from a group responding to an individual's rule breaking, it is important to consider the actions a partner takes when identifying aberrant behavior. There are no strict guidelines as to what constitutes conventional behavior; responses are simply made based on a spouse's or partner's past interactions and observations of the deviant. As John Kitsuse (1962/1996, p. 14) explains, people's behaviors come into question when they act outside of those commonly exhibited by members of the group with which they are involved. Therefore, a partner must take into account various past behaviors to determine if an individual's actions violate previous patterns. Often, the observer will make a retrospective interpretation, reevaluating events in light of his or her suspicions and possibly altering the facts (Yarrow, Schwartz, Murphy, Deasy 1955/1996, p. 35). When a partner's behavior is such that it threatens the relationship, it becomes necessary for the other partner to do anything within his or her means to put an end to the aberrant behavior, even if it results in ending the relationship.

The Products of Alcoholism

Critics including Facknitz, Gearhart, Matsuoka, Nessel, and Scofield have noted that Carver's early work explores the themes of inarticulation and the idea that even when communication occurs, it is not without dire consequences. The results of failed

speech range from failed relationships to alienation; whatever case Carver chooses, the characters, as Mark Facknitz (1986) asserts, are never capable of directly communicating with one another. "Often they try to rephrase their ideas for inattentive listeners, who are as likely as they to be dulled by drugs, alcohol, and over-eating. Thus speech is stuporous and far from perfect" (p. 287). Michael Gearhart (1989) finds failed speech can cause characters to be socially, morally, and spiritually paralyzed (p. 439). Inarticulation appears as a product of alcoholism both in "One More Thing" and in "Gazebo," as both of these stories are characterized by unsuccessful communication and result in the breakdown of a relationship. "Where I'm Calling From," in contrast, demonstrates the ability of sober discussion to function as a recuperative tool.

L.D.'s problems with communication occur both with his daughter, Rae, and his wife, Maxine. He attempts to persuade Rae that his alcoholism is not in his head, thus medicalizing it, but she insists, "It's in your head" (Carver, 1981b, p. 284). Unable to get his point through to Rae verbally, L.D. attempts physical means to underscore his point, hitting the table as he protests, "That's crazy" (Carver, 1981b, p. 282). Maxine intervenes, telling L.D. "Shut up" (Carver, 1981b, p. 282), stifling his voice. Not only are L.D.'s attempts at communication unsuccessful, but they are also further rejected by both Maxine and Rae. After being told by Maxine to leave, L.D. again resorts to a physical attempt to express himself, throwing a bottle of pickles through the kitchen window. Maxine's reaction is to warn her daughter both to call the police and to leave the room. Language fails L.D. and when he attempts nonverbal means through which to express himself, he is still unsuccessful. The closing line of the story demonstrates

the degree to which language fails L.D.; on the threshold of leaving his wife and daughter, L.D. has his bags packed and wants to state one last thing before he leaves, but his attempt is futile: "But then he could not think what it could possibly be" (Carver, 1981b, p. 284). In this story, Carver grants L.D. the desire to communicate, yet he denies the possibility of actualizing successful communication.

Inarticulation is similarly expressed in "Gazebo" as Holly attempts to express to Duane that their marriage is over, while Duane refuses to listen to her; he hears the words she says, but he fails to actively listen to and comprehend her. He acknowledges the end of their relationship to himself, but he is unable to vocalize it. Holly protests, "I've had it . . . I can't take it anymore" (Carver, 1981a, p. 198), yet Duane feigns that he doesn't know to what she refers. He later admits, "We knew our days were numbered. We had fouled our lives and we were getting ready for a shake-up" (Carver, 1981a, p. 201), referring both to the inevitable end of their relationship and to their eviction by the management of the hotel where they work. While Duane can admit this to himself, he is both emotionally and verbally crippled in admitting it to Holly: "I don't have anything to say. I feel all out of words inside" (Carver, 1981a, p. 201). Duane, whose verbal skills fail him, hopes for nonverbal communication with Holly: "I pray for a sign from Holly. I pray for Holly to show me" (Carver, 1981a, p. 203), but this, too is unfulfilled. Duane epitomizes the characters in Carver's early works who "talk and listen with characteristically poor results" (Nesset, 1994, p. 121). Duane clearly wants to maintain the relationship in spite of his recognition that it is ending: "We both knew it then. We'd reached the end of something, and the thing was to find out

where new to start" (Carver, 1981a, p. 202); his failure to communicate with Holly parallels Robert's in "Cathedral" who prefers to "go on as married couples do in Carver's stories, never forcing a point because each hurt touches on another hurt. Thus, because each serious effort risks the destruction of a stuporous status quo that he [the narrator] maintains by various strategies of denial, they never touch each other" (Facknitz, 1986, p. 294). Unlike Robert, however, Duane is not granted a reprieve from his inability to communicate; he and Holly continue towards the end of their marriage with only drinking to dull the pain.

Kirk Nessel notes that Cathedral marks a turning point in Carver's writing, explaining that unlike his earlier works, in which "narrative transactions--if transaction has taken place at all--constitute perilous intercourse indeed" (1994, p. 119), Cathedral marks a transformation in Carver's style, as characters are endowed with the power to overcome unsuccessful communication and use it as a tool with which to heal. Cathedral suggests that "as an artist Carver, like a few of his more fortunate characters, is capable of breaking free of enclosing environments, exchanging them not only for greater capaciousness but, we must assume, for a new understanding of himself and his craft as well" (Nessel, 1994, p. 124). Within Cathedral, "Where I'm Calling From" demonstrates the use of communication as a recuperative rather than a harmful element.

The prospect of successful communication to heal is illustrated in "Where I'm Calling From," in which the narrator discovers strength in communicating with others. The importance of others' narratives, especially J.P.'s, to the narrator is undeniable:

"The coming out of hardened insularity involves intensive listening, as necessary for him as telling is for J.P." (Nesset, 1994, p. 119). The narrator encourages J.P. to continue telling his story, admitting, "I was interested. But I would have listened if he'd been going on about how one day he'd decided to start pitching horseshoes" (Carver, 1983d, p. 379). The narrator is assisted in dealing with his sobriety by listening to J.P. reveal the events that brought him to the treatment facility: "It's helping me relax . . . It's taking me away from my own situation" (Carver, 1983d, p. 380). The story marks a divergence from earlier works not only in successful face-to-face communication, but also in the use of the telephone not as an object to avoid communication but rather as an object to successfully carry conversation. The phone, which provides the opportunity for either party to discontinue conversation, is used within the story to offer hope: the narrator, who is expecting a telephone call "is waiting for a drop-line of his own, his 'line out' being . . . the telephone" (Nesset, 1994, p. 120). Rather than using the telephone as an instrument by which either party can instantly cut off communication and harm the other one, Carver uses it in this story to present a tool for healing. The story closes with the narrator thinking about calling his wife and his girlfriend: " 'Hello, sugar,' I'll say when she answers. 'It's me' " (Carver, 1983d, p. 389). The narrator looks forward to communicating with his wife, admitting that he'll have to tell her where he's calling from; rather than attempting to deny his situation, he is willing to confess it and to begin repairing relationships.

Alcohol abuse, which leads to difficulties in communicating with others, is one trait with which Carver plagues his blue-collar characters. Inarticulation compounds

characters' deviance, as they are incapable of confronting their accusers to negotiate for a lesser label. Through analyzing "One More Thing," "Where I'm Calling From," and "Gazebo," one discovers clear parallels between the stages through which Carver's characters and research subjects pass: in both cases partners identify actors' excessive drinking and ultimately seek to reorganize their families in the absence of the offender. Through his convincing portrayals of the problems faced by alcoholics and their families, Carver's stories function as ethnographic accounts of what it is to be an alcoholic, blue-collar worker in American culture.

CHAPTER FIVE

ENTROPY IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Because they define what constitutes acceptable behavior, Edwin Schur (1971) asserts: "Organizations produce deviants" (p. 82). According to both Schur (1971) and Charles Wolfson (1984), social control is a force that creates and continues deviance by designating rules, which offenders break. Gary Marx (1981) concurs, stating the presence of social control functions to explain deviance in "the possible irony of social controllers creating what they set out to control" (p. 222). Deviance, an audience-specific designation, exists not because of rule-breaking but rather because others define norms for acceptable behavior. Frances Piven (1981) explains agencies of social control function both to define this behavior and to enforce the domination of offenders by conformist society; as such, the defiance of rules by deviants "is not only a threat to social order, but a challenge to the particular pattern of domination on which that social order rests" (p. 489). However, when social order is challenged not by deviance but by instability, the ability of agencies and audiences to assign labels to offenders is weakened.

If labels are to be taken seriously by actors, to the extent that they will either accept or reject the label, they must be assigned by agents that have the authority to enforce them; when such authority is undermined by disorder, the impact of the label diminishes. Wolfson (1984) identifies three groups whose actions maintain the prevailing social rules, which an offender's behavior violates: people who have personal interaction with the rule breakers (e.g. friends, family, coworkers), who may provide the initial labeling and sustain the dominant cultural values; pressure groups, which may be

morally or politically driven, who demand change by rule makers in response to the violation of rules; and those who enforce the rules by taking official action to punish the offender's behavior. When the authority of people who regularly interact with an offender is put into question, the actor may choose to dismiss a label on the grounds of its triviality (Williams, 1976). Because one of the most important aspects of labeling is the stigma it poses to actors, if offenders find the audience that labels them lacks credibility, then the label, too, will be irrelevant. When pressure groups lose their leverage, they fail to influence the legislature and can no longer prompt new measures that officially forbid rule-breaking behaviors; as such, offenders may resist deviant labels when their activities are no longer deterred by official means, such as arrests. When the authority of agencies of social control diminishes, both offenders and normals may no longer take these agencies' actions or judgment seriously. Furthermore, through retrospective interpretation, the agencies' previous judgement calls may be questioned. An example from recent American history demonstrates this point: following the beating of Rodney King by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), an incident that was videotaped by a passing motorist and subsequently aired on television stations nationwide, charges of officers' racism arose. When the case went to trial and the officers were acquitted, not only did racially motivated riots ensue, but also the credibility of the LAPD fell, as people were provided with the opportunity to question whether arrests made were valid. When instability endangers the power of those groups that maintain social rules, labeled individuals are provided with the means to escape the label. Offenders, as Laurie Chassin, Barbara Eason, and Richard Young

(1981) claim, "are not necessarily passive receptors of their deviant label" (p. 34); when they are given a way out of the label, such as through having it assigned by an audience that lacks authority, the labeling process is no longer effective.

When the order of social control is threatened, as is the case in Thomas Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49, the instability both of labeling and of designations of deviance, which are fragile, audience-dependent affairs, becomes pronounced. The text, itself, is an example of controlled chaos, which leads readers and characters to negotiate carefully the boundaries of deviance and normalcy. Entropy, or the disorder of a closed system, is significant to The Crying of Lot 49 not only in its use as a force that shapes the text, but also for its appearance as an element that Oedipa attempts to defy, a pursuit that leads her to alternate between adopting the roles of Maxwell's Demon and sensitive. Her efforts to choose between these opposing identities parallels the dilemma faced by labeled individuals in attempting to determine whether to embrace the deviant identity and to accept the accompanying stigma, or whether to reject it in the hopes of returning to normal society.

An Overview of Entropy, The Second Law of Thermodynamics, And Maxwell's Demon

Pynchon not only presents entropy as a subject within The Crying of Lot 49, but he also applies the theory of entropy to the text itself. As Tony Tanner (1982) has noted of the effect of Pynchon's use of entropy in the novel: "The more we think we know, the less we know we know" (p. 56). Entropy has two different applications that

appear in the study of thermodynamics and the study of communication; while in both cases it refers to the disorder of a closed system, the relationship between thermodynamics and communication theory and their uses of entropy is inverse. Before a formal discussion of the use of entropy as a textual force can occur, it is necessary to play the role of Maxwell's Demon¹, thereby decreasing the entropy² in this chapter, by sorting through references in Pynchon's novel to the second law of thermodynamics and by separating fact in this subject from the fictional constructs that appear in the novel.

A brief overview of the laws of thermodynamics is essential for understanding the ideas of entropy and Maxwell's Demon. The first law of thermodynamics, also referred to as the law of conservation of energy, requires that the energy in any given system remain constant in spite of any changes that occur. For example, if a turbine works in combination with a generator to change mechanical energy into electrical energy, "the quantity of electrical energy 'produced' by the generator, plus any frictional losses, is exactly equal to the quantity of mechanical energy 'lost' by the turbine" (Castellan, 1971, pp. 96-97). The second law of thermodynamics concerns the direction in which energy transfers occur in a system, insisting that they can only occur in the natural direction, which is to move towards a state of equilibrium (Barrow, 1973). In discussing these processes and the order in which they move, the term "entropy" is

¹ It is worth mentioning here that this task, itself, is rife with irony. The existence of Maxwell's Demon, by virtue of breaking the second law of thermodynamics, was proven to be impossible.

² This, too, is rendered impossible by the second law of thermodynamics.

defined as the "property that might be associated with the tendency of processes, or chemical reactions, to proceed" (Barrow, 1973, p. 168). An equally valid and slightly clearer reading of entropy is that it is the amount of disorder that exists in a system:

The second law was originally expressed as a restriction on the possible transformations of heat and work, but it is now seen as being fundamentally a statement about the increase of disorder in the universe. According to the second law, the entropy, or disorder, of the universe as a whole cannot be made to decrease. This means that only two kinds of events are possible: events during which the entropy of the universe increases and events during which it remains constant. (Bennett, 1987, p. 108)

Entropy in a system increases when an irreversible process occurs, "i.e. out of balance and therefore spontaneously" (Barrow, 1973, p. 169), and entropy remains constant when a reversible process occurs (Barrow, 1973). One of the most important consequences of the second law is its requirement that changes in temperature that occur in systems require energy: "such devices as refrigerators, which create inequalities of temperature, require energy in order to operate" (Bennett, 1987, p. 108).

With the basic laws of thermodynamics and entropy clarified, it is possible to explain the relevance of Maxwell's Demon.

Maxwell's Demon sought to violate the second law of thermodynamics by creating temperature changes without using any energy. Maxwell proposed that

perhaps it was possible for a vessel to be divided into two chambers, A and B, connected by a small hole. A "demon" who possessed the ability to examine each and every molecule in the containers would allow any fast moving molecules to enter chamber A, and any slow moving molecules to enter chamber B. In this manner, through the placement of every molecule into one of the chambers, the temperature of chamber A would be raised (because of the relationship in gases whereby the higher the temperature of a gas, the faster its molecules move, and vice versa), and the temperature of chamber B would drop. Thus, the demon would cause an alteration in the temperatures of these chambers without performing work, contradicting the second law of thermodynamics (Bennett, 1987). Maxwell's Demon was constructed, in essence, in order to prove the second law of thermodynamics: by ruling out all of the impossibilities, such as the Demon is through its ability to change temperature without using any energy, scientists are left with what must be the truth.

Maxwell's Demon was refuted when the field of information theory, which was founded by Claude Shannon in 1948, demonstrated that it is not possible to perform work (exchanging information) without an increase in entropy (Palmeri, 1987). Paul Maltby (1991) clarifies the inverse relationship between thermodynamics and communication and their use of the term entropy: while in both cases it appears as a synonym for disorder, "entropy in a thermodynamic system denotes a decrease in complexity . . . entropy in a communication system denotes an increase in complexity" (p. 145). Entropy in a communication system is a measurement of the disorganization caused by information that cannot be analyzed; the greater the disorganization that

exists, the greater the prospect for new information (Siegel, 1977, pp. 41-42; Tanner, 1982, p. 67). Pynchon employs both of these ideas about entropy within The Crying of Lot 49, not only within the treatment of Maxwell's Demon as a credible theory, but also within the plot of the novel.

Pynchon's creation of characters within the novel who accept Maxwell's Demon as reality, rather than theory, functions as a vehicle to play thermodynamics and communication theory against one another. John Nefastis, who owns a Maxwell's Demon, is mentally located in the 1950s, before the denouncement of the Demon. Frank Palmeri (1987) explains: "His understanding of entropy takes advantage of the conceptual murkiness that marked the introduction of mathematical information theory" (p. 982); for Nefastis, an increase in information counterbalances the decrease of heat entropy, demonstrating that Pynchon has melded the two concepts in his character's mind. Oedipa Maas, however, rejects Nefastis' explanation of the Demon and realizes that information cannot be transmitted without an expenditure of energy (Abernethy, 1973, p. 24). Pynchon heightens the interplay between thermodynamic and communication entropy by designating Oedipa as a "sensitive," someone whose task within the novel is to communicate to the Demon. That she cannot communicate with the Demon suggests two possibilities: in terms of thermodynamics, it is possible that the system is closed, and thus does not permit energy to enter from the outside to offset the natural tendency of a system to gravitate toward equilibrium or toward entropy. The second possibility is in relation to communication theory and entropy: perhaps Oedipa is not a "sensitive," or either she has nothing to communicate to the

Demon, or she does not speak the same language as the Demon (Abernethy, 1973, p. 26). Pynchon, however, does not stop at the integration of entropy as a subject that appears in the novel; one may also find the application of entropy as it applies to communication as a force that shapes the plot of the novel.

Entropy As A Textual Force

Entropy is inherent in the structure of The Crying of Lot 49, as is revealed through Oedipa's desire to make order in her world. Oedipa's search for clues to unveil the Tristero conspiracy is an attempt to create meaning out of disorder. As Geoffrey Lord (1997) notes Oedipa's quest: "she goes out to discover the underlying order—if there is one—in the present world, the world around her, and continues to press ever forwards" (p. 148). Recalling Maxwell's Demon, in which work is performed in a closed system without the expenditure of energy, John Stark (1980) proposes that, due to the interconnectedness of informational entropy and thermodynamic entropy, the Demon can exist because it holds information and, as such, resists entropy; thus, "by obtaining information one can resist entropy" (p. 63). While disorder is inherent in Oedipa's world, as Tanner explains in regards to Pynchon's use of informational entropy, "The state of communication in the everyday world she comes from is zero" (1982, p. 64). Oedipa does possess information, and, as a result, it is possible that she, herself, resists entropy. Pynchon creates a text in which the entropy within the text is countered by Oedipa's knowledge, which can offset disorder.

Another consideration of entropy within the novel is that of its function as a metaphor reflecting Pynchon's social commentary. Peter Abernethy (1973) notes the redefinition of entropy from thermodynamics to relate to social terms, finding disorder translates into "uniformity, a lack of distinctions, a sameness, a lack of individuality, a tendency toward complete conformity" (p. 20). Stark (1980, p. 63) similarly notes Pynchon's use of entropy to show increasing similarity between characters, while Maltby (1991, p. 146) expands these observations about uniformity to include the idea that even communication suffers, as the message it conveys becomes expected. If one focuses a discussion of entropy on its applications in thermodynamics and communication, what is most striking about the former's use as a metaphor is not necessarily the uniformity it expresses, but the contrast seen between it and Pynchon's use of informational entropy, which "is quite literal; in the text itself, messages are encoded so as to maximize their uncertainty or improbability in a defiant reversal of the prevailing tendency" (Maltby, 1991, p. 146). Thermodynamic entropy in the guise of uniformity surrounds Oedipa in such appearances as Tupperware and Muzak (Maltby, 1991). Pynchon's multiple uses of entropy, as a subject matter, as a plot device, and within the very language of the text, pervade The Crying of Lot 49 and are at work even when the reader is not aware of them, displaying the idea that the reader can be a "sensitive," receiving information from the Demon, which is the novel. Pynchon uses the bond that exists between entropy and Maxwell's Demon to extend the entropy in the text through a three-tiered manipulation of Maxwell's Demon, in which he

augments, actualizes, and verifies it in order to introduce his fictional construct of the sensitive, a variable that creates yet another source of entropy in the text.

Pynchon elaborates on Maxwell's Demon in order to set the stage for its subsequent actualization and validation. The first part of Pynchon's description of Maxwell's Demon is in accordance with that found in texts on entropy and thermodynamics: "As the Demon sat and sorted his molecules into hot and cold, the system was said to lose entropy" (1965/1990, p. 105). However, Pynchon diverges from standard discussions on the Demon to include: "But somehow the loss [of entropy] was offset by the information the Demon gained about what molecules were where" (1965/1990, p. 105). The idea that an attempt is made to explain the loss of entropy as a result of information gained is a fictional construct of Pynchon's that works simultaneously to contradict explanations regarding the Demon, to treat it as a working model, and subtly to connect the fields of thermodynamics and communication. In "Demons, Engines and the Second Law," Charles Bennett (1987) insists that it is the very loss of entropy without the expenditure of any energy that has been the prime concern of physicists who have sought to protect the second law of thermodynamics: "One can decrease the entropy of a given system by doing work on it, but in doing the work one would increase the entropy of another system (or that of the first system's environment) by an equal or greater amount" (p. 110). Pynchon intentionally disregards the Demon's shortcoming, which is to decrease entropy without performing work, by extending its definition to include a rationalization for the decrease in entropy.

Expanding the concept of Maxwell's Demon is the first of three steps Pynchon takes to provide a solid foundation from which to launch his concept of the sensitive.

After slightly altering the idea of Maxwell's Demon to account for its ability to decrease entropy without performing any work, and in this manner sidestepping its opposition to the second law of thermodynamics, Pynchon treats this scientific myth as reality by introducing both a patent and a working version of the "Nefastis Machine." Stanley Koteks, whom Oedipa meets when she is separated from a group of stockholders who are touring the Yoyodyne plant, first mentions the Machine, inside of which is contained an "honest-to-God Maxwell's Demon" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 86). As a reply to Oedipa's statement that nobody invents anything anymore, Koteks rebuts:

"You know the Nefastis Machine? . . . Well this was invented by John Nefastis, who's up at Berkeley now. John's somebody who still invents things. Here. I have a copy of the patent." From a drawer he produced a Xeroxed wad of papers, showing a box with a sketch of a bearded Victorian on its outside, and coming out of the top two pistons attached to a crankshaft and flywheel.

(Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 85-86)

Koteks' introduction of the patent to Oedipa is the first step in transforming the myth of Maxwell's Demon into the reality of the Nefastis Machine. Oedipa does not question the validity of the patent; she accepts it as a true document. It is Oedipa's acceptance of the patent that drives her to find out more about the Nefastis Machine, which provides Pynchon with the opportunity to demonstrate its existence through a working version. During Oedipa's visit with the creator of the machine, John Nefastis, Pynchon

reasserts the truth and existence of this invention: "John Nefastis beamed at her [Oedipa], simpatico, and brought out his Machine from a workroom in back. It looked about the way the patent had described it" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 105). Pynchon has reliably introduced both the idea of the Machine and its existence through Oedipa's encounters with Koteks and Nefastis. The final thread remaining to be woven into the fabric that will become Pynchon's sensitive is the merging of thermodynamics and communication.

By actualizing Maxwell's Demon into the Nefastis Machine, Pynchon provides the opportunity to fuse the fields of thermodynamics and communication, which serves to verify the existence of the Demon. When Oedipa meets with John Nefastis in order to determine whether or not she is a sensitive, he explains the connection between the fields: "Entropy is a figure of speech, then . . . a metaphor. It connects the world of thermodynamics to the world of information flow. The Machine uses both. The Demon makes the metaphor not only verbally graceful, but also objectively true" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 106). This claim's credibility cannot be doubted because it could come from no one more knowledgeable about these matters: Nefastis is an expert in the subject of Maxwell's Demon, as it is he who has invented the Machine. This claim regarding the correlation between thermodynamics and communication, made by an expert, functions to reinforce the Demon's existence, while simultaneously providing Pynchon with the opening to later insert his sensitive into the equation. Additionally, Pynchon's (1965/1990) fictionally forged connection between thermodynamics and communication on the basis of entropy is given credibility on the basis of a fictionally

devised indisputable scientific claim: the equations for entropy in both disciplines looked very similar to one another. With the correlation between thermodynamics and communication clearly established, Pynchon is free to expand on these ideas and to introduce his fictional construct of the sensitive at their junction.

Pynchon extends Maxwell's Demon to include the concept of a "sensitive," which is something he has added to the ideas expressed in thermodynamics, not found in texts regarding this subject. It is this scientific mysticism, the merging of actual science with fictional construct, that creates the sensitive and increases the entropy in the novel. Nefastis defines the sensitive, explaining:

Communication is the key . . . The Demon passes his data on to the sensitive, and the sensitive must reply in kind. There are untold billions of molecules in that box. The Demon collects data on each and every one. At some deep psychic level he must get through. The sensitive must receive that staggering set of energies, and feed back something like the same quantity of information.

To keep it all cycling. (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 105)

Because Pynchon has augmented and verified the existence of Maxwell's Demon, he has precisely prepared the reader to accept the sensitive as an equally viable concept.

Within the universe of The Crying of Lot 49, there can be no doubt regarding the existence of either the Demon or the sensitive. Introducing the sensitive into the relationship that exists between entropy, a real condition, and Maxwell's Demon, an impossibility that is real within The Crying of Lot 49, increases the disorder within the text for the reader, who must suspend his or her disbelief in order to process the

contradictions between the novel and the world outside of it. The rise in entropy in the novel is demonstrated by the effect of utilizing "sensitive" as a label that opposes "Maxwell's Demon," a dichotomy that mirrors that of normal/deviant and mainstream/Other. Oedipa's wavering between "sensitive" and "Demon" results from her attempts to make order from the disordered information she receives about the Tristero System, Thum and Taxis, the Wells, Fargo massacre, and the Tristero assassins. In attempting to deal with this information, Oedipa shifts her identity back and forth between being a Maxwell's Demon and a sensitive; in doing so, she mirrors the process deviants endure both in trying to adapt to the stigma of a label and in rejecting it, through which they anticipate rejoining normal society.

The Effect Of Entropy On Adopting And Managing Identity

When the authority of agencies of social control is undermined by disorder, the process of assigning labels to offenders is affected, as the labels, themselves, are unstable. Perhaps nowhere is this more clear in The Crying of Lot 49 than in the case of Oedipa Maas, whose identity fluctuates between the roles of sensitive, in which she responds to other characters who play Maxwell's Demon by sorting information on the Tristero System, and Maxwell's Demon, in which she sorts and collects information on the Tristero System, which is interpreted and expanded upon by others. While her sorting is an attempt to create order, the alternation of these roles held by Oedipa, her participation in an "irreversible" process, causes the entropy in the novel to increase.

Maxwell's Demon and the sensitive need not be literal, even as they are defined in The Crying of Lot 49. If one interprets them as metaphors for people involved in irreversible processes³, one may view one of the participants in this system as the Demon, who functions to separate every bit of data into one of two system-specific categories, and the other as the sensitive, who functions to reveal and to feed back, in the same quantity, additional information about the data. It is in this manner that Oedipa performs the roles of Maxwell's Demon and sensitive. It is of no consequence that by Nefastis's terms Oedipa is not able to work his Machine and to demonstrate her abilities as a sensitive.

While Oedipa's test by Nefastis as to whether or not she is a sensitive reveals that in his terms she is not (Pynchon 1965/1990), she is, in fact, engaged in the complex metaphorical roles of both Maxwell's Demon and sensitive. Oedipa is a Maxwell's Demon, collecting data on each and every Tristero System reference, sorting leads into those that are relevant and continue her search and those that are irrelevant and steer her only to dead ends. As the Demon, she is involved with several sensitives who function to give her additional information regarding her sorted material. Oedipa functions in the text as a sensitive by communicating with the Maxwell's Demons in The Crying of Lot 49 who have sorted information about the Tristero System, just as the Demon sorts molecules into fast and slow groups. Oedipa receives the Demons'

³ An "irreversible" process is being used in this sense as it is defined by the laws of thermodynamics to be any process that occurs in the real world, rather than the idealized, theoretical process that is reversible (Castellan, 1971), such as the process of exchanging information.

information and feeds back the same quantity in order "to keep it all cycling" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 105). Oedipa occasionally reverses the roles she plays throughout the text, as is evident in her relationships with Mike Fallopian, Genghis Cohen, and Professor Emory Bortz, with whom she engages in the most pronounced Demon-sensitive relationships.

In Oedipa's relationship with Mike Fallopian, the roles of Maxwell's Demon and sensitive perpetually alternate between the two characters. At her first encounter with Fallopian at the Scope, before she is aware of the Tristero System, it is Oedipa who is the Demon, as she interprets information divulged to her by Fallopian regarding the Peter Pinguid Society. As Oedipa collects information about the Society, her role as Demon is subverted by Fallopian, who acts as the Demon, collecting information about Oedipa and Metzger. Fallopian evaluates whether Metzger should be sorted into the portion of the vessel (using Maxwell's Demon's terminology) devoted to people worth knowing, containing "us," or whether to place him in that which contains people who are useless to him and the Society, the portion containing "them." He evaluates Metzger: "You think like a Bircher . . . Good guys and bad guys. You never get to any of the underlying truth. Sure he was against industrial capitalism. So are we" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 51). The "we" in the last sentence of this passage suggests Fallopian has made up his mind: Metzger is one of them. At this point Oedipa is not playing the sensitive, which causes the system comprised by Fallopian, Oedipa, and Metzger to operate out of balance; Fallopian, as Demon, lacks a sensitive to offset the loss of entropy in the system. The loss of entropy is not without ramifications: it is impossible

for any loss of entropy to occur in a given system without a rise in the entropy of another system (Bennett, 1987, p. 110). The increase in entropy appears through Oedipa's acquaintance with the Tristero System, after which point in the novel entropy increases.

Shortly after the collapse of the initial system, Oedipa walks into the women's bathroom and discovers graffiti revealing W.A.S.T.E. and the post horn symbol. This is the location in the text at which the roles of Maxwell's Demon and sensitive become more lucid: from this point forth there are repeated cycles of information exchange and processing regarding data on the Tristero System. Oedipa plays Maxwell's Demon with Ralph Driblette, who plays the sensitive by giving Oedipa additional information about the conspiratorial look the Tristero assassins give one another in his production of The Courier's Tragedy: "That [the look] was my own . . . that, and actually bringing the three assassins onstage in the fourth act. Wharfinger didn't show them at all, you know" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 79). As the Demon, Oedipa also sorts out useful information about the original reference to Tristero, which causes her to purchase a copy of the text in which the play originally appeared. This simple sorting of material relating to the Tristero System, in spite of superficially creating order, opens up a new location, a new system in which Oedipa may sort more information, increasing the entropy of the text.

After this first classification of information regarding the Tristero System, Oedipa again plays the Demon, this time in the system she and Stanley Koteks comprise. She sorts out useful information on Maxwell's Demon and attempts to gain insight to W.A.S.T.E. Speaking with Koteks, Oedipa assumes the role of Demon:

She took a chance: "Then the WASTE address isn't good any more." But she'd pronounced it like a word, waste. His face congealed, a mask of distrust. "It's W.A.S.T.E., lady," he told her, "an acronym, not 'waste,' and we had best not go into it any further." (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 88)

As with her interpretation and reciprocal exchange of information with Driblette, this system of exchange with Koteks opens another system for Oedipa, this time returning her to Mike Fallopian, again increasing the entropy of the text.

Oedipa has sorted Koteks into her useful information vessel, which is also labeled as the chamber into which she places those individuals she meets whom she believes to be involved in the Tristero System, or the underground movement.

Addressing Fallopian with the information that Koteks is involved in the underground, Fallopian plays the sensitive and responds:

Sure this Koteks is part of some underground . . . an underground of the unbalanced, possibly, but then how can you blame them for being maybe a little bitter . . . Of course they stick together. They can always tell when they come on another of their kind. Maybe it only happens once every five years, but still, immediately, they know. (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 88)

Oedipa, as Demon, has sorted Koteks into the vessel containing the underground and communicates this idea to Fallopian. Fallopian, in turn, responds to her as the sensitive by giving her additional information. Fallopian's response functions to offset the loss of entropy and to continue the cycle of sorting and exchanging information.

Oedipa's search for additional information relating to the Tristero System increases the

entropy in the novel, as each new bit of information presents her with new individuals with whom to engage in exchanging information.

As a result of her visit to see the historical marker regarding the massacre of a dozen Wells, Fargo men, Oedipa meets Mr. Thoth, from whom she collects information connecting the Tristero System to the massacre, to be later sorted out and replied to by Fallopian. In her encounter, Oedipa additionally gathers information connecting the Trystero assassins in The Courier's Tragedy to the Tristero System that opposes other mail services. Mr. Thoth recounts a dream from which he has just waken to Oedipa. The dream is marked by the appearance of counterfeit Indians, about whom he has learned from his grandfather, an old Pony Express rider who once cut off one of the phony Indian's fingers in order to retrieve a ring with the post horn emblem on it:

The Indians who wore black feathers, the Indians who weren't Indians. My grandfather told me. The feathers were white, but those false Indians were supposed to burn bones and stir the boneblack with their feathers to get them black. It made them invisible in the night, because they came at night. That was how the old man, bless him, knew they weren't Indians. No Indian ever attacked at night. If he got killed his soul would wander in the dark forever.

(Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 92)

This information, sorted by Oedipa, reveals the connection between the Trystero assassins, the Tristero System, and a massacre. Although Oedipa learns of the connection between the elements from Mr. Thoth's dream, an unusual source of information, she fails to question its validity, sorting it as if it were fact. The random

images that appear in Mr. Thoth's dream are no less lucid than those she encounters in the real world. With her newly sorted information, Oedipa seeks out a sensitive to provide her with feedback.

Oedipa addresses Fallopian, creating another system between them where she functions as the Demon and he as the sensitive. She presents her sorted information, suggesting the correlation of information between the Trystero assassins, the Tristero System, and the marauders who attacked the Pony Express and Wells, Fargo. Oedipa asks if indeed her sorting of this information is accurate, seeking confirmation of her abilities as Demon. Fallopian responds as the sensitive, reassuring her and presenting an equal amount of information about her sorting: "Marauders, nameless, faceless, dressed in black. Probably hired by the Federal government. Those suppressions were brutal" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 93). In this manner, the lost entropy, which has occurred through Oedipa's sorting information, has once again been offset, allowing the Demon-sensitive relationships to continue.

Oedipa enters a new system when Genghis Cohen, a philatelist hired to appraise Pierce Inverarity's stamp collection, calls her to discuss aberrations in Inverarity's stamps. Initially, it is Cohen who plays the Demon, with Oedipa responding as the sensitive. Cohen sorts the stamps into two groups, authentic and counterfeit, just as Maxwell's Demon sorts molecules. Cohen allows Oedipa to examine the stamps, then reveals his suspicions of forgery:

He rolled over to her a small table, and from a plastic folder lifted with tweezers, delicately, a U.S. commemorative stamp, the Pony Express issue of 1940, 3¢

henna brown. Cancelled. "Look," he said, switching on a small, intense lamp, handing her an oblong magnifying glass. "It's the wrong side," she said, as he swabbed the stamp gently with benzine and placed it on a black tray. "The watermark." (Pynchon, 1965/1990, pp. 95-96)

The post horn appears in the watermark of the paper, yet Cohen's concern is with the stamp's origin. When Cohen, as Demon, reveals to Oedipa a transposition, "U. S. Potsage" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 97) that appears on another stamp, she responds as a sensitive, offering information about a letter she received from her husband "telling her to report all obscene mail to her potsmaster" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 97).

Oedipa's and Cohen's roles immediately reverse themselves: Cohen, as sensitive offers that the transposition in lettering only appeared on the 1954 issue of the stamp, while other forgeries dated back to 1893. Oedipa, as Demon, sorts this information: "That's 70 years He'd [the forger] have to be pretty old" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 98). Cohen, again as sensitive, responds the forgery could run back to the late 1200s to the Thurn and Taxis couriers in Milan. Oedipa sorts this information, deigns it useful, and flips roles to become the sensitive. Cohen receives, as a reply to his sorting of data, the information Oedipa has sorted through her previous roles as Demon (Pynchon, 1965/1990). In this manner, through the sorting of data pertaining to the stamps, Thurn and Taxis, and the Tristero System, and the insight given in reply to this data, the roles of Demon and sensitive offset the lost entropy in the system, perpetuating the relationship.

Oedipa returns to examining The Courier's Tragedy and enters a new system, whose other participant is Professor Emory Bortz, the author of the preface to the edition of the text Oedipa reads. Oedipa arrives at Bortz's house and initially plays the role of the Demon. She recites the lines, " 'No hallowed skein of stars can ward, I trow . . . Who's once been set his tryst with Trystero' " (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 151). Bortz responds as the sensitive, offering that the lines have been misquoted in the edition Oedipa has read. He continues, revealing that the night he saw Driblette's production of the play these lines were omitted. Oedipa processes this information, and Bortz offers to let her view microfilms of an "obscene parody" of the play. She slowly amasses information on the Trystero assassins, playing the Demon to sort through and to make sense of it. In turn, Bortz clarifies the information for her and continues to act as the sensitive. Explaining to Oedipa the manner in which the Trystero was able to spread from Milan throughout Europe, Bortz says: "If I wanted word to get to England, to sort of pave the way, I should think he'd [Diocletian Blobb, who was spared in the Italian massacre] be perfect. Trystero enjoyed counter-revolution in those days. Look at England, the king about to lose his head. A set-up" (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 158). As in this passage, later passages demonstrate Bortz's position as the sensitive who responds to data sorted by Oedipa, continually offsetting the entropy loss, perpetuating the Demon-sensitive cycle.

Oedipa's roles as Maxwell's Demon and sensitive are both, in the thermodynamic sense, "irreversible" processes. "Reversible processes are, therefore, not real processes, but ideal ones. Real processes are always irreversible" (Castellan,

1971, p. 115). As Oedipa is engaged in the real processes of sorting and reciprocating data in both of her roles, she is engaged in irreversible processes. Returning to the second law of thermodynamics, then, it is only possible that Oedipa's actions within the universe of the text, in which the systems of informants, informees, and she are grounded, increase the entropy of the text. With the growth of the text's disorder, readers may encounter difficulty in attaching a clear label to Oedipa, who has been analyzed as a female version of Oedipus.

Oedipa's Oscillation As A Model Of Managing Other Identity

Oedipa navigates two worlds: that of mainstream culture, characterized by Muzak and Tupperware, and that of Koteks' underground, in which she seeks answers to the Tristero conspiracy. However, her identity is more complex than this juggling of identities and beliefs. Critics have examined the translation of Oedipus into Oedipa Maas, which creates a version of the Oedipal myth that is solely located within the text. Debra Modellmog (1987, pp. 240-243) suggests the reason that other critics' analyses of the Oedipal myth within the novel have failed is due not to the invalidity of approaching The Crying of Lot 49 mythically, but it rather results from errors in correlations between Oedipus and Oedipa. She dismisses critics who have compared Oedipa's attempt to find an answer for the riddle of the Tristero conspiracy to Oedipus' answering the Sphinx's riddle, asserting that Oedipa fails to solve the mystery. She suggests a true correlation exists between Oedipa's search to uncover the Tristero conspiracy and Oedipus' search for the murderer. Modellmog (1987) admits there are

inconsistencies between these two searches, but asserts the two are much closer to each other than previously attempted correlations: "her investigation is, like his, finally an investigation of reality and knowledge—and her understanding about their nature is basically that reached by Oedipus" (p. 244), which is a point echoed by Alfred Mac Adam (1978, p. 559); James Hans (1995) explains Oedipa's search for the truth is made more difficult because of the "horrifying plentitude of meaning" she encounters (p. 286).

The similarities that emerge in a comparison of Oedipa and Oedipus are such: both search for answers, which they are certain they will find; both fail to consider that it is their own worlds that are under scrutiny; and, both, upon discovering knowledge that threatens their conceptions of reality, blind themselves (albeit Oedipa's version involves driving down the highways without using headlights, and as such is temporary) (Moddlemog, 1987, pp. 244-245). Cathy Davidson (1977), however, notes a serious distinction between the characters: "An Oedipa, in her search, is never accorded the dignity of an Oedipus" (p. 41), which she later explains to mean that while many mythical heroes descend to an underworld to return vindicated and to be rewarded for their searches with a higher social position, "she [Oedipa] is not at last subsumed, with honor, into the surface life. In fact, after her descent, she is even more ready to renounce her previous world" (p. 42). Moddlemog (1987), in contrast, emphasizes that both Oedipa and Oedipus discover dissatisfaction with their previously held ideas of the world. Additionally, Moddlemog argues against critics who point to Oedipa's failure to find truth as enough of a disparity to dismiss a mythological reading, for both characters

ultimately discover the knowledge that seemed constant is actually variable; both cases emphasize the ambiguity of truth. Moddelmog admits Oedipa's actions do not exactly mirror Oedipus' and as such there is no attempt to retell the entire tale of Oedipus within The Crying of Lot 49. Rather, the novel is concerned with the search for the truth that reveals to both characters the dangers of assuming truth is absolute. In reference to Oedipa's attempt to discern whether she is crazy or whether Tristero exists, Robert Merrill (1977) notes that she "poses the alternative interpretations of her experience" (p. 65), suggesting that the meaning of Oedipa's quest is Pynchon's central concern within the novel. It is apparent that Pynchon has transformed the real Oedipus myth to suit the novel; the effect of blurring the line between reality and fiction is to create a text rich in meaning that draws on readers' knowledge and simultaneously challenges them to enter upon a quest that has the potential to reveal, as it does to Oedipa, that previously held knowledge is not always correct.

Citing Oedipa as a failed Oedipus who is unable to unearth the answers she seeks to the Tristero conspiracy, James Young (1969) explains Pynchon's technique is the creation of characters with names that are "sometimes wonderfully improbable, but then to deny the characters most, if not all, of the qualities and significance that the name usually shouts" (p. 71). While such attention has been given to Oedipa's first name, critics have not addressed her surname, Maas. As deliberate as Pynchon's characters' names are, it is difficult not to wonder whether this "maas" is a representation of the Spanish word "más," meaning "more;" if Pynchon's intent is to create Oedipa as "more" than a female Oedipus and then to deny Oedipa this

significance, one finds that Oedipa, rather than being more than a female Oedipus, is less than a female Oedipus. As a result, Oedipa experiences a loss in status similar to that imposed by deviantization; thus, when her deviance emerges in the text, as she begins to involve herself with the underground, it is augmented and builds to paranoia.

As Oedipa fluctuates between sensitive and demon, she oscillates between the two worlds of mainstream and Other. Pynchon explains:

Either Oedipa [was] in the orbiting ecstasy of a true paranoia, or a real Tristero. For there either was some Tristero beyond the appearance of the legacy America, or there was just America and if there was just America then it seemed the only way she could continue, and manage to be at all relevant to it, was as an alien, unfurrowed, assumed full circle into some paranoia. (Pynchon, 1965/1990, p. 182)

The diametric opposition set up between these two worlds, two identities, and two sets of truth suggests that for Oedipa there are only two options: accept the paranoid Other identity or accept the conspiracy. Either way, there is no opportunity for her to attempt to pass in mainstream culture; she is outcast either on the basis of her paranoia or on the basis of her knowledge about Tristero. In such a manner, one cannot help but think of the chorus' cry at the end of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex:

Whose lot what citizen
 Did not with envy see,
 How deep the billows of calamity
 Above him roll.

Either option available to Oedipa will bring such calamity: either that of lack of sanity or that of lack of belief in the world in which she lives. As such, Oedipa's alternation between the two possibilities parallels the decision faced by labeled individuals in trying to determine whether to accept the stigmatization that accompanies the label or whether to reject it in an attempt to return to mainstream culture. Just as Oedipa's worldview changes through the knowledge she unearths about the Tristero system, so, arguably, do deviantized individuals as they recognize not only their previously held status in the world, but also the unfamiliar nature of the new knowledge, the label, to which they must adjust.

CHAPTER SIX

**LOOKING AT CARVER THROUGH KROEBER-TINTED GLASSES:
AN ANALYSIS OF TRANSMISSION OF
AND TRANSGRESSIONS AGAINST CULTURE**

In a recent broadcast on National Public Radio, a commentator referred to McDonald's as the defining characteristic of American culture. While the word "culture" may be haphazardly thrown around in casual conversation, frequently in reference to activities that pertain to the realms of high culture and popular culture, Alfred L. Kroeber sought a much more precise definition. Clearly specifying culture as the singular most important characteristic that separates humankind from the rest of the animal kingdom, Kroeber (1948) explains:

No cultureless human society is known; it would even be hard to imagine
Beyond the range of man there are societies, but no cultures. Cultural phenomena thus characterize man more specifically than his social manifestations characterize him, for these latter he shares with vertebrate and invertebrate animals. (pp. 252-253)

Culture is not only unique to humans, but it also serves to solidify behavior within a given society, as beliefs, customs, ideals, and rules are communicated from one generation to the next. Kroeber (1948) explains that it is the transmission of learned activities that is crucial to the definition of culture, leading to the speculation: "So perhaps how it [culture] comes to be is really more distinctive of culture than what it is" (p. 253). Arguably, the conveyance of culture is just as important as culture is itself. Raymond Carver's short stories "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?", "So Much Water

So Close to Home," and "Tell the Women We're Going" provide an opportunity to examine the transmission of cultural attitudes towards sex and death, which characters uphold and defy in a dichotomy that mirrors the mainstream/Other division in American culture. Before an analysis of Carver's works can begin, it is necessary to clarify the importance Kroeber places on these topics.

The Creation, Re-creation, And Change Of Dominant Beliefs And Customs

In discussing the transmission of culture, one discovers two topics that appear in Kroeber's discussions of it and that are significant for his use of them in describing the differences between advanced and uninhibited¹ cultures: attitudes towards sex and the treatment of the dead. He not only explains the importance each of these areas holds in cultures, but he also uses them as measuring points for the advancement of cultures along the ruler of progress. This is interesting, as in spite of Kroeber's staunch anti-evolutionist stance, there are clearly moments when he performs the same role of judging cultures, albeit without the explicit (or one may infer the implicit) judgment that one is necessarily "better" than the other.

Kroeber explores the role of attitudes towards sex, suggesting that limitations on sexual conduct, such as incest taboos and other governing ideas, are a cultural

¹ With respect to describing cultures, Kroeber uses the term "primitive" as an antonym for "advanced." Although "primitive" did not hold any negative connotation at the time Kroeber was writing, today the term does carry a stigma of inferiority. In an attempt to recognize cultural differences without necessarily treating non-Western culture as Other, the best synonym I can offer for "primitive" is "uninhibited." The choice to use this term is supported by Kroeber's (1948) discussion of inhibition being one characteristic that distinguishes "advanced" from "primitive" cultures.

construct based on the need for competition. In referencing Kohler's examination of behavior among apes and their use of inventions when challenged by other apes who were competing for the same food source, Kroeber (1948) admits that while he cannot propose that apes possess culture, the study and Kohler's observations indicate that the lack of competition within a society would not only cause people not to exert more effort than needed to accomplish goals, but it also holds the potential to "deprive civilization of one of its principal prerequisite impulses" (p. 60). Kroeber (1948) continues, speculating that

The data suggest further why the institutions, codes, and ethics of all peoples have so strongly emphasized inhibition . . . All human groups do [hold moral standards] . . . they have never seriously swerved from an insistence on some sort of social limitation on the natural sex impulse. (p. 60)

Admittedly, the leap from competition within a society as necessary for advancement and invention to the need for rules governing sexual conduct initially appears to be great. However, the latter premise is actually an extension of the former argument: just in the way society requires competition to provoke discovery of new concepts, it similarly requires competition in mating practices in order to ensure that the strongest members of a society are able to pass on their genes to the next generation. Therefore, limitations on sexual behavior are culturally imposed tools that allow societies to ordain certain members within the group (as, for example, people with direct bloodlines) outside of the possibilities of mating. In such a way, the promise for mating is decreased, causing greater competition within the limited realm of possible

mates; this results in each male necessarily having to work harder, or to be more inventive, in order to prove himself worthy to potential partners. It is essential to note that Kroeber has chosen this partitioning of those who can and cannot be mates as but one sign of culture; it serves as a measure for what separates humans from animals, as the behavior is unique to human culture.

There is a second point that Kroeber makes about sex that appears in his discussion of the different forms in which repression appears within cultures: while many cultures choose to put restrictions on individuals' behaviors, as in the form of prohibiting certain foods, it is American culture that seems to have premarital and extramarital sex as its inhibitions. As Kroeber (1948) explains:

It is interesting, psychologically as well as culture-historically, that sex, on which later Protestant puritanism perhaps centered its repressive interests--'immorality' means nonmarital sexual indulgence in ordinary American English, as 'passion' is coming to mean sex appetite--this same sex is the principal field of activity which Mohammedanism excepts from its puritanism. (p. 598)

Kroeber's point is well-taken: using Mohammedanism as a point of reference, in which limitations are put on such activities as gambling and the drinking of alcohol but in which men are allowed to have four wives, American inhibitions, or puritanism as Kroeber deigns it, are focused on sexual activity, while the drinking of alcohol and gambling are freely accepted. These restrictions, according to Kroeber, are found primarily only among more advanced cultures. He admits, "Now and then a primitive people . . . becomes puritanical in its generic attitudes" (Kroeber, 1948, p. 599), but the

emphasis here is on the rarity of this happening. Because inhibition is a characteristic that is typically demonstrated by advanced cultures, it can be used to determine the progress of a culture. Sexual inhibition is but one area, however, that Kroeber uses as a marker to distinguish cultures.

Kroeber (1948) notes burial practices serve as another marker to differentiate between advanced and uninhibited cultures; while the former ensure to perform some form of care for the deceased, the latter fail to perform what mainstream Western cultures consider to be a "proper" burial. Kroeber (1948) explains the importance of such practices:

When prehistoric skeletons of a certain period are normally found in the varying positions in which death might have taken place, the presumption is that the people of that time abandoned their dead as animals would. If on the other hand a skeleton lies intact with its arms carefully folded, there is little room for doubt that the men of the time had progressed to the point where the survivors put away their dead; in other words, that human burial had been instituted, and that accordingly at least some form of society was in existence. (p. 625)

Kroeber's likening of peoples who do not perform a type of burial to animals is extremely important because culture is perhaps more significant than biology in separating the two groups. While Kroeber (1948) suggests the possibility of prehistoric human society existing in the absence of culture, it is a central influence on human behavior. As Kroeber examines culture as being uniquely human, one may explore the

ways in which such concepts within this field are not only communicated but also passed on between individuals within a society.

Individual Practices And The Breaching Of Cultural Norms

Both "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" and "So Much Water So Close to Home" present a dichotomy of characters who uphold and defy American cultural attitudes towards sex and death. This division, which functions as a vehicle for dramatic tension in the stories, mimics the schism between mainstream and Other cultures. "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" is marked by characters' shifting values and labels: initially Ralph Wyman appears to represent the prevailing attitudes that extramarital sex violates the sanctity of marriage and is an activity for which an offender should be stigmatized as an adulterer. However, during the course of the story, his wife, Marian, who has committed such a transgression, ends up more accurately representing American cultural mores, as Ralph's values present an extreme viewpoint and his behavior exhibits a perverse inhibition. Ralph and Marian negotiate normal and deviant identities, which reveal divergent attitudes towards sex. "So Much Water So Close to Home" exposes American opinions towards death, specifically in terms of burial practices; however, characters are stable in their representations of either the dominant or subordinate codes. In this story, Claire Kane, who mourns the delayed identification and burial of a dead young woman, represents the mainstream American cultural ideal that dictates that a rite be performed in honor of someone's death. In

contrast, representing a deviant attitude, her husband, Stuart, illustrates a breach of cultural codes through his inaction at discovering the woman's body.

The conveyance of culture, in the forms of beliefs and rules, and the committal of transgressions against the prevailing sexual inhibition that restricts sex to within the confines of the marital bond is evident in "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" The story, in which Marian Wyman admits to her husband, Ralph, that she has had an affair with one of their acquaintances, deals with Ralph's subsequent attempt to come to terms with her transgression, suggesting the morals and beliefs that have been passed on to him. The story provides an exploration of his puritanical nature and insinuates that Marian's affair results not from her lack of culture, but rather from her human need for variation. Ralph initially represents the mainstream view that Marian's transgression is grave; however, as his repression becomes more pronounced, Marian's role shifts from being a representation of deviance to that of normalcy.

Ralph's acculturation has been influenced most visibly by his father, whose advice Ralph has taken too close to heart. When Ralph left home for college, his father cautioned him that "life was a very serious matter, an enterprise insisting on strength and purpose" (Carver, 1963c, p. 46). Clearly, these ideals have affected Ralph's outlook on the world, as Carver later writes that Ralph was a "solemn student" (1963c, p. 47); Ralph's no-nonsense attitude is demonstrated by his accomplishing traditional, mainstream goals: after completing college, he marries his college sweetheart, Marian; he begins a career as a high school teacher; he buys a house; and he has two children. These are respectable accomplishments, expected of

members who follow the dominant American codes. However, it becomes evident that the advice and the beliefs, in short, the culture, with which Ralph has been bestowed have not caused him to be a functional member of society, but have rather disastrously resulted in puritanical inhibition.

Ralph's sexual repression, while perhaps being stereotypically American, verifies Kroeber's (1948) idea that it is possible to react to the learned blocking of a natural impulse by chronically curbing it, with the result of a pervading and dysfunctional inhibition. Although Kroeber's concern is with groups of people, rather than individuals, it is possible to extend his argument in order to look at Ralph's individual practices. Ralph's overly serious nature, apparently the result of his father's counseling, has resulted in an abnormal reaction to sexuality in which his inhibition precipitates a response of abhorrence, which occurs three times within the short text. Ralph first demonstrates revulsion to public displays of affection at the beginning of the story, while on his honeymoon in Mexico. Carver (1963c) writes, "Ralph was secretly appalled by the squalor and open lust he saw and was anxious to return to the safety of California" (p. 48). Reading inhibition as an indication of advanced culture, it is reasonable to speculate that Ralph's disgust results from a difference in cultural attitudes. However, that fails to explain adequately the second incident, which reveals Ralph's sexual inhibition, even as it pertains to Marian:

The one vision he would always remember and which disturbed him most of all had nothing to do with Mexico . . . She [Marian] wore a white blouse with a bright red scarf at her throat, and he could see her breasts pushing against the white cloth. (Carver, 1963c, p. 48)

While the sight of their wives would likely arouse most newly married husbands, Ralph has repressed himself in an abnormal manner. Rather than transcending to an advanced culture through his inhibition, Ralph has become psychologically scarred. Ralph Wyman, who has conditioned himself to deny his basic biological reactions to normal stimuli, warps culture, which functions in part to fulfill biological needs. His inhibitions and his dysfunction increase, settling into a pattern in which he no longer represents mainstream culture but instead deviates from it.

Five years later, just after Ralph has learned that Marian has cheated on him, Ralph's inhibition grows to the point of a full-blown disorder. While he is out walking, he passes a couple and is overwhelmed by what can be construed as, at worst, innocent flirtation: "Ralph stepped out of the way and they got into a car parked at the curb and Ralph saw the woman toss her hair as she got into the car. He had never seen anything so frightening" (Carver, 1963c, p. 57). Because there is no indication that Ralph is the object of the woman's affection, one may interpret his response as an indication that his affliction has grown to such a point as to include apprehension towards strangers' body language when it is even vaguely sexually suggestive. Ralph's initial attempts at curbing his natural impulses have led to repression, distancing him from normal society. While Ralph initially presents a modest, slightly prudish attitude

towards sexuality that is within the range of standard American attitudes, as his repression becomes more pronounced, he violates the dominant code of acceptable sexual behavior, effecting a status change to deviant.

Marian, who begins the story as a deviant—an adulterer—resists the label. In light of Ralph's strict puritanical attitudes and sexual inhibitions, it is possible that Marian's cheating results not because she does not hold the same culturally instilled values, but rather because she craves variety. Marian's sole excuse for accompanying Mitchell Anderson, the man with whom she cheated on Ralph, to get alcohol for the party, is that it was an impulsive move. Ralph, however, protests it is Marian's nature to follow such a course of action: " 'But you've always been that way, Marian!' And he knew at once that he had uttered a new and profound truth" (Carver, 1963c, p. 53). Aware of the taboo of extramarital sex, Marian fails to yield to culturally imposed values as her impulsive nature allows her to surpass them. Kroeber (1948) reveals that the human need for variation is motivated by play impulses (which are significant in courting in the animal kingdom), which serve to "motivate great areas of human behavior and important achievements of culture. This refers not only to games and sports, but to the influence of curiosity, of desire for variety, of mental restlessness" (p. 29). It is possible that Marian's adultery is the result either of her curiosity or of her desire for diversity in her life. While Ralph appears to be a good provider for Marian, his inhibitions and repression could prompt Marian not only to seek fulfillment outside of her marriage but also to seek excitement. Her restlessness is evidenced by her

infidelity. In their dichotomy, Ralph, inhibited, and Marian, impulsive, illustrate two popularly held American attitudes towards sexuality.

"Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" presents the installation of culture from generation to generation, the development of inhibitions as the result of repressing natural instincts, and the liberation from the ties of monogamy, through which two opposing American attitudes towards sexuality are explored. A correlation exists in "So Much Water So Close to Home" both in terms of the conveyance of culture and in the representation of mainstream and Other American attitudes towards death.

"So Much Water So Close to Home" explores Claire Kane's struggle to deal with her husband Stuart's failure to immediately notify authorities when, out with fishing buddies, the naked body of a young woman is discovered floating in the river. While Claire is evidence of the transmission of culture through the idea that the dead deserve special treatment, Stuart's complete disregard for the body represents a breach of culture that establishes him as deviant.

Claire's persistence that Stuart's behavior is condemnable indicates her insistence that to fail to properly inter or otherwise quickly dispose of the dead, with the involvement and application of a ritual process performed by those who are close to the deceased, is unforgivable, a view that is likely shared by most Americans. As Claire's personal experience would unlikely yield such strong conviction on this matter, one may view her insistence on burial rites as a moral that only could have been instilled by others in her culture who passed on their beliefs and customs. As such, Claire represents prevailing attitudes of acceptable behavior for dealing with death. In

Kroeber's writings, one discovers a possible reason that Claire finds the failure to follow these moral guidelines abhorrent; in discussing affect and culture change, he explores that human cultures have not only devised a great number of methods to care for the dead, including "burial, cremation, water burial, setting away in vaults or canoes or houses, scaffold burial, exposure or simple abandonment, cremation with eating or drinking of the ashes by the relatives, temporary inhumation with either reburial or preservation of the bones" (1948, p. 402), but also that the role of affect, or feeling, is strongly tied to death. Not only is it necessary, then, to merely perform a disposal of the deceased, but it is also imperative to break emotional bonds with him or her. Observing the role funerals play in dealing with the death of others, Kroeber (1948) insists: "Here again affect seems to be involved. Death obviously releases immensely powerful emotions; and a funeral, as the final act of a group toward an individual, comes to participate in this emotion" (p. 402). Claire's proclivity to mainstream cultural beliefs about treatment of the deceased is revealed by her necessity to attend the dead girl's funeral, at which she says farewell to the young woman she never knew: "Along with the others I file slowly past the casket. Then I move out onto the front steps and into the bright, hot afternoon light" (Carver, 1977, p. 90). While Claire experiences a catharsis in attending the funeral, it is only in terms of dealing with the girl's death and does not involve an epiphany in her feelings towards Stuart. The true loathing Claire feels towards Stuart's actions appears as a theme that augments and intensifies throughout the story. Claire's response illustrates the degree to which Stuart violates dominant customs in dealing with the girl's death.

The Assignment Of Other To Rule-Breakers

To Claire Kane, Stuart is no longer recognizable, but rather becomes an alien Other. Claire's attitude towards Stuart's failure to report the dead girl to the authorities upon her discovery, preferring to fish and drink with his friends for an entire three days before finally getting around to informing them of her location, can only be described as utter repugnance. Stuart, in attempting to explain himself, asserts, "She was dead, dead, dead, do you hear?" (Carver, 1977, p. 70), to which Claire responds, "That's the point . . . She was dead. But don't you see? She needed help" (Carver, 1977, p. 70). While Stuart feels he was entirely justified in carrying on with his vacation, sitting around with his friends and fishing and drinking beer, Claire can only respond to him with disbelief, questioning, "It isn't true . . . You didn't leave her there like that?" (Carver, 1977, p. 74). Stuart's actions offend Claire's basic sensibilities and the beliefs with which she has been raised. Moreover, Claire seems to lose all hope as the result of Stuart's inaction, questioning the culture that is supposed to offer protection and guidance, speculating: "Two things are certain: 1) people no longer care what happens to other people; and 2) nothing makes any real difference any longer" (Carver, 1977, p. 78). While the incident has had no apparent lasting effect on Stuart, it has absolutely devastated Claire, for she is forced to confront the idea that her husband's moral codes differ drastically from hers.

Stuart's transgression is even more grievous due to his complete oblivion of committing any error, which further illustrates his differing acculturation and deviance. Stuart's mindlessness is evidenced in his questioning of Claire, "What'd I do? Listen to

me carefully now, once and for all. Nothing happened. I have nothing to be sorry for or feel guilty about. Do you hear me?" (Carver, 1977, p. 74). His justifications for failing to report the body are weak to Claire; he states that: the girl was already dead, he had walked for hours to the fishing spot, it was opening day for the fishing season, and, ultimately, the body "wasn't going anywhere" (Carver, 1977, p. 71). Recalling Kroeber's observations of prehistoric humans leaving their dead in the positions in which they died and likening them to animals, one is forced to consider the possibility that somehow Stuart, in spite of possessing other indications that beliefs and ideals of culture have been transmitted to him (as, for example, his marriage to Claire), is missing one of the key criteria for belonging to an advanced culture. His behavior and treatment of the girl operate in direct contrast to those expected by advanced culture; he has violated the rule of treating the dead with common decency, which requires that he do more than simply ignore the body while he fishes.

Claire's disgust with Stuart, evidenced through her willingness to classify Stuart's actions as condemnable, results in her labeling him with the identity of non-socialized, cultureless Other and leads to newly discovered apathy: "Look at what has happened. Yet nothing will change for Stuart and me. Really change, I mean" (Carver, 1977, p. 78). In spite of Stuart's transgression, Claire cannot accept the consequences that would follow permanently labeling Stuart, or, rather, admitting to herself the labeling; she concedes to accepting their relationship as it has always been, regardless of his behavior. As Martin Scofield (1994, p. 247) explains, Claire balances her need to continue her daily routine of loving Stuart and her repugnance with his actions. Yet, as

is evident in the conclusion of the story, Claire's actions contradict her belief that things will not change; her disgust with Stuart persists, rather than fading over time: "For God's sake, Stuart, she was only a child" (Carver, 1977, p. 92), Claire laments, indicating that his actions are even more heinous due to the girl's young age, which suggests that somewhere her parents were worrying over her disappearance. Claire's incessant disbelief with Stuart's lack of culturalization and his lack of regret assure the perpetuation of Stuart's status as Other.

In contrast to Stuart, Marian Wyman fails to become Other not only because she abides by the cultural need for variation (while Ralph is restrained by puritanical inhibition), but also because Ralph returns to and accepts her, effectively stopping the label before it is reproduced in secondary deviance. To clarify, when Ralph returns to Marian at the end of "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" he no longer reacts to her stigmatized status as adulterer, but rather re-accepts her as his partner, an element that is wholly lacking in "So Much Water So Close to Home." Forgiveness, rather than persistent stigmatization, appears at the conclusion of the story, as Ralph finds comfort in Marian's touch, ultimately turning towards her (Carver, 1963c, p. 68). Furthermore, there is difficulty in perceiving Marian as Other even in light of her committing adultery, as this is not only a concept with which readers are familiar--if not through personal experience, then through media exposure--but also because it is Ralph, and not Marian, who appears as the alien Other through his extreme sexual repression.

A key distinction that arises in a discussion of the construction of Otherness in "So Much Water So Close to Home" and "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" is

whether the stigmatization is applied to characters by other characters, as in the former story, or by the reader, as in the latter story. In the second case, it is only natural, due to the diversity present among readers, that they should disagree about whom, if anyone, is Other. Yet, it is possible that readers can effect the label in characters just as characters can apply the label to others. To explore fully the manner in which the reader enacts the label, it is useful to turn to a clear example in which the breaching of cultural norms is only slightly reacted to by other characters, but in which the reader's response results in the offending actor being labeled Other.

Perhaps the most obvious case in which Carver presents the potential for readers to label characters deviant, through which it is possible to construct Otherness, is "Tell the Women We're Going," as it contains the elements of infidelity and failure to mourn for and care for the dead. The story, in which two life-long friends, Bill Jamison and Jerry Roberts, take a drive out into the country as a short break from their wives in pursuit of women with whom to commit adultery, ends in shocking tragedy when Jerry brutally and unexpectedly kills two women. Conflict exists in the story as the result of the tension between Bill's ambivalence towards having an affair as opposed to Jerry's determination to have one. What is notable in this relationship is that in spite of having grown up in the same neighborhood at the same time--most certainly in the same culture and having been raised with the same mores--Jerry's actions defy American attitudes towards death, while Bill's reaction upholds them. Jerry, a deviant who knowingly transgresses the rules of advanced culture, parallels Marian Wyman in his

need for variety in sexual partners and Stuart Kane in his failure to treat the dead in a culturally accepted manner.

Following up on the previous discussion of infidelity as resulting from the influence of curiosity and the desire for variety, it is arguable that Jerry transcends the puritanical limitations on sexual conduct imposed by American culture. Bill's hesitation is evident from the beginning of their diversion, as even when he is involved with a game of pool with Jerry he persists to think about his family, "always looking at his watch and then looking at Jerry" (Carver, 1981c, p. 149). In contrast, Jerry's readiness to have an affair is displayed when, on entering a bar, he questions the owner: "What kind of a place is this, Riley, that it don't have any girls on a Sunday afternoon?" (Carver, 1981c, p. 149). While Marian Wyman's affair appeared to be an incident without forethought, Jerry's is a carefully planned event. Upon leaving the bar, Jerry and Bill take a drive out into the country; Jerry's determination to have an affair is evidenced in his pursuit of two girls on bicycles. He reveals to Bill, "Look at that! . . . I could use some of that . . . Let's go back . . . Let's try it" (Carver, 1981c, p. 150). Bill halfheartedly makes conversation with the girls, and Jerry decides to pull off the road ahead of them to wait for them. When the girls approach Bill and Jerry, the men pause for a moment, and as the girls begin to climb a trail up into the hills, the men pursue them. The incident unfolds, and Jerry still appears to only be expressing interest in having an affair; directing Bill in the pursuit of the girls, Jerry commands: "You go right and I'll go straight. We'll cut the cockteasers off" (Carver, 1981c, p. 153). Evaluating the episode up to this point, one may rightfully find that Jerry, who has taken on so

many responsibilities, such as providing for a pregnant wife and two children, has already experienced a great degree of stagnation and craves variation in his life. Bill comments that upon looking at Jerry he, "thought how much older Jerry looked, a lot older than twenty-two" (Carver, 1981c, p. 147). Jerry's complete boredom and lack of variety spawn his desire to have an affair. He does not appear, through this desire, to belong to an uninhibited culture. Rather, he is able to transcend the boundaries of rules regarding sexual activity on the basis of need for variation. However, even the need for variation cannot explain either Jerry's murdering of the two girls or his disregard for customs regarding treatment of the deceased.

Jerry violates the American ethics both not to murder and to treat the dead with respect. After killing the girls, Jerry, like Stuart Kane, performs no action to inter the dead (insofar as the text gives no indication of a burial or other final act with which to honor them). Carver concludes the story describing Jerry's actions: "He [Bill] never knew what Jerry wanted. But it started and ended with a rock. Jerry used the same rock on both girls, first on the girl called Sharon and then on the one that was supposed to be Bill's" (1981c, p. 154). The last sentence lingers, and as the action conveyed in it appears so completely unexpectedly, one is at a loss to speculate about what happens next. Solely relying on the text, then, an interpretation can only be based on the events with which one is provided: there is no indication that Jerry provides any form of final ritual action to honor the deceased. One is reminded, again, of the prehistoric society in which members leave their dead the way animals do. Either some breach in the conveyance of culture has occurred in Jerry's case—he does not possess the burial

customs that are indicative of belonging to an advanced culture—or he demonstrates a complete disregard for the potential to be labeled.

One is tempted to ask the nature of the disgust that many readers reach upon arriving at the conclusion of the story. Do Jerry's actions offend because they counter beliefs, ideals, and customs that, if they are not American, are those possessed by advanced cultures, or do they offend the reader because they prompt the recognition that Jerry is only indicative of a larger trend towards inexplicable, senseless violence? Regardless of the case, Jerry cannot easily be seen as a normal, nondeviant member of American society. That even Bill, his closest friend, is clueless as to Jerry's motivation for killing the women, suggests that readers will have an even more difficult time rationalizing the murders; as such, deviance will likely be conferred to Jerry, through which his Otherness is constructed.

In this reading of the characters, difficulty arises due to the fact that the reader is presented with both Bill's and Jerry's childhoods through their long-standing friendship. Arguably, one can infer that these two like people share a comparable upbringing in which the same knowledge, beliefs, ideals, customs, and rules were instituted in their cultural backgrounds. This leads to the question as to whether Jerry is merely an exception, not unendowed with culture, but, like Marian Wyman, impulsive and able to overcome inhibition; or, whether Jerry represents a greater trend in American culture. In introducing his discussion about sadism, Kroeber asserts, "Almost any trend or inclination familiar from individual psychology might be recognized in culture. For instance, for cruelty, or sadism" (1948, p. 606). Kroeber is quick to note

that this alone cannot be any form of measuring point along the ruler of progress, for if one turns to another trait to measure cultures, the order will likely come out very differently. However, the essential point to be made here is that individual behavior can be recognized in broader cultural patterns. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that Jerry is an index of American attitudes about violence; he is uninhibited in murder and feels no responsibility to dispose of, much less to honor, the deceased.

Can one speculate on reasons for transgressions against culture? There exists a possible explanation for the reason that even those individuals who are engaged in advanced cultures may falter and perform activities or express beliefs or ideals that pervade uninhibited culture. It is necessary to note, as Kroeber does, that human cultures are extremely diverse and that it would be ludicrous to make universal generalizations. Culture, while a universal institution within every human society, is not itself universal; there does not exist a singular "Culture." There exist myriad possibilities for the beliefs and ideals instilled within cultures because culture, while serving to fulfill biological functions, is not itself a biological function. Certainly biological features are common to every human, for it is our designation as *Homo sapien sapien* that denotes one as "human." As Kroeber explains:

This notorious plasticity or variability of human culture is due precisely to the fact that its content and forms, its substance, are non-genetic, and are therefore exempt from the overwhelmingly repetitive and preservative influence of heredity. The customs--which viewed systematically are the culture--of human societies often differ drastically Yet in their organic morphology, the most

divergent human societies are only races within the confines of one zoologic species. (1963, pp. 201-202)

Bearing this concept in mind, it is reasonable to believe that mores and customs may not be transmitted from one generation to the next, even if the occurrence of this failure is only a rare one, as the result of human error, intentional or otherwise. Humans are not preprogrammed with all of the necessary ideals to govern behavior already in place; culture is only conveyed to an individual on the basis of interactions with others. Given the numerous possibilities that exist in terms of cultures and their beliefs, it is reasonable that certain ideals should fail to be transmitted if one is not exposed to the necessary individuals. One may look at "American culture" as an example: if it were, indeed, homogenous, there would be no need to specify subgroups that are prevalent within the broader field. However, because one may examine African-American culture, or Asian-American culture, or any one of the multiple American cultures that is distinguished with some prefix, it is obvious that variation can and does exist. While one may assume some overlapping occurs with the customs and beliefs of these varying American cultures (as the designation of a subgroup within a culture signifies that there does exist some broad cultural pattern into which these subgroups fall), there are likely to be cracks in the tiles of culture, through which specific attitudes can reasonably fall and fail to be passed on to the next generation.

Is it possible, then, from these analyses and from Kroeber's ideas, to generalize about American culture? It is arguable both that Carver's works provide a social commentary and that the reason his short stories evoke such strong reactions from

readers is due to this point. In other words, two of the central ideas or mores presented in "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?," "So Much Water So Close to Home," and "Tell the Women We're Going," those of puritanical attitudes towards sexual conduct that restrict it to occurring within marital bonds and burial rites, reflect ideals of American culture: straying outside of the boundaries of marriage for sexual fulfillment and improper treatment of the dead are offensive, or denounce models of American behavior. Carver's sword is double-edged: he provides the reader with a cultural commentary while offending the reader's delicate senses, as the means for his commentary exist due to the violation of the backbone of advanced culture.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SHORT CUTS AS A REFLECTION OF AMERICAN CULTURE

In many cases American culture is reflected through the leisure practices of its residents. When parents a generation ago turned the raising of their young to the electronic babysitter, television became one of the most powerful and influential media of our lives. Movies, too, have prevailed in our leisure pursuits, replacing radio's glory days of the 1930s and '40s when families would gather around their radio sets to listen to shows together. Parents, it seems, have turned to movie theaters as inexpensive babysitters, defying today's violent modern world where children are snatched out of public restrooms. It is not uncommon to see young children alone at movie theaters, captivated by the power of Technicolor in 35mm frames. However, it is not only our devotion to television and the movies which is a reflection of American culture; frequently the content of these shows mirrors our culture.

Robert Altman's (1994) adaptation of Raymond Carver's writings in his film Short Cuts is a reflection of American culture, apparently examining a series of relationships that exist between nine couples. When one digs below the surface in this film, one cannot help but identify the conflict Robert Bellah, William Sullivan, and Steven Tipton (1985) examine in Habits of the Heart, which they term as the struggle between expressive individualism and utilitarian individualism. Additionally, one finds evidence to support their ideas that modernity is a necessary unifying force of American culture and that fragmentation is an essential element within any unified culture.

Utilitarian and Expressive Individualism as Models of Class and Cultural Conflict

In each of the vignettes in Short Cuts, dramatic tension results from the conflicting ideals of expressive individualism and utilitarian individualism. To clarify, expressive individualism is explained as success seen in a life that is "rich in experience, open to all kinds of people, luxuriating in the sensual as well as the intellectual, above all a life of strong feeling" (Bellah, Sullivan, and Tipton, 1985, p. 34). Opposing this theme is utilitarian individualism, or the idea that if an individual pursues his own success, then "social good would automatically emerge" (Bellah, Sullivan, and Tipton, 1985, p. 33). The upper-class characters in Short Cuts are primarily motivated by their expressive individualism because they do not need to be concerned with making financial ends meet; however, the lower-class characters are financially driven and thus are motivated by their utilitarian individualism. The relationship between expressive and utilitarian individualism is paralleled by that of mainstream culture to Other, as American culture values monetary success greater than spiritual wealth.

The relationship between the lower- and upper-class characters in Short Cuts is not only characterized by the conflict between expressive and utilitarian individualism, but also by antifeminism, in which the lower-class working women are stigmatized for opposing the feminine ideal. Furthermore, the film reveals a concern with two areas that have been noted in ethnographies about American culture: the dual role of women as wage-earners and primary caretakers of children, a central issue in both of Robert and Helen Lynd's ethnographies, Middletown (1929) and Middletown in Transition (1937), and the fragmentation that pervades American culture, denying the treatment of

any town as a "community," which Hervé Varenne explores in Americans Together (1977). In order to understand fully these areas of conflict, it is essential to discuss some of the ways individuals' class may be defined, the American concern with it, and the conflict created by dual-income households.

Susana Narotzky (1997) explains that one method of defining class is not in terms of property owned, but rather through an individual's realization of "owning one's future" (p. 218). In this scenario, the lower-class is not delimited by individuals' limited possessions, but rather by their need to enter into "some sort of dependent and exploitative relation with capital" (Narotzky, 1997, p. 218) in order to survive. Narotzky (1997) asserts that Western cultures are characterized by economically motivated actions, even in such areas as love and recreation; through this overwhelming concern with economic success, economic hegemony appears, in which there is conflict about the distribution of capital.

Michael Weiss (1988) explores class construction in his The Clustering of America, in which he explores forty neighborhood types into which American communities may be categorized, a classification system originally developed by Jonathan Robbin as a marketing technique called "geodemographics" in the 1970s. He explains that the predominant American community type is "a suburban community filled with middle-class workers" (Weiss, 1988, p. 83). These classifications, Weiss explains, not only reveal America's consumer society--for we are defined by what we "wear, eat, drive and read" (1988, p. 17)--but also demonstrate that neighborhood type is the "ultimate yardstick for status and style" (1988, p. 17).

Americans continually strive to climb the ladder of economic success, attempting to reach the highest possible rung. Education, Weiss (1988) explains, has typically served as a means for upward mobility; however, even this does not guarantee a rise in income. Weiss asserts: "Where upward mobility for the middle-class was once a given, midscale Americans now find themselves moving both up and down the economic ladder" (1988, p. 31). Yet, it is this perpetual struggle to advance from one class to the next that marks American culture; furthermore, this struggle does not end once individuals reach a higher class, for they cling to their memories of their previous class and frequently provide the strongest resistance against others moving up in status, labeling those who attempt to change their status as outsiders through such terms as "nouveaux riche". Outsiders are feared across the socioeconomic spectrum, for they have the potential to "bring change and uncertainty. Throughout America, a kind of social glue maintains the feeling and culture of a specific neighborhood" (Weiss, 1988, p. 36), which is constantly threatened by change.

One such change that threatens the status quo was identified by the Lynds in both Middletown (1929) and Middletown in Transition (1937): the entrance of women into the workforce. While Weiss (1988) notes this as a recent phenomenon, asserting, "New patterns of supply and demand for labor have drawn millions of women out of the house" (p. 93), the Lynds traced the change in women's roles throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Of central importance to the Lynds' ethnographies is the place held by women, who maintained the multiple roles of wage earners and child rearers in both studies. An examination of these roles and the conflict they cause in one another

reveals that these women of the 1920s and 1930s are not as different from women of the 1990s as one might imagine.

By examining the roles held by women in Middletown, the Lynds provide an account of the backbone of the community and the culture that holds it together. Women worked in Middletown due to economic necessity, their children's education, debt, and the need for extra spending money. That economic need was the impetus for women joining the labor force reveals the displacement of men from the jobs upon which they once relied, a result of industrialization. In Middletown, twenty-four of the 55 working-class wives cited their husbands' unemployment as their reason for returning to work. Middletown in Transition returns to the issue of women in the workforce and examines both the shifts in the occupations they held and the change in the number of married women working. While women of the 1930s were an integral part of the workforce, the greatest change was in their rapid increase in holding clerical and professional jobs, which the Lynds (1937) explain can be seen as significant because these professions offered women the benefit of higher pay which allowed them to become more independent. Additionally, the issue of which women are working is important. Married women are more marked in the workforce in the 1930s; the Lynds explain: "They rose from 27.9 per cent of all 'usually' employed females in 1920 to 37.7 per cent in 1930" (1937, p. 59). This reveals cultural attitudes in Middletown about marrying: due to the trend in the 1930s of marrying at a young age, couples were often short on finances, which required that the wife work in order to make the marriage possible. Married women frequently filled the demand for workers

to occupy less-skilled, lower-wage jobs, as they were the only ones who could afford to take these positions; while married women needed the extra income to support their families, such low wages provided by these less-skilled jobs prevented women without a secondary income (as from husbands) from being able to afford these jobs. The wages these women earned were not enough to survive on had they been on their own; it was only because these women had the benefit of a working husband that they could accept these jobs. While there was an increase of higher-paying jobs that became available to women in Middletown in the 1930s, there was also a surge in married women taking extremely low-paying jobs.

The Lynds reveal that women's working was cited as one reason for the high divorce rate in Middletown. They explain, "With the spread of the habit of married women's working, women are less willing to continue an unsatisfactory marital arrangement" (1929, p. 127). Women became wage-earners in order to fill various needs, and, as a result, adopted an independence that permitted them to earn greater satisfaction in other areas of their lives, such as in leaving unfulfilling marriages.

The return to Middletown in the 1930s examines in greater detail the effect of a decade-long belief that women should not only stay home and raise their children, but also they should be able to hold a job in order to contribute to the family's income. Middletown's rapid changes, such as industrialization, allowed its women to enter the workforce. However, once women found themselves accepted in the workplace, they had to deal with attempting to balance work and home duties, as well as adjusting to the different mental demands these tasks required. There was an added mental

struggle that resulted from careers that drew on more masculine qualities in women.

The Lynds explain that while men's roles had not changed drastically from the 1920s to 1930s, women faced a great struggle:

As over against this relative fixity of the male world, the female world has exhibited more change and opened wider chasms of difficult choice . . . Careers for women have opened an alternative path diverging sharply--in its demands for male traits of drive, single-mindedness, the qualities associated with power--from the traditional woman's path in the home with its emphasis upon the feminine traits of gentleness, willingness to be led, and affection. (1937, p. 178)

The move of women into roles traditionally held by men caused them to have to adjust their attitudes, often taking on more male qualities in the work place. While women readjusted their views and gained a greater sense of independence by working outside of their homes, they were still tied to their homes and to traditionally female attitudes that resulted from filling the role of primary caretakers for their children.

Middletown's children in both the 1920s and 1930s were raised by their mothers, who frequently made significant sacrifices to attend to their children's needs. The Lynds comment that: "The role of the father in child-rearing is regarded by Middletown as less important than that of the mother" (1929, p. 148), emphasizing that the mother was expected to spend the majority of her time taking care of her children and preparing them for their social positions; however, with the need to devote such a large portion of time to child care, mothers frequently sacrificed their own leisure activities. Those who had the most leisure time, or the business-class mothers, were

able to devote more of their time to their children, while working-class mothers often had to split their time between taking care of children and meeting other demands. The Lynds emphasize the continually conflicting ideals of woman as mother and woman as wage earner, as was evident from the new demands placed on women in filling traditionally male roles.

In essence, the conflict between ideals of woman as wage earner and woman as child caretaker were just starting to become evident in the 1920s. It was only in the 1930s, partly out of the Depression, which increased the necessity for women to work, that this struggle became clear. This is certainly a concern of American women today, who often must choose between their career goals and their desires to raise a family. Feminist critiques of American culture function to refocus the anthropological scope onto the roles held by women, while antifeminism, especially as it is propagated through the media, functions to clarify the response of popular culture to feminism. Suzanna Walters' examination of the antifeminist movement, traced through the media in the 1980s, explores the social forces that produce dominant ideas about women, their roles, their lives, and their options. She identifies two realms within the movement against feminism (which she also terms postfeminist): the popular backlash against feminism, and the academic opposition to it, which she associates with postmodernism and poststructuralism. Walters finds the two areas "have serious points of overlap that equally, albeit with different intentions, contribute to the dissolution of feminism as theory *and* practice" (1995, p. 117). The power of the media cannot be overlooked for its repercussions both on the feminist movement, itself, and on the perceptions of

feminism by popular culture. Walters explains the postfeminist construction of women was specifically directed against the popular stereotype of feminists: "Counterposed to this imaginary vision of mean and hairy lesbians [the stereotypical feminist] is the 'new woman' of the late 1980s and 1990s: a woman whose essence is neatly encapsulated by reference to fashion (feminine clothing), body parts (breasts), and reproductive institutions (motherhood)" (1995, p. 118). While the media espoused the new ideal for women, in which there was no room for feminism, it also performed the role of revising history, announcing that the women's movement was at once successful and disastrous: it left women as winners, yet miserable, for they had lost any opportunity to pursue the American dream of success. Walters finds the media has created an image in which feminists acknowledge the error of their ways, as in taking extreme positions that were destined to fail on issues such as motherhood and women's success in the work force. Using Glenn Close's character in Fatal Attraction as but one example of the media's portrayals of antifeminism, Walters reveals that her single, childless character, who becomes a homewrecker and threatens the good mother character is the " 'working woman from hell,' beloved of recent popular culture" (1995, p. 123). Similarly, other negative portrayals, in film and in television, of the inability of women to be successful both as mothers and as career women reveal American culture as willing to reject the idea that women are as equally suited to hold these dual positions as men are. Walters asserts: "popular culture now constructs a world where there are no good women, only good men" (1995, p. 131). The attack on feminism is equally evident in the realm of academia, in which the entire category of "woman" as object of inquiry had

been dismissed, until, Walters explains, postmodernism redrew attention to women's studies.

Altman's Short Cuts reveals a perpetuation of the struggle of woman as mother and wage earner, in which the former is the image with which mainstream culture identifies (or at least strives to reach) and the latter is Other and predominantly associated with being lower class. Altman heightens the schism between the two identities by establishing an either-or scenario in which a woman can be successful in one realm but certainly not in both. By denying motherhood to several of Carver's female characters, Altman places a greater emphasis on the lack of possibilities open to women and stresses the stigma of a woman's choice to pursue a career instead of a family. This concern with women's roles in Short Cuts parallels that of the Lynds' ethnographies and demonstrates the extent to which women's roles have been not only an important aspect of American culture but also a cause for stigmatization by the media.

Upholding And Defying The Feminine Ideal:

Representations Of Mainstream And Other

The female characters in Altman's Short Cuts are not only distinguished from one another on the basis of class, illustrating the greater conflict that exists in the film between those individuals who are motivated by utilitarian and expressive individualism, but also operate as negations of Carver's strong female characters, demonstrating the popular backlash against the feminist movement and stigmatizing women who are

career-driven, establishing them as Other. Relationships between the lower- and upper-class female characters are marked by the contrast between expressive and utilitarian individualism. While Miriam Clark (1991) has noted that class, rather than gender, is typically a defining characteristic of Carver's characters insofar as their speech is concerned, Altman extends constructions of class beyond a consideration of speech to include the impact it has on women's roles as primary caregivers for children and as wage-earners, for it becomes evident that those female characters who are financially secure are awarded the valued position of "good mother." An examination of characters' motivation reveals that while Ann Finnigan, Zoe Trainer, and Marian Wyman are guided by expressive individualism, a luxury granted by economic security, Doreen Piggot and Betty Weathers are guided by utilitarian individualism, a consequence of economic instability; Claire Kane, a middle-class working wife, is a hybrid of the two traits, evidenced in both her desire to move up the social ladder and her emotional attachment to the corpse of the young woman her husband discovers.

Recalling Narotzky's (1997) idea that one may identify class based on the extent to which individuals enter into exploitative relationships with others in order to secure capital, Ann Finnigan is immediately recognizable as upper-class for her ability to rely upon her husband's wage-earning capacity. There is no reference made to Ann working outside of the home; the viewer is presented with her filling up her time figuring out what sort of decorations should go on her son Casey's birthday cake. When Casey is struck in a hit-and-run accident, he becomes the focus of her existence, demonstrating that she is a good mother whose sole focus is the welfare of her child.

Ann is reminiscent of one of the respondents in Middletown who expresses, "I accommodate my entire life to my little girl" (1929, p. 146). Furthermore, Ann relies upon Casey to contribute to her own expressive individualism just as much as she contributes to his. Financial security provides Ann with the opportunity to ignore such petty distractions as money in order to center her life on the experiences being a mother provides her. This "safe" image of a woman is one that expresses the mainstream American cultural ideal that women should make children their first priority.

Zoe Trainer is similarly untroubled by financial concerns and is granted the freedom to follow wherever her expressive individualism may take her. Free from being bogged down by the trappings of utilitarian individualism, she moves through life as a series of emotional experiences, riding from highs to lows. Zoe's expressive individualism is demonstrated to the audience by her rebellion, which manifests itself in attempts to frighten her mother, her anger over her mother's drinking, and the clear pain she experiences at Casey's death. In one striking scene, Zoe is in the pool, drifting in a dead man's float; she is completely motionless and seems to be absorbed in her own tranquillity. As Tess, her mother, laments, "I wish you wouldn't do that. You're not fooling me, you know" (Altman, 1994), she tosses an ice cube onto Zoe's back, striking her from her reverie. Zoe is clearly an emotional woman who at times seems to be so guided by her expressive individualism that she no longer possesses logical thought. Zoe is a trained cellist, and, as is evident by her performance near the opening of the film, is quite successful. Certainly, the use of her hands is of primary

concern to her. However, when she expresses anger about her mother's excessive drinking, she shatters, in her bare hand, the glass into which she has just poured her mother's "veggie Mary." Blood flows freely from her wound and it is clear that had she been slightly angrier, her career could have been over. Furthermore, she is not concerned with immediately washing and dressing the wound. Instead, she looks at the blood trying to take in every aspect of it; she smears it on the cupboards and walls, then leaves the kitchen. However, the most dramatic example of Zoe's expressive individualism overriding even her will to survive is evident in her reaction to Casey's death. On learning the news that he has passed away, Zoe is shattered. Flying in the face of any shred of utilitarian individualism that would, if nothing else, be concerned with being successful in continuing to live, Zoe's pained expressive individualism motivates her to take her own life. Perhaps if Zoe had not had the freedom to pursue her expressive individualism, her fate would not have been sealed. Financial security, it seems, places the upper-class characters, who are guided by expressive individualism, in the position of their own creators.

Marian Wyman holds the position of being a doctor's wife, a prize that grants her the freedom to follow a "career" (for it is a pursuit for which monetary compensation is irrelevant) as an artist; Marian unquestionably enjoys her "work." When speaking with a gallery director who is considering showcasing her paintings, she explains: "There is a hard, heavy physicality in my new paintings. In part because I've executed them on large panels of wood, but I say that they're tempered by the ephemeral use of color. You could almost say that it's beyond natural color" (Altman, 1994). Marian's

expressive individualism, however, causes conflict between her and her husband, Ralph, who is only half-heartedly guided by his expressive individualism. Perhaps he has been too indoctrinated by science, for he attacks Marian for her description to the gallery owner, spitefully saying, "Scientifically speaking, Marian, there is no such thing as beyond natural color" (Altman, 1994). While Marian is unconcerned with technicalities and accurate descriptions of reality, demonstrating the extent to which expressive individualism motivates her creativity, Ralph's correction of her use of language illustrates that he is not wholly an expressive individualist. Marian's expressive individualism fosters her career as an artist, a detail with which Altman provides her and which is not present in Carver's original story, "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?", yet Altman denies her the status of mother, heightening her self-centeredness. Within the film, Marian operates as a contrast to Ann Finnigan, a woman who shares a similar social standing but whose concern in life revolves around her child. The effect of Marian's childlessness, a trait imposed by Altman, is to deny Marian the opportunity to be a "good" woman, through which he stresses her status as Other. By denying Marian's status as mother, Altman proposes a dichotomous set of options for female characters: either they can be unemployed mothers who devote their lives to their children, or they can be career women, for whom a family is out of the question, a result of the self-centeredness that is illustrated through the refusal to put aside career ambitions.

When examining the middle- and lower-class characters in Short Cuts, it is evident that these are utilitarian individuals who strive to achieve personal success.

Doreen Piggot and Betty Weathers not only contradict the idea that the pursuit of success necessarily results in the creation of a social good, for it becomes apparent that these characters' attempts at success result in a negation of social good, but they also demonstrate Altman's reflection of the dominant code in which it is impossible to be both a working woman and a good mother.

When Doreen Piggot runs into Casey Finnigan with her car, her obsession with economic success not only fails to produce any social good, but it also directly denies it. While Doreen's primary concern when she hits Casey is his own well-being, it is clear that her secondary concern is a monetary one. When she explains to her husband Earl that she has hit the boy, he quickly interrogates her regarding the presence of witnesses, explaining: "Okay, all right, I just don't want to get sued" (Altman, 1994). This statement has the result of reordering Doreen's concerns so that the possibility of economic loss becomes her primary focus. She later comments, "everything could have changed. Our whole lives could have changed" (Altman, 1994). She maintains her monetary holdings by cautiously refusing to drive the vehicle with which she hit the boy. Had she not taken this course of action and instead reported the incident to a higher authority, it is possible she would have had some chance to contribute to the social good by at least providing comfort to Casey's family. However, because she fears being sued, she fails to take responsibility for hitting Casey, an action that ensures her economic success. This callousness extends to her fractured relationship with her own daughter, Honey Bush, with whom she has no contact throughout the duration of the film; one may question why Altman provides the

opportunity for Honey and Earl to interact at a night club, yet denies the possibility of any mother-daughter interaction. The marked absence of any such relationship between Doreen and Honey can only be taken as deliberate, as an indication that Doreen, a lower-class waitress who struggles to get by and who drinks in order to avoid her problems, is denied the possibility of being both a wage-earner and a mother. Altman emphasizes Doreen's lower-class status through her living in a trailer park, the American icon for white trash, which, when added to her lack of relationship with her daughter, demonstrates her failure both as a wage-earner and as a mother. Altman's character, whose Otherness is achieved in part by her economic status, solidifies her identity as Other by failing to live up to the ideal of woman as mother.

Betty Weathers' utilitarian individualism motivates her not only to maintain an affair with Gene Shepard, a married man who has three children, but also to cheat on Gene to whom she lies about her trysts with other lovers; the rapid pace with which she moves through her boyfriends prevents her from being an ideal mother because she is more concerned with her own welfare than her son's. Betty is unconcerned with Gene's inability to commit to her, for she actively pursues other men; she tries to conceal her infidelity, explaining to Gene: "I'm going away for the weekend, I'm going to Tahoe to see my sister" (Altman, 1994); however, Gene catches her on this lie, asserting that he believed her sister lived in Michigan, to which she responds, "This is Bunny . . . my half-sister . . . Bunny is my half-step sister. My dad's wife's kid, and we have been planning to get together for over a year" (Altman, 1994). Betty is clearly someone who will lie when she believes she has something to gain. Her view of

success, as is the case with other middle- and lower-class characters, is primarily economically motivated: she is looking for a wealthy, single man to buy things for her and her son. However, she is willing to settle for Gene until she can find the ideal man.

The negation of social good is clear when one examines the effect of the lack of a stable male role model in Betty's son's life. Betty's actions are detrimental to her son, Chad, who has not only lost his father through divorce, but who also is now faced with putting up with a series of strange men who do not fulfill his paternal needs. It has already been implanted in Chad's mind that his mother will meet new men who often seek nothing more than to buy his affections in order to secure their place with his mother. When returning from a trip with one of Betty's other men, Chad is carrying several obviously new toys. " 'Bye Pete," Chad says, only to be quickly corrected by his mother: "Wally, Wally." " 'Bye Wally" (Altman, 1994), Chad responds. Chad has been affected to the point where he cannot possibly hope for a new father; all of the men in his life apparently have left after short periods of time, which can only cause him to feel a sense of abandonment and serves to reinforce Betty's status as a failed mother.

Claire Kane's yearnings to surpass her middle-class status are evident not through the pursuit of a higher income as a means through which to climb the ladder of success, but rather through socializing with the "right kind" of people, such as the Wymans. This, however, is the extent of her utilitarian individualism, for it appears that she can attain what she wants simply by befriending those who possess more prestige than she does, rather than having to supplement her income with more than her employment as a clown hired to entertain at children's parties. Claire's expressive

individualism contributes to her reaction to her husband's failure to report the discovery of a young woman's dead body to the police; she expresses astonished horror at Stuart's actions: "You left her in the water? For how long? . . . How long did you say you left her in the water? . . . And when did you report it? Today? And when did you find her? When did you catch the fish? You fished while she was in the water? You just left her there? You're making me sick" (Altman, 1994). Her disgust stems from Stuart's decision to casually fish and to make no attempt to do anything about the body for three days' time. As in the case of Marian Wyman, Altman denies Claire's role as a mother, removing the son, Dean, from the vignette and thus shifting the focus away from her own child and to her concern with someone else's: the body of the young woman her husband discovered floating in the river. While denying Claire's position as a literal mother within the film provides Altman with the opportunity to heighten the grief Claire feels over the death of the young woman, for she mourns as if the woman were her own daughter, one cannot overlook the greater effect Claire's childlessness poses: it creates a character for whom social standing is more important than being a mother and denies her the possibility of representing a positive image of a working mother. Being a mother is a role valued by mainstream American culture; to give this position up in search of higher social standing violates the rule that women should not only want to be mothers but that they should take good care of their children, placing their needs before the mothers' own.

That Ann Finnigan should be the only female character endowed with the characteristics of a stereotypically good mother demonstrates that Altman not only

perpetuates the media's backlash against feminism, but also that he denies the characters the strength with which Carver endows them. Altman denies Marian Wyman and Claire Kane the status of mother with which Carver provides them, effecting self-centered, status-conscious characters, while Doreen Piggot and Betty Weathers are granted the requirement for motherhood—children—yet are denied the possibility of representing virtuous mothers.

Barbara Henning (1989) and Naomi Matsuoka (1993) have noted Carver's propensity for creating strong, yet subdued, female characters. Examining the role of gender in Carver's and Mason's stories, Henning asserts: "women are the better survivors; survivors who suppress their anger, cursing under their breath and slamming cabinet doors, perhaps because an active expression of their anger might further the distance between husband and wife, turning the wife into the aggressor" (1989, p. 697). Matsuoka describes the wives as "practical and realistic" (1993, p. 431), emphasizing that while the inability to act is a trait exhibited by Carver's male characters, his female ones are endowed with the power of action. She cites "Blackbird Pie" as a clear example in which the male character is unable to confront his wife, even at the crucial moment when she is leaving him, while the wife takes control of her life, leaving a marriage that no longer has anything to offer her. Henning and Matsuoka both express the ideas that husbands are incapable of action, and that they ultimately decay in front of their wives' eyes. Henning, exploring Carver's "Preservation," asserts: "Sandy observes her husband's deterioration, the way he *is* degenerating into his body parts" (1989, p. 697).

In stark contrast to Carver's strong female characters, Altman presents ones who are so completely powerless as to be victims. Realistically, the only definitively strong character throughout the film is Stormy Weathers, Betty's ex-husband; Altman provides Stormy with the tools (quite literally, for he is empowered by a chainsaw) to defy the constraints of his relationship with his former wife.

While it is possible that Altman's film comes across as antifeminist, Short Cuts reflects the persistent standard placed on American women that recalls the "a woman's place is in the home" mentality. For female characters such as Ann Finnigan, motherhood is the greatest accomplishment possible; however, for those who pursue other goals, whether they be monetary or status-oriented, motherhood is denied, a signal both that these characters fail to measure up to expectations and that labels them as Other.

Modernity And Fragmentation

While Bellah, Sullivan, and Tipton (1985) are concerned with modernity as a unifying force of American culture that results from the creation of metropolitan areas, which has caused people to interact with a greater diversity of people on a daily basis, Short Cuts adapts this theme in that modernity is the unifying element between the different characters and vignettes. Complex relationships between characters exist in Short Cuts as a direct result of modern cultural and social structures, as is evident in the relationships between Ann Finnigan, Mr. Bitkower, and Dr. Ralph Wyman; Marian Wyman and Claire Kane; and, Casey Finnigan and Doreen Piggot. Modernity, which

has unified American culture by bringing people together economically, technically, and functionally, merges mainstream and Other cultures within Short Cuts.

As the result of modernity, Ann Finnigan's life is filled with a number of complex relationships. The initial relationship between her and Mr. Bitkower is the direct result of an economically spawned service industry. She, like so many modern women, is no longer required to perform every task herself. She has the opportunity to relegate tasks to others who have been trained and who have set up businesses to accommodate these needs. Her relationship with Mr. Bitkower is a result of Ann's need of a service: the baking of a birthday cake for her son Casey. This seems simple enough, until the clash between her expressive individualism and Mr. Bitkower's utilitarian individualism occurs. At the same time that she establishes her relationship with Mr. Bitkower, a car hits her son and she is forced into the relationship with Dr. Ralph Wyman. This relationship is clearly a functional one: Ann Finnigan relies on Dr. Wyman for his expertise in medicine and his potential to heal her son from his injuries. Again, without urbanization there would be little need for a multiplicity of individuals who serve the same function. However, because they live in the urban environment of Los Angeles, Ann Finnigan and Dr. Wyman establish a relationship. The clear distinction between Ann's relationship with Dr. Wyman's when contrasted against the relationship with Mr. Bitkower is the question of choice: Ann's relationship with Mr. Bitkower is voluntary, while her relationship with Dr. Wyman is unavoidable. Modernity has functioned to unite Ann Finnigan with both Mr. Bitkower and Dr. Wyman, who most likely would not otherwise be involved in any sense of relationship.

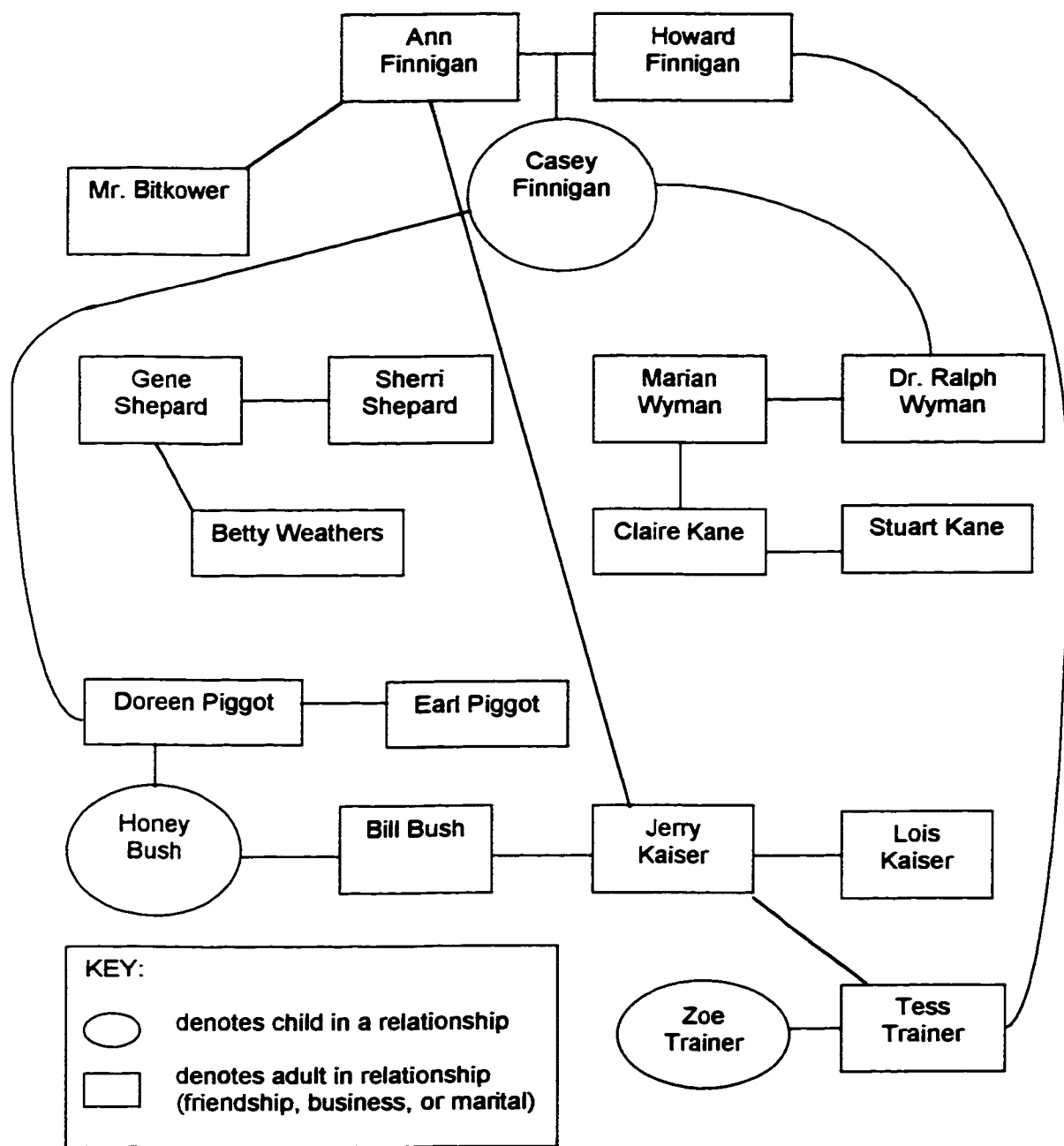
Marian Wyman and Claire Kane are also clearly united by modernity, as is evident by their meeting at a concert. The classical performance concert is clearly a function of modern society, in which high culture attempts to unite individuals who share similar interests (Weiss, 1988). For Marian Wyman to attend such a concert is clearly keeping in step with her expressive individualism: she is enjoying a sensual aspect of life. For Claire Kane, however, the event is motivated by, at least to a small degree, utilitarian individualism: she seeks to get ahead on the social ladder and to increase her prestige by meeting the "right" kind of people. The classical performance at which Marian and Claire meet is marked as an instrument of unification by modernity in the sense that as a result of living in a cosmopolitan area there exists a wide diversity of leisure pursuits. An opportunity such as a classical concert would be unthinkable in rural America as a place to unite with similar individuals--although in that case opportunities such as square dances and church revival meetings serve the same purpose (Weiss, 1988). When one wanders the streets of any of the larger cities in America, one is immediately presented with just how diverse our culture is. Different areas of different metropoli cater to the needs of a diverse set of individuals, and, as such, offer the unique opportunity for individuals to unite, which would not likely happen in smaller towns.

Similarly, Casey Finnigan and Doreen Piggot meet as the result of a directly modern form of unification: the automobile accident. While Bellah and his associates are concerned with cities as producers of economic, technical, and functional forms of unification, one cannot overlook the mechanical and technological forces that bring

individuals together. When Doreen hits Casey with her car, there is a huge impact on both of their lives that can never be changed. Sadly, this results in tragedy for Casey. Doreen's and Casey's relationship is an exception to Short Cuts, as it lasts no longer than a few minutes because Casey's mom has warned him never to talk to strangers. Still, this relationship is worth considering because even though the amount of time invested in it is small, the emotional impact on both characters and those with whom they share their lives is immense.

With the numerous relationships that exist in Short Cuts, as the result of a unification through modernity, one cannot help but think of the theory expressed in Six Degrees of Separation, which explains every individual on this planet is linked to every other individual by the possible connections between the starting individual and six others. Each relationship with one person introduces him or her to a new set of possible acquaintances. Theoretically, then, if one knew the right combination of people, one could potentially know leaders in politics, economics, and popular culture. This idea of a chain of relationships is clear in Short Cuts when one examines the various relationships between characters and who is known and who is unknown by them (see Figure 1). Just as unification is a central theme to Short Cuts and Habits of the Heart, equally important is the idea that fragmentation not only exists in American culture, but that it is a necessary element. Weiss (1988) asserts this fragmentation has become even more pronounced in the last generation.

Figure 1: One Visual Interpretation of the Relationships Between Characters in Short Cuts



Varenne (1977) explores fragmentation in Americans Together, asserting the town he studied, Appleton, does not function as a community due to its diversity.

Varenne defines Appleton:

I have to say that whatever substantive definition of community one wishes to adopt, it is evident that this town is not one. The smaller groups of friends and the smaller churches might seem the likeliest candidates for the title of community, but this is stretching the term, since it is generally used to refer to groups larger than a dozen persons or families . . . *Appleton is not a community to explore or map out.* (1977, p. 150)

It is this idea that Appleton is not a community, but rather a combination of smaller groups of people, that deserves the greatest attention. Appleton, in Varenne's study, is revealed to be a highly diverse group of citizens whose religious, political, and recreational practices nullify any idea of a "community," echoing Bellah, Sullivan, and Tipton's (1985) view of fragmentation within modern American culture.

While fragmentation is expressed in Bellah, Sullivan, and Tipton's (1985) book as a necessary part of a unified culture and is primarily concerned with social structures and institutions, such as the fragmentation in pop culture and in universities, Short Cuts reflects fragmentation in terms of social relationships, separating child-parent bonds and drawing a divisive line between friendship and privacy. It is essential to note that Short Cuts shares the theme expressed in Bellah, Sullivan, and Tipton's work that fragmentation offers integration to an individual by allowing for the simultaneous accomplishment of personal success and the expression of personal feelings,

essentially providing a bridge between utilitarian and expressive individualism. The relationship between Zoe and her mother and between the sisters Marian Wyman and Sherri Shepard both reflect this fragmentation that results in success and in the expression of one's feelings.

Fragmentation is exemplified by the relationship between Zoe and Tess Trainer. Indeed, they could not possibly be more different and separated from one another, yet share the same house and genetic background. Their separation is rooted in their different choices of musical expression. While this area of separation initially appears to simply divide the characters from one another, it is more important to note that the greater effect is to unify them. Zoe is a trained classical cellist, while Tess is a jazz singer. This may appear to be a superficial difference and form of fragmentation, yet it is essential to note in this case because of the emphasis each character places on the role of music in their lives. Here, this fragmentation in terms of different musical styles is actually a tool that permits Zoe and Tess to achieve personal success with their music, while simultaneously allowing for the expressions of their feelings. That they have chosen different forms through which to express themselves only heightens the simultaneous fragmentation, individuation, and unification of the characters. As much as they are separated, they are integrated due to their emphasis on music as a form of expression.

While Marian Wyman and Sherri Shepard initially appear to be as close as sisters possibly can be, a more thorough examination of their relationship yields the discovery that even though they share blood, they do not necessarily share their

deepest secrets. It is this aspect of their relationship that initially causes fragmentation.

When discussing the topic of extramarital affairs, Marian firmly denies that she has had any such transgressions, while Sherri admits she has given them up since she and Gene have had children. However, it becomes clear in Marian's discussion with her husband that she has had at least one affair to which she is willing to admit. Arguably, Marian has not lied to Sherri to save face; it is much more likely that the motivation for her deceit is the result of her perceived relationship with Sherri: because they are sisters and grew up together, sharing many of the same experiences and memories, Marian has made the conscious choice to differentiate herself from Sherri as a means of individuation. She cannot be the same social product as Sherri; she requires there to be some sense of dissimilarity between them in order to establish her own identity. This individuation allows the sisters to continue their relationship, each striving for her own success and openly expressing herself. Marian's lie is not detrimental to her relationship with Sherri. Rather, it fuels the relationship and helps them to grow.

While Short Cuts is a fictional work, its use in gaining insight to American culture cannot be overlooked. Often it is the practices that we take for granted that are most interesting to outsiders. Just as Horace Miner observed American rituals associated with the obsession with the body, we can gain insight by looking at the American obsessions with success and the expression of one's feelings. Indeed, his point that "It is hard to understand how they [the Nacirema, or American, spelled backwards] have managed to exist so long under the burdens which they have imposed upon themselves" (Miner, 1956/1994, p. 21) is well-taken. We have created the conflicting

ideals of success at any cost and living a life rich in experience; for women this often means choosing between having a career and a family. While modernity breeds progress, it carries with it the simultaneous unification and fragmentation of culture. American culture is riddled with diametric oppositions, and somewhere in the midst of them it has created a place for the individual, who, if he or she is to pursue any form of success, must be integrated into some facet of society as a whole. Altman's alteration of Carver's female characters draws attention to the way Americans perceive women who pursue either economic success or motherhood, stigmatizing the former group for being deviant and praising the latter for being normal.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INARTICULATION, DISSOCIATION, AND ALIENATION IN CARVER'S STORIES

Verbal communication exists as a tool through which meanings are produced, circulated, used, and reproduced. Yet, it is not flawless, as there are many places in the process where meanings other than those intended can be read. Ulf Hannerz (1996) notes that misunderstanding cultural contexts frequently occurs, as in the case of the media's foreign correspondents who "do not seem much given to deciphering foreign meanings at all" (p. 120). While foreign correspondents relate international events to their audiences, they not only fail to attribute meaning within the local cultural context, but they also frequently transmit a cultural element incorrectly. However, it does not take belonging to a different culture for meaning to be transmitted incorrectly; if there is a problem with the sender, such as being inarticulate, then the message, the whole purpose for the communicative event, will be lost. Stuart Hall's (1993) discussion of the encoding and decoding processes that are performed by television programs and their audiences is applicable to other forms of communication, such as speech. A product encoded with meaning is transmitted for use by receivers, the audience. The audience receives the product and decodes it to retrieve the meaning, yet it is possible for the receiver to decode the product so that it carries a meaning other than that intended by the producer/encoder due either to distortions or to the lack of equivalence between the source and receiver (Hall, 1993). Reproduction of meaning occurs when, as a result of the decoding of meaning, feedback is returned into the production process, restarting the cycle. Throughout this process, the meaning is contingent on

the ability to encode and decode a program. The processes of encoding and decoding are not, however, flawless, and there are many ways in which meaning can become distorted. Systematically distorted communication occurs when the audience finds an alternate meaning within the symbols than that intended. (Hall, 1993)

The three standard positions of understanding meaning include the dominant-hegemonic position, the negotiated code, and the globally contrary position. In the first case, the audience decodes the meaning in the way intended by the encoder/producer because it is decoded in accordance with the reference code in which it has been encoded. With negotiated code, there is the recognition that the meaning is legitimate, yet there is a contradiction as the code operates on rules of its own. Finally, the audience may understand the meaning connoted to a product but reinterpret it an alternative framework of reference, causing it to have a completely different interpretation than that intended. Complementing Hall's examination of meaning, Morris Eaves (1994) examines the ways in which both an editor changes encoded meaning, and the transmission of the meaning to an audience functions to establish cultural preference of a written text; if an audience responds favorably to a specific work, it is reprinted and continues to transmit its meaning, while if there is a negative response to the work, it is removed from the communicative cycle.

For the most part, Raymond Carver's stories are characterized by a failure of communication between characters that results both from individuals' inarticulation and from meaning that has become distorted. The effect failed communication has on

Carver's characters is frequently one of dissociation and alienation, often leading to a paralysis that prevents characters from changing their situations.

Failed Interpersonal Communication, Its Source, And Its Effects

One of Carver's strengths is his ability to turn the ordinary into the alarming, which is frequently achieved through characters' inarticulation that results in their estrangement, as well as through the dissociation and alienation that is both self-inflicted and inflicted by others. These elements are played against one another in a manner that is recognizable and realistic; the effect of unsuccessful communication within Carver's stories can be seen not only through the devastation that afflicts characters, who find themselves unable to communicate to others, but also through the alienation that follows from the intrusion of outsiders' speech into private relationships. Cathedral stands apart from Carver's earlier work, for while it does contain a combination of the inarticulation, alienation, and dissociation that pervade his stories, this collection marks a turning point in Carver's writing, where he seems to suggest that perhaps characters can move beyond these restraints.

Carver's use of dialogue, in keeping with his tradition of exploring the ordinary, has a comfortable, realistic, recognizable aspect to it, as his language parallels the characters' "flat" lives (Boxer and Phillips, 1979). Carver is explained as a voyeur in the act of writing, as is evidenced in an analysis of "What's in Alaska?" in which the style of writing is compared to being "transcribed" from an overheard conversation: "the writer consciously has slipped into the lives of his characters and caught them at unguarded

moments" (Boxer and Phillips, 1979, p. 81). More notable, however, is the recurrent theme in Carver's stories of the inability of characters to communicate with one another, which results both in failed relationships and in alienation. Certainly, Carver writes dialogue recognizing the speech that is within characters' realms of possibility; however, as Mark Facknitz (1986) notes, this can cause difficulties for the reader who has to "work against a narrator's tendency to sound cretinous or Carver's propensity to reveal characters as bigots and dunces" (p. 292). Stories abound demonstrating the inability to communicate, leading Miriam Clark (1991) to suggest failed speech functions as a resistance to heteroglossia, which results in characters losing their identities. However, it is equally important to note the stories in which Carver endows his characters with the ability to communicate, thereby allowing them to heal. Cathedral uses narrative transactions to heal and to help characters through ordeals. It is reasonable to discuss Carver's pre-Cathedral writing as that in which failed speech pervades the stories, causing harmful consequences, and that of Cathedral, in which speech is not only successful but also rehabilitative.

Carver's early work explores the themes of inarticulation and the idea that even when communication occurs, it is not without dire consequences. Critics have noted inarticulation in Carver's "Blackbird Pie" and "The Train." In "Blackbird Pie," Naomi Matsuoka (1993) finds the refusal to even attempt communication leads to the dissolution of marriage; while the wife craves conversation, the husband not only refuses to talk to her, but he also refuses to read the letter she has presumably written, preferring to maintain the handwriting cannot be hers. The husband's lack of

communication is contrasted by an "eloquent . . . depiction of things and of . . . reflections" (Matsuoka, 1993, p. 429). While "Blackbird Pie" presents both the failures of oral and written communication, "The Train" centers on the inability to communicate verbally. Facknitz (1985) notes that details differ between John Cheever's "The Forty-eight" and Carver's "The Train," often as a reflection of Carver's need to present details that maintain his tradition of the failure of communication: "Instead of being able to listen to Miss Dent, Carver's readers hear her say only 'be still,' words that don't appear in Cheever's text" (p. 346). What is notable about "Blackbird Pie" and "The Train" is the certainty with which characters refuse to communicate.

Recalling Kirk Nessel's (1994) comment about the perils of communication, it is useful to examine the consequences of the intrusion of others' discourse into characters' lives, as is illustrated in "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?" The story, in which Ralph Wyman learns of his wife's infidelity and leaves their house for the night to be disturbed by that which is recognizable to him during the day, expresses the danger of including others' voices in personal communication. Clark (1991) reveals "domestic trouble *begins* with the intrusion of other people, other talk, into their lives" (p. 244). It is not until Marian quotes Mitchell Anderson, the man with whom she had the affair, that Ralph becomes unnerved and finds their relationship threatened. While Marian and Ralph are capable of communicating with one another, Marian's choice to include directly the communication that occurred between her and Mitchell Anderson in her conversation with Ralph introduces an outsider, over whom Ralph is powerless, into their lives; Marian's admission of Anderson into their conversation constitutes a betrayal

to Ralph that is just as serious as her physical act of cheating. Perhaps Marian's motivation for quoting Mitchell Anderson is her own inarticulation, which is but one source of failed communication.

Carver's earlier characters are plagued by failed communication, which appears both in characters' inarticulation and in distortions in decoding meanings. "Why, Honey?", which appears in Carver's first collection of short stories, Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?, is written in the form of a letter, immediately signaling the inability to communicate verbally successfully; furthermore, the author of the letter paraphrases conversations she has had with her son that demonstrate their shared inarticulation. The story expresses a mother's concern with her troubled son who, now a grown man, has been elected governor; the mother establishes a continuing pattern of violence that started with her son killing their cat by exploding it with firecrackers, which was followed by her discovery of a badly bloodied shirt and knife, and culminated in her son's threatening her life.

What is constant throughout "Why, Honey?" is the lack of communication between mother and child, even when the mother confronts her son about his lying. She explains that she wants him to answer her honestly, that the truth is all she has ever wanted from him:

Honey . . . suppose you had a child who when you asked him something, anything, where he's been or where he's going, what he's doing with his time, anything, never, he never once told you the truth? Who if you asked him is it raining outside, would answer no, it is nice and sunny, and I guess laugh to

himself and think you were too old or too stupid to see his clothes are wet. Why should he lie, you ask yourself, what does he gain I don't understand. I keep asking myself why but I don't have the answer. Why, honey? (Carver, 1963b, p. 129)

The narrator explains that her son remains silent, refusing to speak until he moves next to her: "Kneel is what I say, kneel down is what I say, he said, that's the first reason why" (Carver, 1963b, p. 129), which the mother takes as an act of aggression. It is difficult to determine precisely what message the son is sending to his mother, but that she should run to her room and lock the door indicates the threat she feels from his command to kneel before him. Inarticulation is evident in the mother's flight, as she chooses physical means to communicate her fear rather than staying and verbally confronting her son. Following this incident, the son leaves home and his mother sees him for the last time at his high school graduation; she explains that she has seen his television appearances and that she wrote to him for some time, but when he was elected governor she stopped, hoping he would think that she was dead. She fears for her safety, as is evidenced in her explaining to the receiver of the letter that recently she has been watched by a man who has sat in his parked car outside of her house and whom she believes is working for her son. Further cause for concern is her receipt of the letter from the person to whom she is replying, as she has already changed her name and has obtained an unlisted phone number in an attempt to keep her son from finding her. The story closes with the mother inquiring as to how the receiver has tracked her down: "I also wanted to ask how you got my name and knew where to

write, I have been praying no one knew. But you did. Why did you? Please tell me why?" (Carver, 1963b, p. 130). For the writer of the letter, failed verbal communication exists as a pattern, evident not only through her inability to communicate with her son, but also through her choice to continue written correspondence with the person to whom she is writing the letter, rather than to attempt to risk oral communication.

"What's in Alaska?" presents the situation where characters, suffering the effects of marijuana, fail to correctly decode the intended meaning of messages sent by others. The story focuses on an evening during which Carl and Mary are at Jack and Helen's house helping them to break in a new water pipe that Helen has bought for Jack's birthday. Communication within the story is drastically different before the characters smoke marijuana, for characters are able not only to transmit their verbal messages but also to have them correctly decoded by others; following smoking marijuana, two areas of confusion dominate the story: whether there is anything in Alaska and whether or not Carl is on a "bummer." With each of these topics, the characters skirt the edges of sarcasm, genuineness, and incomprehension in their conversations. Ultimately, each character experiences failed communication that results from their distortions in decoding others' intended meanings for their speech. The concern with Alaska arises from Mary's job interview: she is fairly certain that it went well and that she will be offered a job in Fairbanks. Initially, Carl seems happy for her, explaining that he has always wanted to go to Alaska. However, after smoking marijuana with Helen and Jack, Carl's enthusiasm wanes, as he complains: "There's nothing in Alaska" (Carver, 1963a, p. 71). The primary area of confusion concerning

Alaska is whether or not there is anything there for Carl; Mary clearly indicates that she will have a job there and that she will have something to do, whereas Carl is uncertain about his future there. The distortion in meaning occurs through the value with which characters endow the idea of Alaska: Mary encodes "Alaska" in terms of its potential employment, while Carl decodes it as a wasteland, a place where nothing exists and where he will have nothing to do. The confusion in meaning comes from the different connotations characters project onto "Alaska." However, the characters' conceptions of Alaska change throughout the duration of the story. Towards the end of the story, Mary repeats Jack's dissatisfaction that there is nothing in Alaska for Carl and Mary to do: "What's in Alaska?" (Carver, 1963a, p. 75), indicating that she has changed her value judgement and now reproduces Carl's meaning for Alaska.

Mary and Carl experience a similar difficulty in transmitting and receiving, respectively, the idea of Carl's state of mind. Upon arriving at Jack and Helen's, Mary proclaims, "Carl's on a little bumner tonight" (Carver, 1963a, p. 67), which Carl denies, explaining, "That's a good way to put me on one" (Carver, 1963a, p. 67). Mary admits that she is only teasing him, but, as with the case with Alaska, after they have smoked marijuana, this becomes a center of confusion. Their communication is complicated by Helen and Jack's involvement in the conversation, as the concern with Carl's mindframe arises in their shared conversation. Carl appears inarticulate in attempting to persuade the others that he is not on a bumner, adding to their misinterpretations of his speech. Mary, Jack, and Helen respond to everything Carl says by filtering it through the framework of reference of Carl's bad mood; thus while Carl makes such

innocuous statements as the fact that he has to work in the morning (Carver, 1963a, p. 73), Mary's framework of reference for this statement is Carl's foul mood, prompting her to assert, "What a bummer he's on . . . You want to hear a bummer, folks? *There's a bummer*" (Carver, 1963a, p. 73). Therefore, while Carl simply may intend to signal that he needs to leave so that he can get an adequate amount of sleep in order to be ready for work, Mary takes his statement as an indication not only that he is not having a good time at the time that he makes the statement, but also that he has not had a good time the entire evening.

The effects of the lack of communication in Carver's early stories include failed relationships and characters' alienation. Failed communication in "Why, Honey?" is one possible cause for the failed relationship between the mother and her son. Throughout the story, the mother emphasizes the numerous times she has confronted her son about his lies, only to have him remain silent. With each time that his lies continue, his mother's trust erodes until there is nothing left. Her inability to articulate herself is compounded by her son's silence, exponentially increasing the lack of communication between the characters. That successful communication should occur with other characters who inform her of her son's activities only heightens the disparity in communication between the mother and her child. While the mother is successful in receiving information from such people as her neighbors and her son's boss, he remains deceptive. The mother explains that rather than responding to her inquiries, "He laughed, he always had a laugh for you" (Carver, 1963b, p. 127). She recognizes that his pattern of lying has existed for quite some time, explaining that during one

confrontation his explanation of where he had been the previous night "sounded strange" (Carver, 1963b, p. 127). The dissolution of the mother and son's relationship is not merely an estrangement, but it rather escalates into her fear for her life; she recognizes his ability to deceive others, as in her response to what reporters write about him: "I shake my head and wonder. I read what they write about him and I ask myself is that man really my son" (Carver, 1963b, p. 126). While the son fails to communicate with his mother, preferring to offer her lies, which she will not accept as the truth, he successfully transmits his lies to others, who receive them as the truth.

Rather than creating failed relationships, failed communication in "What's in Alaska?" results in characters' alienation. Carl is most notable for this aspect, as he has been labeled as being on a "bummer," and he cannot communicate to the others that he is not, in fact, on one. Carl feels attacked by Mary's claim that he is on a bummer, especially as it is repeated throughout the story and Jack and Helen label him as being in a foul mood. Carl's reaction to the label is to adopt it and embrace it, actually being on a bummer as the story progresses. While the other characters are enjoying their evening, Carl only experiences difficulty both in communicating and in having a good time. After spilling cream soda on his new shoes, Carl laments: "It's done for . . . That cream soda will never come out" (Carver, 1963a, p. 71), which prompts Mary, Jack, and Helen to laugh at him. Carl experiences rejection because of the stigma carried by being in a bad mood, expressing Erving Goffman's (1963) concept of the discreditable stigma. Unlike the immediately recognizable

discrediting stigma, which appears in such cases as physical handicaps, the discreditable stigma is invisible; Carl is able to pass as a normal, yet when Mary identifies Carl's "bummer," he is labeled. Carl attempts to manage his identity and to reject the label, but the moment the discrediting information is exposed, he is forced to deal with the consequences of labeling.

While characters throughout Carver's works face the inability to communicate with others, there is a sharp contrast between his Cathedral collection and his earlier stories. Cathedral marks a transformation in Carver's style, as characters are endowed with the power to overcome unsuccessful communication and use communication as a tool with which to heal. As Nessel (1994) remarks, Cathedral suggests that "as an artist Carver, like a few of his more fortunate characters, is capable of breaking free of enclosing environments, exchanging them not only for greater capaciousness but, we must assume, for a new understanding of himself and his craft as well" (p. 124). Regardless of the success of communication, Carver consistently writes recognizably realistic dialogue for his characters; his concern with the ordinary in his early stories presents the dangers of communication, while in his later stories common speech provides a tool with which characters rehabilitate themselves.

The Source Of Successful Communication In Cathedral

Cathedral marks a turning point in Carver's writing, as it is in this collection that he endows his characters not only with the ability to communicate to one another, but he also provides healing through communication. One may note that rather than

resisting communication, there is the appearance of characters who are described as keen to listen, as is the blind man in "Cathedral" and a character in "Intimacy" who explains he's "all ears" (Nesset 123). Within this collection, it is useful to examine "A Small, Good Thing," the title story, and "Fever" for their use of communication as a recuperative, rather than a harmful, element.

In order to address fully communication as a healing device in "A Small, Good Thing," it is useful to contrast it to "The Bath," the story from which it was revised. While both stories deal with communication through perplexing phone calls placed by the baker to the Weisses, who have failed to pick up their son's birthday cake following his sudden death, the later story provides an opportunity for successful, healing communication. Within the later story, the failure of language appears through the phone calls from the baker to the Weisses; however, the stress on communication as a rehabilitative tool dominates the scene between the Weisses and the family at the hospital and climaxes in the Weisses' confrontation of the baker.

In contrast to "The Bath," which ends with the baker calling Ann Weiss at home enigmatically explaining the call regards her son Scotty, the use of telephone calls in "A Small, Good Thing" functions to express the necessity of physical communication and provides motivation for the Weisses to confront the baker in the final scene of the story. While the baker's phone calls to the Weisses' home in "A Small, Good Thing" are initially mysterious, Michael Gearhart (1989) asserts they function to express the failure of language, which is then coupled with the increasing importance of body language. The substitution of implicit communication through nonverbal means for verbal

inarticulation (Gearhart, 1989) is not only an important part of the final scene between the Weisses and the baker, but it is also present in the exchange between the Weisses and the doctor. Gearhart (1989) reveals that as the doctor becomes more baffled at expressing Scotty's inexplicable coma, he moves from shaking her hand to a full embrace. It is as if the doctor is aware of the inadequacy of language to communicate to Ann Weiss during an extremely difficult situation. Physical action appears both as a counterpart to verbal communication and as a device that prompts the continuation of verbal communication.

Examining the differences in interaction between the Weisses and the black family who wait by their son's bedside in the hospital in the two stories, the later story is marked by the use of physical movement to encourage verbal communication. Gearhart (1989) notes the difference: in "The Bath," the interaction between Ann and the father of the black child, Nelson, is brief, while in "A Small, Good Thing," the exchange is enhanced to include the father's revealing details about Nelson. The crucial point that allows this inclusion, Gearhart explains, is the employment of a regulator, an action that involves the two characters: while the earlier story prohibits lengthy conversational exchange between Ann and Nelson's father by her looking down at the table, the later story encourages conversation: "Ann utilizes a regulator of her own--her insistent stare--which causes him to continue" (1989, p. 441). There is a physical aspect to Ann's communicative skills that prompts Nelson's father to engage in conversation with her; through this transaction he is able to express his grief and to begin the healing process.

Communication as a convalescent tool is most noticeable in the Weisses' confrontation of the baker in "A Small, Good Thing," an important development that provides healing and forgiveness (Gearhart, 1989) that is not present in the original story. Analyzing the interplay between verbal and physical communication, Gearhart (1989) examines the scene, noting that before the baker is told of Scotty's death, physical communication dominates the scene, whereas following the announcement of Scotty's death, verbal communication expressed by the baker takes greater importance. This initial use of physical communication in "A Small, Good Thing" parallels the actions of characters in Carver's earlier collections, for whom verbal communication fails; that the baker should be endowed with the ability to communicate orally, through which he voices the emptiness in his life to the Weisses, "makes him unique among Carver's characters; he is the first to use language in a cathartic sense, the first to confront the nature of his own existence" (Gearhart, 1989, p. 445). Facknitz (1986) focuses on the baker's failure to discuss the son's death, preferring to reveal his own unhappiness, which is a consolation offered to the Weisses. Nessel (1994) notes the ironic disparity between the Weisses and the baker who administers recovery to them and finds his confession to be an opportunity for the Weisses to enter his existence. Through the baker's narrative, the Weisses are granted a respite from their own grief over Scotty's death. Nessel believes Carver intentionally draws attention to the successful act of listening to provide "an answer to the failures his characters have been subject to all along, failures of characters who, in stories in all of his books, talk and listen with characteristically poor results" (1994, p. 121). Clark (1991) also notes

the uncharacteristic embracing of conversation in this story, insisting that even though communication is successful and eventually functions to heal the Weisses, this story emphasizes the menacing aspect of conversation as is indicated by the baker's telephone calls to the Weisses.

In both stories the baker is described both as listening "thoughtfully" to Ann Weiss and as being extremely resistant to verbal communication on his own part. He is willing to tell Ann that the cake will be ready on Monday, and in both stories the emphasis is on his refusal to say anything more than "the minimum exchange of words, the necessary information" (Carver, 1983c, p. 331). However, in the later story, he breaks this tradition, providing the Weisses with much more information about himself than is necessary. While critics have noted the baker's communication functions to heal the Weisses, it is also important to note that his opening up provides him with a means through which to leave his dissociation and self-imposed alienation. While talking to the Weisses, the baker not only admits all that he has lost out on by not getting married or having children but also confesses that his phone calls are the result of his loneliness, his lack of interaction with other human beings: "Maybe once, maybe years ago, I was a different kind of human being. I've forgotten, I don't know for sure. But I'm not any longer, if I ever was" (Carver, 1983c, p. 351). The Weisses, through listening, provide the baker with a path back to being human; with all of the time that has passed since he has shared interaction with others, he has lost his verbal communication skills. However, the Weisses sit with the baker, talking until the early hours of the morning: "and they did not think of leaving" (Carver, 1983c, p. 352).

Like "A Small, Good Thing," "Cathedral" is also marked by the appearance of failed speech, yet it, too, manages to surpass this obstacle and displays successful nonverbal communication. The story, in which a husband begrudgingly spends time with his wife's blind friend and finds the chance to escape the isolation that has surrounded him, presents unsuccessful verbal communication that functions to insulate the narrator from society. The lack of communication is evident in the failed communication that occurs between the narrator and his wife. The narrator, who is a "friendless drunk and a meager husband" (Facknitz, 1986, p. 295), is strikingly unaware of his isolation (Nesset, 1994). However, the reader cannot possibly ignore the narrator's insularity, which derives from failed communication. The alienated husband appears to have no active sense of himself; rather, his identity is based greatly upon his wife, an aspect he achieves by refusing to listen to stories about her past. He is "no ideal listener, having predicated the names and stories of others under the subject of his own tyrannical yet precarious identity: he listens for purposes of self-validation" (Nesset, 1994, p. 125). The narrator's refusal to listen for any purpose other than the reinforcement of his own identity is only one aspect of failed communication.

Failed speech is just as much of an impediment to the narrator's life as is his failure to listen for the purpose of communication, as is evident in his inarticulation with both his wife and Robert, his wife's friend. Facknitz (1986) discusses failed speech in the dialogue between the wife and husband preceding Robert's arrival, explaining they fail to communicate with one another. Similarly, the narrator and Robert are worlds apart: the former suffers from a verbal handicap and isolation resulting from it, while

Robert, whose sole impediment is physical, engages in activities that "bring him out into the world" (Nesset, 1994, p. 125). The significance, Nesset explains, "suggests that verbal handicaps . . . are [as] debilitating as blindness" (1994, p. 125). When the narrator fails to communicate verbally descriptions of a cathedral to Robert, Robert suggests drawing the cathedral; thus, Robert provides the narrator with a nonverbal exchange that provides him the chance to escape his insularity. While verbal communication, as unsuccessful, is precluded from being convalescent in "Cathedral," nonverbal communication provides the narrator with the opportunity to escape his insularity. On completing the cathedral, Robert asks the narrator to look at it; however, the narrator keeps his eyes closed, which leads Nesset to contend he "finds not escape but sanctuary within self-confinement, his sanctuary existing, by virtue of his closed eyes, within that inner vestibule of self, where selfishness gives way at last to self-awareness" (1994, p. 126). The narrator's liberation from his self-imposed isolation clearly presents communication as having the power to heal; Carver proves in "Cathedral" that even his characters who are verbally impaired hold the potential to break free from the constraints of their seclusion through nonverbal means.

"Fever," in which a man tries to regain control of his life after his wife has left him and their children, presents healing through communication as he is able to move beyond the pain of his separation by speaking with his children's babysitter. Carlyle's girlfriend, his wife, and Mrs. Webster offer him the potential for Carlyle to heal himself, yet he only takes advantage of the opportunity with Mrs. Webster. Carlyle's wife, Eileen, has left him for one of his friends and colleagues, another art teacher at the

high school where he teaches; while Carlyle has started dating one of the secretaries at his school, he still has feelings for Eileen. His girlfriend, Carol, attempts to console him while he is experiencing difficulties finding a babysitter for his children, but she is unsuccessful. Carlyle resists being completely open with her, closing one of their conversations by thanking her for listening and telling her she's "one in a million" (Carver, 1983b, p. 400), only to regret it after he hangs up the phone: "he wished he could have thought of something else to say to her instead of what he'd just said" (Carver, 1983b, p. 400).

While Carol offers Carlyle the opportunity to talk, he declines, wanting Eileen to listen to him. Eileen phones Carlyle to recommend a babysitter, only to turn the conversation to a discussion of his karma; he hangs up, only to hunger for her voice: "He wanted to call her now, but he was afraid to call. He still missed her and wanted to confide in her. He longed to hear her voice—sweet, steady, not manic as it had been for months now" (Carver, 1983b, p. 403). Carlyle admits his need to hear her, yet he is bitter when Eileen insists they need to maintain contact in spite of the pain she has caused him: "We have to stay in touch . . . We have to keep all lines of communication open" (Carver, 1983b, p. 404). Without Eileen to function as a sounding board for him, Carlyle is isolate; he cares for Carol, even "likes" her, but he refuses to consider that they are in a relationship (Carver, 1983b). He remains torn apart by Eileen's betrayal, unable to fully accept that she will not return: "It was only late at night, on the nights he was not with Carol, that he wished for an end to the love he still had for Eileen and felt tormented as to why all of this had happened" (Carver, 1983b, p. 409). In spite of

Eileen's actions, he still considers her the only one who holds the potential to heal his wounds.

Ultimately, it is his children's babysitter, Mrs. Webster, and not Eileen who saves Carlyle. He feels so at ease with her that he becomes deeply afraid that she will leave the room in which they are sitting while he is talking, so he clears his throat as a regulator to encourage conversation (Carver, 1983b). In Mrs. Webster he discovers someone who will not only let him talk about his past, but who encourages such action:

I know what you're saying. You just keep talking, Mr. Carlyle. Sometimes it's good to talk about it. Sometimes it has to be talked about. Besides, I want to hear it. And you're going to feel better afterwards. Something just like it happened to me once, something like what you're describing. Love. That's what it is. (Carver, 1983b, p. 416)

Carlyle opens up and discusses his past and the extent to which he feels his world has been shattered; he talks for hours, even after Mrs. Webster's husband has arrived to pick her up. When he has finished, he feels free of the past that has bound him: "It was then, as he stood at the window, that he felt something come to an end. It had to do with Eileen and the life before this But he understood it was over, and he felt able to let her go" (Carver, 1983b, p. 417). Through Mrs. Webster's encouragement and her willingness to listen, Carlyle is able to move on with his life, to achieve the karmic stability about which Eileen has prophesized. When the story opens, Carlyle is tormented by the reality of Eileen having left him, but upon its closure, he is liberated and free to start his new existence without her. The alienation he experienced for the

greater part of the story has disappeared simply through opening up himself to another person who allows his voice to be heard.

The significance of successful communication in Cathedral is most marked by the contrast this collection provides to his earlier ones. While Carver's earlier characters are forced to turn to physical communication when verbal communication fails them, the characters in Cathedral are endowed with the power to use words successfully. As a result, these characters shed their alienation and dissociation from others, finding comfort rather than threat in interpersonal communication. Admittedly, even in "A Small, Good Thing" the baker's phone calls threaten Ann Weiss; however, the mutual healing that occurs at the end of the story overrides the initial pain.

Critics including Nessel (1994) and Clark (1991) have noted Carver's use of telephones within Cathedral, particularly with respect to "Where I'm Calling From" (as discussed in Chapter Four). While telephones are devices through which either party may immediately discontinue conversation, Clark (1991) notes they permit outside voices to enter characters' lives while limiting polyglossia to two voices: "Carver's characters do not live in the world of conference calls" (p. 242). Furthermore, "Where I'm Calling From" marks a divergence from earlier works in the use of the telephone not as an object to avoid communication but rather as an object to carry conversation successfully. "A Small, Good Thing" returns to telephones as objects to avoid communication, as the baker taunts Ann Weiss about the cake she has failed to pick up while refusing to state anything other than: "It's about Scotty, yes. It has to do with Scotty, that problem. Have you forgotten about Scotty?" (Carver, 1983c, p. 342).

While the baker's telephone calls demonstrate his inarticulation, they are also important for their signaling a breakthrough in Carver's characters' choice of their means of communication: the telephone, by its very nature, is an instrument that prohibits physical communication. Although the baker fails to clarify that he is calling about the cake, leading Ann to presume he is calling about her son, his use of the telephone is significant because it forces him to use the only tools that are available to him: words. With respect to Carver's earlier characters, it is a feat for the baker to have enough verbal prowess simply to use a telephone, regardless of the degree of inarticulation that is expressed during its use, because without the opportunity to resort to physical communication, the baker has to have some amount of confidence in his oral communication skills.

In Cathedral, Carver presents stories in which characters are able to surpass their verbal inadequacies in order to connect with others; rather than experiencing the alienation and dissociation that dominate Carver's earlier collections, characters in Cathedral break free from these binds through orally connecting to others. While earlier collections emphasize the failures of both speech and listening, these elements form the basis of Cathedral, healing the wounds of isolated individuals and aiding their re-entrance to life as social beings.

Perhaps the reason characters' inarticulation stands out so clearly in Carver's early stories is that it is only a sign of their greater social inarticulation. From this standpoint, characters' verbal and social articulation in Cathedral marks an even greater deviation from earlier characters' failings. As the baker in "A Small, Good

Thing," the narrator in "Cathedral," and Carlyle in "Fever" discover, opening oneself up to a willing audience can be cathartic. Michel de Certeau (1984) notes that parallels exist between the ways in which enunciative procedures, or "manipulations of imposed spaces" (p. 19), articulate action both in language and in social practices. That characters' inarticulation should extend beyond language to social practices, then, is not surprising. However, when characters discover their voices and speak before willing audiences, their articulation extends into their social behavior.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analyses in the previous chapters, the task in this one is to attempt to tie together some of the loose ends and to develop generalizations about American culture as it appears in Raymond Carver's and Thomas Pynchon's texts. Furthermore, as I addressed the benefit of approaching deviance as Other in Chapter Two, insofar as it allows for studying the impact the dominated group has on the dominant one, it is appropriate to conclude this dissertation with an examination of this issue.

Carver's And Pynchon's America

Obviously, Carver and Pynchon have distinct styles that differ greatly from each other; however, in attempting to discover something about American culture, these differences function to reveal a larger picture than it would be possible to view with two more similar authors. Carver's concerns with the ordinary, the everyday, and the blue-collar worker provide insight to the struggles faced by a large section of Americans. In contrast, Pynchon's fantastic, overtly fictional characters allow for the examination of Otherness as it is represented through counter-culture movements and the threat posed by uniformity.

Part of the reason Carver's stories appear strikingly ethnographic is that his characters are realistic portrayals that could pass for "real" people. Susan Greenstein (1980) notes that readers are capable of actively engaging with fictional people, as texts provide readers with the opportunity to "behave towards characters in some of the ways we do towards real people" (p. 530); readers are invited to respond to characters socially

based on the process through which readers construct characters, "out of the available data, as we do our ideas of real people" (Greenstein, 1980, p. 526). As the readers create the text through the experience of reading, they react to characters based on personal knowledge that is brought into the text. When they encounter the struggle faced by Carver's female characters in attempting to manage the roles of both wage-earners and as caregivers for children, it is difficult not to see the similarity that is occurring in contemporary America. In much the same manner, when they confront Carver's stories about alcoholics, his power as an ethnographer can be seen through his ability to convince the readers that they are reading an account of someone's excessive drinking that has led to the destruction of a relationship somewhere in America. Carver's blue-collar America is characterized by fractured relationships and people who seek to escape their lives through television, drinking, and drugs only to find themselves alienated from those around them. Attempts at reconciliation are destined to fail due to the inability to communicate with others. As William Stull (1985) describes Carver's writing, "Pity and fear abound in these stories, but Carver, writing of disasters rather than tragedies, affords the reader no catharsis, the characters no exit" (p. 6). Carver's realism with respect to recognizable characters, situations, and dialogue is countered by Pynchon's absurdity.

Pynchon's America is perhaps initially less recognizable to readers, which is an effect the author achieves by integrating actual art, history, science, and myth in his texts. However, this is not to say that even real events and concepts are free from Pynchon's fictionalization; facts may be accurately represented, as in the Herero uprising

in V., yet they become parts of histories that exist both within and outside of the novels. The points at which actual past events merge with characters' personal histories and at which actual artwork blends with fictional media is occasionally difficult for readers to discern. Part of Pynchon's power as an author is his demand that readers actively read the text through this amalgam; passive reading is not an option for Pynchon's readers, who, if they were to attempt this approach, would fail to grasp the intricacies of his texts. Pynchon's texts, while presenting fantastic incidents and characters, are convincing as ethnographic material about American culture in terms of characters' actions and their involvement in resisting uniformity through methods that lead to their labeling as Other. His concern with conformity leading to the loss of individuality provides both social commentary and ethnographic data. At its most threatening and entertaining, conformity is expressed through Pynchon's depictions of bureaucracy, particularly in terms of the acronyms he employs in naming them. As Manfred Pütz (1991) explains, "There is a haunting fear of Big Brother bureaucracy, all-incorporating systems, and other forms of dehumanized functionalism at large in Pynchon, and the reader's suspicion is raised that he is supposed to recognize them by their instruments of control and domination" (p. 377). Characters' attempts to resist such conspiratorial governments, as in Frenesi's and Oedipa's cases, result in their estrangement from mainstream culture and their being labeled as deviant. Oedipa attempts to manage her deviant identity, but ultimately is unsuccessful, illustrating the difficulties faced by labeled individuals in attempting to rejoin mainstream culture. While Oedipa's name is fantastic, this does not prevent treating her as a representation of a real individual.

The fictionality of characters' names neither trivializes their identities (Slade, 1977, p. 28) nor creates an obstacle for the interpretation of Pynchon's texts as belonging to the blurred genre of literature-as-ethnography. Whether Pynchon names his characters to emphasize their fictionality or to express an underlying theme, there is no mistaking their significance. Citing Oedipa as a failed Oedipus who is unable to unearth the answers she seeks to the Tristero conspiracy, James Young (1969) explains Pynchon's technique is the creation of characters with names that are "sometimes wonderfully improbable, but then to deny the characters most, if not all, of the qualities and significance that the name usually shouts" (p. 71). Arguably, the heightened attention the reader has to characters' names and their denied potential function to underscore the difficulties they experience.

Because neither author attempts to present a candy-coated America, but rather admits there are dangers lurking not only in the shadows but also in the familiar, there is an emphasis on the struggles faced by individuals and the fragmentation of American culture. In spite of creature comforts and the growing amount of leisure time available, one finds that Americans—as they are represented in the texts—do not spend their time integrating themselves with others but rather distance themselves. Considering Carver's characters who are unable to articulate themselves both in face-to-face communication and in telephone conversations, one finds that even technology that is designed to bring Americans together across great distances functions instead to keep them apart, demonstrating how easily people can become trapped by isolation and alienation. In general, Pynchon's characters are given the ability to communicate, yet he creates

situations in which characters are distanced from others through differing belief systems or through an attempt to inhabit both the mainstream and Other cultures, only to find themselves cut off from both of them.

The difficulties faced both by Carver's and by Pynchon's characters illustrate that stigma, a means for differentiating deviants from normals, is a primary tool through which Americans ostracize one another. In contrast to the subculture described in Pynchon's Vineland, in which the inclusion of everyone is stressed, a primary characteristic of American culture, as it is represented in Carver's and Pynchon's texts, is exclusion. The Statue of Liberty greeted generations of immigrants on their arrival to this country with the following words:

Give me your tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
 Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
 I lift my lamp beside the golden door! (Lazarus, 1886)

However, these immigrants were in for a rude awakening, as America only truly embraces those people who blend into the existing social milieu. Carver's characters face exclusion for defying norms that include appropriate alcohol consumption, economic upward mobility, choosing a family over a career, sexual mores, and social gracefulness. In contrast, Pynchon's characters defy ideological, rather than behavioral, norms, engaging either in politically subversive movements or in the pursuit of knowledge about such movements. Because Carver's characters' deviant actions are

highly visible, they are discredited by stigmas and are unable to pass in mainstream culture. While Pynchon's characters' violations occasionally manifest themselves in visible, physical means, such as through being seen at protests, they are afforded more of an opportunity to manage their deviant identities and to reject the labels that are imposed on them; however, the moment the discrediting information is exposed, they, too, are forced to deal with the consequences of labeling. The effect of both types of violations is the same: actors whose behavior defies norms are stigmatized through labeling, which usually causes a reaction of secondary deviance, in which they embrace the label and continue their activities. A brief summary of the authors' characters' violations clarifies a second distinction: while Carver's characters' actions are nearly always self-motivated and impact few people, Pynchon's characters' rejection of mainstream ideals is motivated by a concern for the world around them and has the potential to effect change in the system.

Carver's characters defy American social rules that govern individual behaviors; they face exclusion for conduct, such as alcohol abuse, adultery, and failing to live up to the feminine ideal, that is unbecoming of normal Americans. Arguably, characters do not engage in the activities for which they are labeled out of some desire to make a statement, be it political or otherwise; their offenses are purely self-motivated and self-indulgent. Chapter Four explores characters' alcoholism, which, while it can affect those in the offender's immediate social and familial circle, is an individual undertaking that is motivated by the inability to escape problems. The characters who label this behavior as inappropriate emphasize the damage it has caused to relationships, which defies an

American ideological norm: that marriages should be stable. Compounding the alcoholics' deviance is their working-class economic status; being poor in this country, in which anyone can rise to be successful, is seen as morally suspect¹. Chapter Six, which addresses characters' infidelity and disregard for the value of human life, demonstrates that while Americans may not be inhibited in areas such as moderate drinking, there is a definite sexual repression in our culture. It is possible this belief seeks to uphold the stability of marriage, although based on characters' transgressions and their partners' willingness to stay with them, it is difficult to come to a clear view on this. Chapter Seven reveals the stigma that is placed on women who value careers or social mobility greater than a family; clearly, the dominant American view is that women should forego roles other than that as mothers. Chapter Eight explores the American attitude towards social gracefulness or the ability to communicate verbally, a skill that is highly valued, for without it characters experience isolation. Carver's texts present an image of America that is activity-oriented, although there are ideological characteristics that come into play.

In contrast, Pynchon's characters' deviance is predominantly ideologically based, although it occasionally is expressed through physical means. Through the analyses in Chapters Two and Three, one finds that American culture is threatened by what does not fit into its jigsaw puzzle of ideology. While this culture prides itself on the Bill of Rights, particularly with regards to the freedom of speech, when individuals choose to

¹ Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel remarks about the American obsession about wealth that it is "not only a prime status marker in American society but also a guarantee and celebration of individualism—wealth allows the freedom to do almost anything, although usually within the limits of the law" (1993, p. 50).

express something that defies the dominant view, they are stigmatized and labeled as Other. Chapter Five reveals that perhaps the most unsettling ideological difference is that of trying to decipher information about subcultures and conspiracies, for such an undertaking is a direct admission that there exists more than just a white middle class in American culture. The reason these transgressions are taken so seriously is that those who perform them demonstrate not only their difference--their failure to be assimilated--but also that they threaten the social order upon which American culture rests.

The Threat Other Poses To Mainstream American Culture

Up until this point, this dissertation has focused on the acts of rule breaking, labeling, and adopting a deviant identity as they are presented in Raymond Carver's and Thomas Pynchon's texts. That is to say, these analyses have focused on examinations of the effects of the dominant (mainstream) group upon the dominated (Other). However, to fail to address the manner in which Other impacts mainstream culture would be to neglect to realize the power subcultures hold. Mainstream culture's motivation to label individuals as Other is out of the fear of losing control; Carver's characters threaten American culture by bringing about its social decline, while Pynchon's threaten it by challenging currently held standards. A return to the discussion of entropy (see also Chapter Five) illustrates that individuality and conformity are the central issues that are at stake in maintaining power. Peter Abernethy (1973, p. 20) notes that in Pynchon's use of entropy as a metaphor, entropy relates to conformity with respect to the term's application in communication theory where it is a measurement of the disorganization

caused by information that cannot be analyzed; when organization increases, the message becomes expected. That Carver's and Pynchon's characters should think outside of the box presents a danger to the stability of American culture.

If left unchecked, Carver's characters with their offending behaviors that include alcoholism, infidelity, murder, inarticulation, drug abuse, and opting to have a career instead of a family, could change the landscape of American culture—at least over time. While these elements are present in contemporary American culture, they are behaviors that are nonetheless stigmatized by mainstream culture because they defy the Judeo-Christian morality that shapes our country. Furthermore, such behaviors violate the code of being like everyone else and blending into the crowd. Individuality is a quality that Americans admire in theory; however, in practice, it is a quality that when exercised in excess prompts suspicion. This struggle between admiring and fearing individuality—which is what Carver's characters' defiance expresses—is explained in part by the threat of defiance, itself. Defiance can lead to revolution, an image that is present in American history, which is perhaps why these threats to the stability of American culture are so serious; it holds the potential to bring about the death of culture. As Gary Taylor explains, "Culture is the gift of the survivor. It is always bereaved, always retrospective, always at war with the present" (1996, p. 5). While Carver's characters pose a threat to the stability of American culture through social decline, Pynchon's characters pose a threat by defying mediocrity.

Mainstream culture is so alarmed by intelligent individuals such as Frenesi and Oedipa because they threaten the status quo of mediocrity that defines America as an

identity. Rather than raising the cultural bar to challenge intellect, expectations, and abilities, we drop it, aiming for the lowest common denominator so that everyone can pass and nobody is left behind. As but one example: we graduate students from high school who are illiterate, having slipped through the educational system as a result of social passing, an effort to stay with their peers at no matter what cost to their education. Frenesi and Oedipa, in their strong, clearly defined personalities, pose a second threat to mainstream culture, which can be characterized as being composed by people who are fearful of being individuals and which motivates the exclusion of others.

Themes that appear throughout the authors' works are those of the struggles faced by deviantized individuals once mainstream culture labels them; what is also recognizable is the effect these offending Others have on the dominant culture. The reason normals react so strongly to the ideological and behavioral offenses of Pynchon's and Carver's characters is that they pose a threat to the stability and the security of mainstream American culture. Recalling Oedipa's quest to make order in her world (as is discussed in Chapter Five) and the threat it poses both to those involved with the Tristero System and to normals, one may infer this quest threatens the foundation of "controlled" disorder in American culture. This disorder is something that is hinted at through the recognition that no matter how hard the dominant group tries, it is forced to permit the existence of the subordinate one, even if the latter's belief systems differ drastically from their own. Some degree of diversity is necessary in American culture; Oedipa's attempt to create order holds the potential of disturbing the precarious balance that exists.

Carver's characters' deviance, while not so lethal to the fabric of American culture, still poses a threat because even less detrimental deviant beliefs, should they be exhibited by enough people at the same time, have the potential to disrupt the balance of power. The order that exists in American culture is perhaps only slightly less fragile than the labels that are applied to those whose behavior violates rules. Recognition of this state of order prompts mainstream culture to continue to enforce the labeling process, in the hopes that if enough offenders are controlled through stigmatization, culture will not be overthrown.

Raymond Carver and Thomas Pynchon are American authors writing about American culture; as such, they are autoethnographers. They provide insiders' accounts to their culture, convincing their readers of the texts' accuracy as surely as anthropologists do. As Clifford Geertz explains, the ability of anthropologists to convince readers their ethnographies are accurate depends on their ability to persuade

us that what they say is a result of their having actually penetrated (or, if you prefer, been penetrated by) another form of life, of having one way or another, truly 'been there.' And that, persuading us that this offstage miracle has occurred, is where the writing comes in. (1988, p. 5)

Because Carver's and Pynchon's texts are fictional works, the authors have an advantage over traditional ethnographers: they can choose to create whatever situations they want to persuade their readers they have experienced American culture—in its labeling, its exclusion, and its mediocrity.

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