THESIS

NEGOTIATING SPACE, PLACE AND POWER IN THE POSTMODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ENCYCLOPEDIC NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

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This project examines the shifts of global and cartographical power in the late 20th and early 21st centuries through the lens of the encyclopedic novel. I argue that cartographies of power have become increasingly global, decentralized, and polysystemic during the postwar era. I have selected six novels spanning from 1955 through 2014 to demonstrate how the encyclopedic genre lends itself to the relationships of power with geographical space, as well as the organization of narrative space through the encyclopedic structure. My research points towards the cartelization of both space and power – as global networks emerge, institutional means of control become irreducibly complex and cannot be isolated to traditional centers of authority. The hegemonic apparatus of control that I examine extends from the cultural and aesthetic value systems to the constraints of global mobility and the creation of abject spaces to which subaltern groups are limited. I argue that a rhizomatic approach to mapping, which includes a multicultural and multinational reevaluation of cartographical space, is the only means in which the cartelization of space can be resisted. This project will provide both a genealogy of hegemonic power in the postwar encyclopedic novel and contend with contemporary issues such as global mobility and the systems of violence that disproportionally target subaltern groups.

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Introduction

Mapping a cartography within the encyclopedic tradition of literature requires an inquiry into the fundamental relationship between space and power. The transformation of space into place is connected with institutional authority, phenomenology, cultural traditions and values, and global networks in such a way that places must be thought of in terms of historical and geographic contingency. In his book *Place: An Introduction*, Tim Cresswell suggests the challenges of grappling with place within academic disciplines:

> Given the ubiquity of place, it is a problem that no one quite knows what they are talking about when they are talking about place. Place is not a specialized piece of academic terminology. It is a word we use daily in the English-speaking world. It can be evoked in so many disparate ways because it is a word wrapped in common sense.[1]

The problem, then, arises in attempting to create a discourse of place. Cresswell's book serves as a fertile starting point to this project as he recognizes the significance of disentangling concepts of place from the notion that a sense of place is obvious. Places can serve as palimpsests, recording both political and cultural history. Places can also be distinct from "non-places," which have arisen in a world where Marc Augé argues "people are born in the clinic and die in hospital, where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating under luxurious or inhuman conditions."[2] Both places and non-places form the framework wherein global routes of capital flow and become calcified. The privileges of class, race, gender, and nationality can also determine the global mobility between these places and who has access to places others do not.

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[1] Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction* (West Sussex: Wiley & Sons, 2015), 6.
[2] Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 2008), 63.

I have chosen to pursue an inquiry of space, place, and power within the genre of the encyclopedic novel because this narrative mode is often necessarily cartographical; in addition to providing sustained, substantial exploration of places within the novel, the encyclopedic mode provides a depth of narrative space through which the reader must carefully map. In the novels I will be examining, such as *Almanac of the Dead* and *Gravity's Rainbow,* the author provides a staggering cast of characters that span across space and time in such a manner that the very act of reading the novel becomes a cartographical enterprise. Although these encyclopedic novels create colossal narratives spaces that must be navigated, an encyclopedic novel is not merely a "big book." Rather, the encyclopedic novel encompasses a certain erudition, specialty, or obsession – perhaps the perennial example of the "obsessional" encyclopedic novel is Herman Melville's *Moby Dick.* Melville describes, in painstaking detail, the practice of whaling to such an extent that the reader becomes intimately familiar with its art. In defining the encyclopedic novel, Edward Mendelson posits that

> Encyclopedic narratives all attempt to render the full range of knowledge and beliefs of a national culture, while identifying the ideological perspectives from which that culture shapes and interprets its knowledge. Because they are products of an era in which the world's knowledge is vastly greater than any one person can encompass, they necessarily make extensive use of synecdoche. No encyclopedic narrative can describe the whole range of physical science, so examples from one or two sciences serve to represent the whole scientific sector of human knowledge.[3]

Here Mendelson provides two central insights through which I establish the framework of my inquiry into the encyclopedic format. First, he identifies the encyclopedic novel as emerging from a national culture – this notion is closely linked to works such as *Don Quixote* or *Ulysses,* which come to be almost synonymous with the bodies of national literature that they represent.

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[3] Edward Mendelson, "Encyclopedic Narrative: From Dante to Pynchon." *MLN* 91, no. 6 (1976): 1269.

Second, Mendelson identifies the narrow erudition of the encyclopedic format; here Melville's whaling comes to mind, as well as Pynchon's V2 rocket. The specific focus of the encyclopedic novel forms its cartographical kernel; the fields of erudition that the novel centers on determine the methods through which narrative maps are generated. I will look more closely at each of Mendelson's points here as they relate to this project.

First, I will address the notion of the encyclopedic novel as a national product; i.e. that national culture necessarily determines the encyclopedic format. Indeed, a novel such as *Ulysses* exemplifies the national tradition; it encapsulates what seems to be the entire cultural and mythological history of Ireland. Even as late as *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), to which Mendelson responds, seems to promote a distinctly American culture, even if this culture is doomed – Pynchon punctuates the narrative with pop culture references and provides a cursory history of Calvinist New England. However, I argue that the impetus of encyclopedic fiction, insofar as we are concerned with the past half-century, has been towards an increasing engagement with cultural and historical contingency. Chilean author Roberto Bolaño's novel *2666* (2004), which I shall examine at length in the third chapter, resists any reduction to a single national history. In his article on the "maximalist" novel, Stefano Ercolino argues that

> Bolaño's novel offers an ample representation off multiple social, historical, and cultural realities . . . it also ranges among an array of literary genres—from magical realism to the non-fiction novel. But it makes no history of language, nor does it occupy a central place in Chilean culture, at least not yet. Does this mean *2666* cannot be considered an encyclopedic novel? Of course not.[4]

Bolaño not only denies cultural or historical centrality in *2666,* but the novel's encyclopedic structure demands that it *cannot* hold onto national identity. Ercolino's argument is not that *2666*

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[4] Stefano Ercolino, "The Maximalist Novel." *Comparative Literature* 64, no. 3 (2012): 245.

is too new to merit the status of the national novel of Chile, but rather that the issues of the novel are irreducibly global. In the novels that I will explore, I hope to trace a genealogy of power that acknowledges the shift between the localized power of the nation-state and the ubiquitous cartelized power that extends beyond national barriers and cultural identities.

Second, I wish to examine the extent of knowledge that is possible within the encyclopedic format. David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* (1996) is perhaps the most literal of the encyclopedic novels that I will examine – the novel includes nearly 400 footnotes and serves as a veritable pharmacopeia, as well as providing minute details about tennis among other topics. A principal component of the encyclopedic novel is not merely its expansiveness—as the title of Wallace's novel jokingly gestures towards—but also its limits as a body of information. Hilary A. Clark suggests that

> The encyclopedia is a form that seeks to expand its boundaries ever wider to incorporate new knowledge as the centuries pass. However, it is also by definition a practice that 'encircles,' encompasses, delimits knowledge. It seeks order in the chaos of things to be known and said; it categorizes and divides while amassing, excludes while including.[5]

The principle work of the encyclopedia is, then, cartographical. The reader is provided with a body of knowledge through which the narrative is structured; this knowledge serves as a map that strictly delineates the discourse through which the novel can be approached. The power, of course, lies with the mapmaker; the author determines which avenues of inquiry are valid within the parameters that have been set. Cartography, then, is always a negotiation of the spaces of power and the validity of discourse.

[5] Hilary A. Clark, "Encyclopedic Discourse." *SubStance* 21, no. 1 (1992): 96.

Cartographical enterprises determine the historical, cultural, and aesthetic values and boundaries with which these novels grapple. The very aesthetic of maps can serve as a hegemonic authority, as Denis Cosgrove notes: "Mathematics, language and illustration, including various forms of maps, plays a major role in securing claims to the universality, authority, and immutability of scientific knowledge."[6] Maps, then, do not simply provide a geographical survey of the land, but inherently carry an agenda. I argue that postmodern and contemporary encyclopedic novels often attempt to challenge hegemonic maps through alternative cartographies. Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Almanac of the Dead* (1991) provides the reader with a literal map from the titular almanac which subverts the European colonial project in the Americas by predicting the disappearance of "all things European." Silko recognizes that any attempt to undo centuries of European colonialism will necessarily be a cartographical project. The map becomes at once a historical, cultural, aesthetic, and political artifact. Place-identities are often determined by maps, but I argue that places themselves can give rise to rhizomatic maps that resist monocultural hegemony. However, through the processes of globalization and neoliberal capitalism, the idea of the map as a set of boundaries and defined spaces is challenged. In Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (2014), the distinction between "First World" and "Third World" spaces becomes blurred through both the transnational activities of the Jamaican drug cartel as well as the ensemble of political and economic institutions that form another cartel. The emergence of these global systems invites a new cartography that is predicated upon the privilege of global mobility. I posit that spaces of control are reproduced across these boundaries even when the illusion of mobility suggests an escape from hegemonic domination. Thus, the map is not abolished with the emergence of global

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[6] Denis Cosgrove, "Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century." *Imago Mundi* 57, no. 1 (2005): 36-37.

neoliberalism, but instead supplanted by a new cartography of control and violence inflicted by a polysystemic model.

This project will focus on six novels that have been often categorized as encyclopedic, spanning from William Gaddis' 1955 novel *The Recognitions*—arguably one of the first postmodern novels of American fiction, if not a precursor to postmodernism—to Marlon James' recent 2014 novel *A Brief History of Seven Killings.* I have chosen the entire breadth of the postwar era to examine the ways in which contemporary relationships between space and power have shifted from the nation-state model to the irreducibility of global neoliberalism. In the first chapter I will examine the relationship of power and the cultural and aesthetic space of *The Recognitions* and *Almanac of the Dead.* Here I will incorporate Rancière's notion of the aesthetic regime in linking cartographical hegemony with Western value systems of aesthetic space. I will also suggest the possibility of the Deleuzian rhizome as a cartographical model that could potentially resist the hegemonic organization of space in these novels. In the second chapter I will motion towards the center of the canon—if there can be said to be a canon of postmodern encyclopedic fiction—in my examination of *Gravity's Rainbow* and *Infinite Jest.* Here I will provide a framework of cartelized power to demonstrate movement away from monopolitical power towards the decentralization of hegemonic authority. Focault's *Discipline and Punish* creates much of the foundation for this model – his concept of *microphysics* becomes entrenched with an irreducible ensemble of institutional power that forms an ideological controlling mechanism within the individual and ultimately leads to incarceration via pleasure. In the final chapter, I gesture towards the polysystemic power structures that result from increasing globalization. I will examine the imbrication of global violence with localized abject spaces and argue that the impossibility or insufficiency of global mobility produces a system of violence that

disproportionally targets subaltern groups. Overall, I hope to bring attention to the cartographies of power that are becoming increasingly relevant in the 21st century.

Chapter 1

Mapping Aesthetic and Cultural Place in *The Recognitions* and *Almanac of the Dead*

The genre of the encyclopedic novel not only extends the geographical sense of space—wherein Eurocentric notions of cartographical space is challenged—but also broadens the notion of what *kinds* of space and places can be inhabited. In this chapter I will examine William Gaddis' novel *The Recognitions* (1955) and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Almanac of the* Dead (1991). These two novels, aside from their encyclopedic nature, are not intuitively similar in terms of places and geography; Gaddis' canvas consists of New York City as well as the protagonist's New England upbringing, while Silko explores the borderlands of the US and Mexico, weaving in a 500-year history of cultural erasure and appropriation. I argue that Gaddis and Silko, in addition to using an encyclopedic format, demonstrate the imbrication of cultural and aesthetic spaces that produce an American sense of place. For Gaddis, this means a critique of Western cultural values while still maintaining a sense of nostalgia for the great masters, while Silko presents the possibility of the almanac as a rhizomatic counterforce to European institutions. A close examination of *The Recognitions* and *Almanac of the Dead* reveals that their cultural and aesthetic spaces resist incorporation into a singular hegemonic tradition; rather, these novels question the centrality of these values through narrative fragmentation and the heterogeneity of spatial modes.

The spaces that are produced in these novels are protean rather than static; they do not serve as the locus of a single history or a single aesthetic, nor are they occupied by individuals. Spaces, rather, function as a discourse – it is spaces that occupy people. The culmination of social, historical, and cultural contexts results in the establishment of a *place,* which is imbued

with the existential values of its inhabitants. But these places are not rigid structures, and Tim Cresswell maintains that "places are never complete, finished, or bounded but are always becoming – in process" (68). Places, then, are determined by their contextual constituents. In attempting to map these places as shaped by cultural and aesthetic space, a clear sense of hegemonic structure emerges. Cultural and aesthetic spaces are entangled with the apparatuses of economic and political power; this notion gives way to the Foucauldian perspective that "the map is allied with power, discipline, and control."[7] Foucault's identification of cartography as a hegemonic tool can be synthesized with Cresswell's idea of place as in process – as the forces of economic and political domination infiltrate the notion of individual places, they will struggle against, erode, and write over cultural-historical and aesthetic spaces.

Silko and Gaddis, within the genre of the encyclopedic novel, question the hegemonic structures that define, limit, and erase these spaces. To this end, the authors employ a *rhizomatic* means of both organizing these spaces and formatting the encyclopedic novel *itself* as a tool of resistance against hegemonic modes of spatial distribution. Deleuze and Guattari identify rhizomatic structures as

> Acentered systems, finite networks of automata in which communication runs from any neighbor to any other, the stems or channels do not preexist, and all individuals are interchangeable, defined only by their state at a given moment—such that the local operations are coordinated and the final, global result synchronized without a central agency.[8]

The encyclopedic novel, through its sprawling narratives and resistance to centrality, produces a matrix of points—whether they are plots and subplots, or the characters themselves—that do not and cannot cohere, but still produce an emergent totality without a hegemonic means of

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[7] Tom Conley. "Mapping in the Folds: Deleuze "Cartographe"." *Discourse* 20, no. 3 (1998): 126.
[8] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (London: Continuum, 1987): 19.

organization. A rhizomatic model challenges aesthetic and cultural value systems and suggests a movement towards spatial heterogeneity. The plurality of spaces allows for discourse outside of traditional Western European modes of thought, where artistic and cultural values are limited and prescribed by a legitimating political or economic institution. This does not mean, however, that Gaddis and Silko produce the same kind of resistance; while Gaddis pushes towards a critique of institutional aesthetics, an attempt of rhizomatic resistance is thwarted by a nostalgia for European greatness. Silko's almanac, on the other hand, promises an end to European influence in the Americas. This contrast suggests a dramatic difference in the scope and capabilities of these modes of resistance.

Counterfeit Art, Counterfeit Spaces

In *The Recognitions,* Gaddis illustrates a canvas of the American aesthetic tradition that has formed from the detritus of European cultural space. The characters of the novel experience "that which Fredric Jameson has called 'the waning of affect,' that is, the postmodern artwork's incapacity to have a substantive impact—emotional, political, intellectual—on the social fabric any longer."[9] Gaddis' notion of a fin-de-siècle of art in America hints towards a delineation of authentic and counterfeit aesthetics; this dichotomy, however, is subject to intense scrutiny. Rancière, in developing the concept of the aesthetic regime, remarks that the regime frees singular art "from any specific role, from any hierarchy of the arts..." and "does so by destroying the mimetic barrier that distinguished ways of doing and making, a barrier that separated its rules from the order of social occupations."[10] Here Rancière suggests a kind of mapping of aesthetic space onto the social framework; his aesthetic regime functions in Gaddis through the constant

[9] Birger Vanweesenbeck, "Art and Community in William Gaddis's 'The Recognitions.'" Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal 42, no. 3 (2009): 142.
[10] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, ed. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Bloomsbury, 2004): 18-19.

struggle between originals and counterfeits, between high art and commercialism. Gaddis also uses *The Recognitions* as an aesthetic space to respond to the modernist movement; Matthew Wilkens poses the following question:

> If a book written in the late forties and early fifties is necessarily dependent on existing modernist techniques, if it pursues them to their breaking point and without the resulting demonstration of their unsuitability in itself leading to a new aesthetic regime, how might that book suggest a compelling alternative to modernism?[11]

Wilkens suggests that this cannot be easily answered, if it can be answered at all. Gaddis' novel occupies a cultural-historical and aesthetic space largely created from the remains of modernism, but it is a space that is cordoned off by the hegemonic structures of commercialism and Capital.

Gaddis makes use of the encyclopedic format of the novel to interpose spaces between cultural and historical *modes;* hagiography appears together with commercial advertisements, and currency counterfeiters are intertwined with the old masters and artisans of the Flemish Renaissance. Central to these modes is the aesthetic space which they inhabit, albeit the purpose of these aesthetic disciplines varies dramatically. Wyatt, the protagonist and art forger, dwells upon the relationship between criticism and aesthetics, observing that "criticism is the art we need most today . . . yes, a, a disciplined nostalgia, disciplined recognitions."[12] To him, criticism is the living force surrounding aesthetics – art criticism is what allows a Van Eyck or a Memling to remain profound despite the eons, and without erasing their historicity. Wyatt's "disciplined nostalgia," however, is absent within the circles of art criticism that Gaddis invites us to eavesdrop upon. If *The Recognitions* is chiefly predicated upon metaphors of counterfeiting and

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[11] Matthew Wilkens, "Nothing as He Thought It Would Be: William Gaddis and American Postwar Fiction." *Contemporary Literature* 51, no. 3 (2010): 599.
[12] William Gaddis, *The Recognitions* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1955): 335.

imitation, then the critics themselves are merely imitations of Wyatt's ideal conception of aesthetic criticism. The supposed interest in the artwork that the "critics" postulate is instead reduced to "a painting obscured by a group of nattering human beings" (183). What happens in this space is the subversion of the artist; that is, a lack of critical engagement with the art itself, and in its stead, there is a pseudo-appreciation of art to promote one's own "culturedness." Gaddis' acknowledgement of the stratification of cultural appreciation reflects an institutional organization of aesthetic value systems. Pierre Bourdieu remarks that "the essential merit of the 'common people' is that they have none of the pretensions to art (or power) which inspire the ambitions of the 'petit bourgeois'. Their indifference tacitly acknowledges the monopoly."[13] Gaddis satirizes the educational and cultural capital as artificial boundaries – the community of critics becomes a self-imitation, and consequently, a self-parody. Here, the repetition of nonsense phrases (such as a fascination with "the solids in 'Oochello'") and the need to display one's own false erudition leads to a failure of genuine aesthetic recognition.

Gaddis' depiction of the corrosion of aesthetic space via 20th-century consumer culture situates itself within an encyclopedic framework; the reader is exposed to catholic saints, Flemish painters, and mystery religions in the matrix of modern New York. The encyclopedic genre, as Gaddis employs it, constantly places the cultural contexts of the instantly recognizable and the hopelessly obscure next to one another. In doing so, he creates a medium of communication between the reader and the novel that occupies a liminal space; it is a unique cultural and aesthetic space that provides a *heuristic* for understanding Gaddis' world that does not belong entirely to the characters or the reader. Instead, encyclopedic space cannot be reduced to individual knowledge but instead as a collective system of information. The space that Gaddis

[13] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction.* (London: Routledge, 2010), 55.

creates between the reader and the art, as well as the work itself, falls into what Alain Badiou would refer to as the "encyclopaedia":

> I call 'encyclopaedia' the general system of predicative knowledge internal to a situation: i.e. what everyone knows about politics, sexual difference, culture, art, technology, etc. There are certain things, statements, configurations or discursive fragments whose valence is not decidable in terms of the encyclopaedia. Their valence is uncertain, floating, anonymous: they exist at the margins of the encyclopaedia.[14]

Badiou's encyclopaedia can thus be broken down into the center and the margin – these spaces are determined by Rancière's aesthetic regime, which orders the accessibility and immediacy of aesthetic objects. In the novel, Wyatt's personal struggle with his forgeries is not predicated on an anxiety of imitation, but rather he seeks to produce *new* art from the old:

> Do you think I do these the way all other forging has been done? Pulling the fragments of ten paintings together and making on . . . so that they look at it and recognize Dürer there? No, it's . . . the recognitions go much deep, much further back . . . (250).

Wyatt has a need for his aesthetics to be productive rather than mimetic, while producing a recognition within the beholder. For him, the genuineness of artistic production does not stem from the imitation of Dürer's elements. Rather, the artistic experience is emergent – Wyatt realizes that the aesthetic experience cannot be reduced to the artist themselves, or even the cultural values that produced the art. His desire for a deeper recognition on the part of the beholder involves breaking away from the hegemonic stratification of art.

Gaddis establishes an aesthetic regime in *The Recognitions* by separating recognition from misrecognition or non-recognition; the latter can be seen within the circles of the "art

[14] Alain Badiou, "Thinking the Event" in *Badiou & Zizek: Philosophy in the Present,* ed. Peter Engelmann (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009): 35.

critics," while genuine recognition, if it is possible at all, would be found in Wyatt's "forgeries." I call his work *productive* in the sense of Badiou's conceptualization of aesthetic invention: according to Silverman, "Badiou responds to the dissolution [of traditional aesthetics] with a constructive formalism," while art critic Arthur Danto puts forth a new formalism, that "revolves around the way in which genuine artistic invention adds a new category to the matrix of possible ways of understanding art . . . for both Danto and Badiou, art self-defines as production of truth."[15] The aesthetic truth, however, is never encyclopedic – while Dürer, Bosch, and Breughel occupy the encyclopedic center of German and Flemish Renaissance painters, the recognition of their art is never encyclopedic, it is always marginal. This is because the act of recognition, as Gaddis demonstrates, is intensely personal and subjective; Wyatt, who has entered a Faustian bargain in selling "new discoveries" of Renaissance masters, is forced into entering an economy of aesthetics. As Rancière argues, "mimesis is not the law that brings the arts under the yoke of resemblance. It is first of all a fold in the distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in social occupations, a fold that renders the arts visible" (*Politics* 17). Art, then, is not primarily influenced by imitation of reality (if such a thing can be rendered at all), but instead art is molded by the social fabric surrounding it. Aesthetic consumption is certainly inseparable from the matrix of political economy, which not only projects a regime of "meaning" onto art but does so through the means of monetary and material value systems.

Wyatt enters the economics of aesthetics not, as several characters initially suspect, for monetary gain; rather, he understands that this bargain is the only way for "his" art to be recognized. Valentine, who usurps Wyatt's talents along with the aptly-named Recktall Brown,

[15] Hugh J. Silverman, "Aesthetics of Philosophy and Art." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012): 374.

remarks about Wyatt's work that "a painting like this or a tube of toothpaste or a laxative which induces spastic colitis. You can't sell any of them without publicity" (*Recognitions* 244). Valentine grants primacy to economic over aesthetic value; to him, as well as Brown, the aesthetic regime that determines the value placed on art is inseparable from the economic regime of art as capital. Here a work of art exists within an institutional and decentralized space instead of a local space which exists only between the observer and the work itself. The former is an example of what Marc Augé would refer to as the "whole institutional and normative mass which cannot be localized." Augé argues that "the expression 'advertising space' applies to an area or to a length of time 'set aside for advertising in the various media'; 'buying space' refers to all the 'operations carried out by an advertising agency in connection with advertising space'" (67). Gaddis designates this "advertising space" for artwork, where instead of enriching the cultural value of national galleries, these paintings can exist only in the limbo of the marketplace.

The artwork that Wyatt produces does not move directly from the personal space of artist-art to the personal space of art-observer, but instead moves into the medium of the market. In other words, the art has moved from place to non-place, a distinction described by Augé as "[deriving from] the opposition between place and space" (64). Augé's conceptualization of non-places primarily centers on places such as airports and hotels, which exist as places "in transit," rather than fixed identity-places. I propose a more abstract notion of non-places; in *The Recognitions,* advertisements not only occupy audio and visual space, but become non-places because of their entanglement with familiar places. Mr. Pivner, a businessman in New York City, is aware of a paradoxical feeling of both familiarity and disconnection:

> [He] started at an advertisement which, like 90 per cent of the advertisements he read, had no possible application in his life. He had no sewer; but with glazed attention he read, 'Look, darling, he found my necklace,' spoken by a lady, of the

> Roto-Rooter Service man, who offered to come 'to Razor Kleen that clogged sewer… (283).

Here Pivner has no practical use for reading the advertisement, but it grants a "placeness" to his interface with the city. The Roto-Rooter advertisement creates a sense of place that, while *permeating* but not really existing anywhere in space, nonetheless conjures the fantasies of traditional domesticity, gender roles, and economic power in suburban life. The advertisement thus reinforces the hegemonic organization of space everywhere and is inescapable. Advertisements occupy space within places, but they become integrated with places over time. The disembodied voices, the catchy tunes, and the trademarked illustrations exist in themselves as non-places, but merge with place-identities in such a way that it becomes impossible to disentangle them. It is much in this way that Wyatt's forgeries flow into the market; art collectors recognize, with a certain familiarity, the Bosch-ness or van Eyck-ness of a painting. The art object itself takes its value from what it is expected to be, rather than some inherent quality within the art itself. This suggests that there will *always* be a separation of space between the observer and the object; where meaning is not communicated from the artwork, but from the exterior notions of the observer.[16] Contrary to Badiou, the artwork in *The Recognitions* does not contain the "self-defining" production of truth. Truth and meaning are imprinted onto the art from the collectors' expectations, which are tempered in the non-places of the market.

[16] It is worth noting the Marxist and psychoanalytic tones that surround the theoretical apparatus of recognition here. Althusser's notion of interpellation places the individual within a framework of social and ideological identification – see Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Toward an Investigation)" in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: Verso, 1970). For Lacan's notion of object-relations found within a matrix of recognition and satisfaction, see Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book I. Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953-54,* Trans. John Forrester (New York: Norton, 1988).

We have seen how advertisement, consumer culture, and the economization of aesthetics have become imbricated with the places and non-places in Gaddis' novel. I would now like to turn to the cultural-historical elements that have created the foundations, value and belief systems, and sense of geographic space of these places. Gaddis situates *The Recognitions* within an emerging system of globalization; here, not only does the hegemonic structure of capital alienate the individual from a local sense of place but rise of a global geography threatens the traditional comfort of the hearth. In the novel, Wyatt spends his boyhood in a rather typical small New England town. However, "foreign" notions endanger the community and its ancestral traditions – when Wyatt's father, a Calvinist minister, buries his wife Camilla in the "heathen land" of Spain, the rest of the family "never forgave him for not bringing the body home" (18). Here Camilla's body becomes a place-identity for Wyatt's community; her absence not only subtracts from the Protestant value of the community, but also poses a challenge to the community's very belief system. An ideology is ascribed to Spain – it is as if the dirt that Camilla was buried in was itself Catholic. In this sense, ideology is not limited to the discourse between individuals as a purely subject-oriented phenomenon but permeates the landscape of a place itself.

It becomes necessary to identify the relationship between the individual, the body, and the landscape. Edward Casey argues that:

> Self, body, and landscape address different dimensions of place in contrast with space. The self has to do with the agency and identity of the geographical subject; body is what links this self to lived place in its sensible and perceptible features; and landscape is the presented layout of a set of places, not their mere accumulation but their sensuous self-presentation as a whole.[17]

[17] Edward S. Casey, "Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does It Mean to Be in the Place-World?" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91, no. 4 (2001): 683.

Casey's notion of landscape as a "set of places" connects to the larger sense of globalization, where the scale of geographies and histories are rapidly shrinking. The "lived place" of Wyatt's Calvinist community grows more and more susceptible to the outside influences of Catholicism and even Mithraism, which is later embraced by Reverend Gwyon in defiance to the place-history of the community. Wyatt himself is being prepared for the priesthood in anticipation of the fulfillment of the ancestral duty, but even at an early age he "was, in fact, finding the Christian system suspect" (21). These various infiltrations of heretical thought suggest not simply a subversion of the community, but also a failure of the possibility of hermetic space in the postwar world. The cultural infiltrations are both spatial and temporal; the former is accomplished via Spain's Catholic influence (among Reverend Gwyon's souvenirs, "the rubbish included a number of un-Protestant relics soon to darken the parsonage" [18]), and the latter through Gwyon's esoteric studies of pagan history, which culminates in his obsession with Mithraism. History's ability to destabilize place-identity is also present in Wyatt, whose interest in the 15th-century paintings of Bosch et al spur him to flee and study in Germany and France.

Gaddis broadens the scope from the parochial center—the New England hearth steeped in the history of American puritans—to the larger hegemonic structure of European culture and aesthetics. Here culture and aesthetics are historically coextensive; the modes of artistic expression emerge from what Bourdieu refers to as the "historical culture":

> "This historical culture functions as a principle of pertinence which enables one to identify, among the elements offered to the gaze, all the distinctive features and only these, by referring them, consciously or unconsciously, to the universe of possible alternatives. This mastery is, for the most part, acquired simply by contact with works of art—that is, through implicit learning analogous to that which makes it possible to recognize familiar faces without explicit rules or criteria."[18]

[18] *Distinction* xxvii.

Bourdieu presents the encountering of art objects as an act of cultural recognition; thus, in the various art spaces of *The Recognitions* (galleries, private collections, etc.) there is a *mapping* of culture onto the observer which occurs simultaneously with the observer's own cultural mapping of the object itself. These cultural-aesthetic maps operate through recognition *as* alienation, where art becomes the "counterfeit" of culture – there can never be total mimesis, but rather an isolation of cultural-historical elements excised from some cultural fabric. Through this framework, Wyatt's counterfeits are indistinguishable from genuine articles. By this I mean to suggest that art objects imperfectly transmit cultural information – Gaddis, in considering art as cultural-historical artifacts, acknowledges the total failure of recognition in a postmodern Western society.

Within the genre of the postmodern encyclopedic novel, Gaddis develops a geography where aesthetic, cultural, and historical spaces are organized through narrative space. Rather than organizing the several subplots of the novel around a single center, Gaddis instead operates through fractured, incohesive, and diverging narratives. The decoherence here results from the emergence of global capital, which alienates not only the individual from the institution, but also creates a fragmentation of narrative that is driven by the impetus of history. Fredric Jameson identifies the "weakening of historicity" as a hallmark of postmodernism – "for Jameson, the way back into history, so to speak, is through space, and therefore 'Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' proposes that a 'model of political culture appropriate to our own situation will have to raise spatial issues as its fundamental organizing concern'", where the "'aesthetic of cognitive mapping' stages [the] reactivation of history through space capable of

providing the subject with that 'heightened sense of its place in the global system.'"[19] For Jameson, the tendency towards globalism involves the inextricability of space from history, despite the apparent erasure of historicity. Gaddis identifies this "weakening of historicity" within the European aesthetic tradition, where a global sense of history can only lead to the collapse of this tradition.

Apart from the fin-de-siècle of Eurocentrism that comprises much of the novel, Gaddis also explores the socio-political geography that exists on the margins of European hegemony. Otto, an aspiring playwright with romantic sentiments (and acquaintance of Wyatt's), is thrilled with the notion of revolution on his visit to Central America. As an observer, he styles himself as a romantic hero for his proximity to a real political revolution, but upon his return he crosses the threshold between real and imaginary political space:

> The demonstration was noisy, but he looked back on it with a tired eye, refusing to be taken in by such foolishness. Until a policeman rode toward him, swinging a saber; and the policeman's neck was covered with blood. That suddenly, it was real. And as suddenly terrified, Otto looked frantically for a sanctuary (729).

Here the aesthetic imaginary—represented by Otto's mental space—collides with political ideology with a violence of both physical immediacy and cultural shock. His narrative closes as he is left penniless, physically ill, and mentally deluded – he comes to refer to himself as "Gordon," the romantic hero of his play. Otto's total failure to actualize his aesthetic project stems from his inability to reconcile his romantic notions with a completely new geography; he is unable to locate himself within the cartography of revolution. His own idealization of romantic aesthetics finds itself at odds with the global political consciousness of the mid-20th century,

[19] Quoted from Emilio Sauri, "Cognitive Mapping, Then and Now: Postmodernism, "Indecision," and American Literary Globalism." *Twentieth Century Literature* 57, no. 3/4 (2011): 477.

where the impetus has been towards the avant-garde, where the avant-garde has attempted to reach escape velocity from the fossilized European tradition.

The margins of globalism that Gaddis explores in the novel cannot seem to be crossed without a surrendering of closely-held identity; in Otto's case, this means certain cultural and aesthetic internalizations must inevitably be challenged. The revolution is where politics *becomes* aesthetic, where the avant-garde becomes lived experience. Rancière suggests the possibility of the avant-garde as "rooted in the aesthetic anticipation of the future . . . this is what the 'aesthetic' avant-garde brought to the 'political' avant-garde, or what it wanted to bring to it – and what it believed to have brought to it – by transforming politics into a total life programme." (*Politics of Aesthetics* 24-5). From this notion of the avant-garde aesthetics, revolution becomes the always avant-garde. In *The Recognitions,* the aesthetics of revolution—although always marginal—present an alternative geography to Eurocentrism. Gaddis identifies within the aesthetics of revolution the Jamesonian return to historicity; that is, the return of political and geographical consciousness to the aesthetic imaginary. When Gaddis describes "[the] stock of arms which has been floating about Hispanic America for decades, whereabouts totally unknown until necessity produces it with revolutionary magic in any one of the sister republics" (726), he does so through the mind of Otto, who can hardly distinguish these nations. As Gaddis moves further away from the European center, he presents the reader with a new geography where the focus of aesthetics lies not in art objects themselves, but rather within a lived experience where the daily political activities run parallel to a much deeper sense of cultural history. Gaddis approaches a cultural-aesthetic perspective that lies outside of the dominant discourse elsewhere in the novel but falls short of organizing this idea into a

rhizomatic means of resistance. As we will examine in the next section, Silko extends the rhizomatic possibilities of globalization into a core organizational mode.

The Almanac's New Geography

To further investigate the imbricated relationship between history, culture, and aesthetics, I will now turn to Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*. While Silko addresses the problematic history of European hegemonic structures, her concerns lie not only with the erasure of culture through history, but also with the reclamation of a lost geography. Alex Hunt argues that "in its largest sense, Silko's novel uses representation to erase the dominant European American culture just as her characters use maps against the mapmakers and borders against the nation."[20] It is worth pausing here to consider Silko's novel itself as a political-aesthetic object; by situating her novel within the encyclopedic genre, Silko creates a sprawling narrative map which stands in opposition to the historical map of colonialism. In presenting a counter-colonial narrative, Silko emphasizes history as not a series of injustices isolated in time, but rather as a perennial hegemonic force that molds the everyday life of Silko's characters.

Silko's aesthetic canvas is also subject to a hegemonic apparatus where geography is narrativized to reveal historical conflicts. Before the novel proper, Silko presents the reader with a map that stretches across space and time, illustrating the clash between native and European cultures: "The ancient prophecies also foretell the disappearance of all things European" . . . "Sixty million Native Americans died between 1500 and 1600. The defiance and resistance to things European continue unabated" (14-15).[21] Silko dissolves the boundaries between cultural and aesthetic space; the map itself, complete with its illustrations, becomes a historical primer

[20] Alex Hunt, "The Radical Geography of Silko's "Almanac of the Dead"." *Western American Literature* 39, no. 3 (2004): 259.
[21] Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead* (New York: Penguin, 1991).

that locates these conflicts within a geographical system. At the forefront of historical place-identity is the constant reevaluation of local and global boundaries. Doreen Massey, in her seminal article "A Global Sense of Place," challenges the notion of places as being insular or self-contained. Rather, she argues that "what gives a place its specificity is not some long-internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus . . . it is, indeed, a meeting place."[22] Massey's notion of place suggests that even specific places are in fact "border towns," where their identities are formed by a contingent social interface. Silko's novel is immersed in the internal history of its characters; the sprawling heterogeneity of these personal histories forms a network of narrative resistance against a singular historical plot or force. In doing so, Silko suggests the contingency of colonial hegemony – in other words, *Almanac of the Dead* is a collection of place identities that necessarily resist the cohesiveness of a singular historical narrative. Place identities in *Almanac of the Dead* are constructed from a sense of cultural erasure; the result is a geography that is as much *historical* as it is spatial, and a map that is *cultural and aesthetic* rather than purely cartographical.

In the novel, Sterling, a Yaqui Tribal member, is banished by the Council for his association with white visitors:

> [The messenger] said the Council had concluded that "conspirators" could not be permitted to live on the reservation because, in their opinion, all of the current ills facing the people of Laguna could be traced back to "conspirators," legions of conspirators who had passed through Laguna Pueblo since Coronado and his men first came through five hundred years ago. Sterling shook his head. This was terrible. They had probably confused "conspirator" with "conquistador" (96).

[22] Doreen Massey, "A Global Sense of Place" in *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

What seems to be a malapropism here really allows access into the modern Yaqui consciousness, and the broader struggle between Native American identity and centuries of colonial exploitation. Silko brings attention to the influence of conquistadors in the 20th century not by pointing fingers at the 'modern conquistadors,' but instead by addressing the hegemonic structures that determine the matrices of geographic power. But geography is far from static, and Silko realizes this; in *Almanac of the Dead,* the demand for the reclamation of land extends beyond the notion of restoration. To Silko, the historical decimation of culture represents something that has become irretrievably lost – the novel's eschatological framework points not only to the 'end of times,' but to the end of history, geography, and culture.

Silko, then, is chiefly concerned with an *emerging geography* rather than a return to pre-colonial times. Wendy Shaw et al, in investigating the anthropological geographies of indigenous peoples, emphasize this fluidity of geographical identity:

> Many indigenous peoples exist within the framework of globalizing 'Western' cultures, and encompass realms of existence for many peoples going about the business of living their lives - in urban and non-urban settings, and increasingly where identity is multiple and fluid. The ongoing evolution of 'tradition', and consequent transformations through modernity, has resulted in negotiations, resistances and selective appropriations.[23]

Indigenous geography, as Silko represents it, is not merely the palimpsest of colonial geography that has written over indigenous culture for five centuries. Instead, this geography is deeply rooted in the "evolution of 'tradition,'" where indigenous identity is constantly being negotiated through colonial and postcolonial discourse. Thus, Silko's geography in *Almanac of the Dead,* as well as the larger hegemonic structure of postcolonial geography, is necessarily contingent; these

[23] Wendy Shaw et al, "Encountering Indigeneity: Re-Imagining and Decolonizing Geography." *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 88, no. 3 (2006): 268.

maps, however, are not without contact zones and disputes both political and personal. Silko treads between a history of colonial oppression where Native Americans suffered as a people, and an understanding of the contemporary individual as inherently complex and not reducible to any political, ethnographical, or geographical identity.

The identities of both the individuals and the peoples are further complicated by systems of power; Silko explores the problem of reconciling self-determination of identity with an imposed cultural consciousness where identity is pre-formed and essentially manufactured by the colonial dominator. In examining the relationship between Europeans and tribal peoples, Silko posits that "the tribal people here were all very aware that the whites put great store in names. But once the whites had a name for a thing, they seemed unable ever again to recognize the thing itself . . . Europeans suffered a sort of blindness to the world" (224). To the colonizers, naming is a method of categorization and de-individualization. Colonial cartography has adopted the guise of objectivity; the very notion of mapmaking, to the colonizer, is not the notion of 'discovery.' Rather, it is the imposition of identity on indigenous individuals who are not reducible to their culture. While the erasure of culture is intimately linked to the history of colonialism in the Americas, Silko eschews the notion of culture as *wholly constituting* the individual. The individual instead finds themselves within a matrix of history and culture that is always already present. Individuals are both products and producers of culture, and thus must negotiate a personal *recognition* of culture. This notion leads to a bidirectional understanding of indigenous culture; culture is simultaneously erased and imposed as the chief identifying feature of indigenous peoples. When colonial cartography cannot wholly erase indigenous culture, it instead creates a monoculture where indigenous tribes are homogenized. This is a counterfeit

recognition of culture; the narrative of the emergent monoculture imposes a single history for all indigenous peoples, while their experiences may vary dramatically.

Culture, however, is a historical necessity; Silko's most fundamental structure in *Almanac* is that of the myth. Myths are born as cultural objects, but can become distinct, independent entities that exist apart from the people or culture that produced them. The encyclopedic scope of the novel lends itself to the propagation of these myths. Kimberly Roppolo suggests that

> *Almanac* could be compared to *Paradise Lost, The Iliad,* or *The Odyssey* in that it is directed toward an audience who is intended to see itself as inhabiting the same mythos as that of the story. Like *Ceremony, Almanac* fits itself into an intertribal metanarrative, the story in the novel being the ongoing story we are living, the story that is living itself and not a dead thing on a shelf . . . the story of *Almanac* must find the commonalities in the stories of the peoples and the symbols within them and make these, not an individual, not an individual culture, its center.[24]

Silko's myth-center provides the *medium* through which the individual characters navigate the cultural-historical map. The metamythological mapping done by Silko is not, then, an *alternative* map to that which has been traced by colonial cartographers. The map is instead totally enmeshed in the violent contact between cultures; in this sense, every cartographical erasure is in fact an impression, and the notion of maps as palimpsests becomes not just historically true but an everyday occurrence. Silko herself claims that "I knew *Almanac of the Dead* must be made of myths—all sort of myths from the Americas, including the modern myths."[25] For Silko, myths form both the thematic and aesthetic structure of the novel; they bind cultural and aesthetic identities through the medium of history.

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[24] Kimberly Roppolo, "Vision, Voice, and Intertribal Metanarrative: The American Indian Visual-Rhetorical Tradition and Leslie Marmon Silko's "Almanac of the Dead"." *American Indian Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2007): 545.
[25] Quoted from Roppolo, 545.

The central object of the novel—the almanac itself—is preserved and carried by children who "were the very last of their tribe," and "they were told the 'book' they carried was the 'book' of all the days of their people. These days and years were all alive, and all these days would return again. The 'book' had to be preserved at all costs" (246-7). Contained within the almanac is the "five hundred year map" interwoven with myths and stories; the almanac, then, is situated at the center of culture, mythology, history, cartography, and aesthetics. The almanacs were conceived before the arrival of colonial hegemony, and they "had warned the people hundreds of years before the Europeans arrived" (570). The almanac that comes to the hands of Lecha is thus a non-Western aesthetic object that has become enmeshed with a colonial consciousness and is inseparable from the eschatological eruption of conflict between indigenous peoples and colonizers. Shari Huhndorf, who recognizes a "countermapping" within *Almanac of the Dead,* points out that

> Silko's map draws on indigenous cartographic traditions to represent an alternative geography that supports Native claims to the land. While colonial maps render land as 'blank space,' Native cartographies, by contrast, emerge from the histories, social relations, and cultural beliefs that constitute landscape in traditional indigenous contexts.[26]

Silko's almanac denies the "blank space" imposed by Western cartography and recognizes that the aesthetic tradition of indigenous cartographies and the almanac are inextricable linked with the land.

The almanac can be understood as emerging from a non-Western aesthetic system; to this point, it is worth pausing to consider the influence of non-Western aesthetics in a colonial

[26] Shari Huhndorf, "'Mapping by Words': The Politics of Land in Native American Literature," in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Environment,* ed. Louise Westling (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 55.

hegemony. H. Gene Blocker argues that certain aesthetic values are projected onto non-Western traditions by Western thought, and these values "are either idealized or stigmatized . . . non-Western peoples are typically viewed either negatively as primitive, backward, underdeveloped, or positively as a welcome emotional and holistic antidote for the overly cerebral, logocentric West."[27] Silko's almanac rejects Western categorization; instead, the almanac is something untranslatable. The almanac resists incorporation into a system of Western thought and combats the colonial enterprise through its stories. In addition to elucidating the several gods, epochs, and mythological foundations, the almanac also catalogues the atrocities brought forth from conquistadors and colonial activity, and it also serves as a prefatory text to the eventual disappearance of "all things European." The almanac contains prophecies that predict a rebellion against European hegemony: Silko records, in the almanac, that "one day a story will arrive in your town . . . after you hear the story, you and the others prepare by the new moon to rise up against the slave masters" (578). Silko seems to suggest that the only sufficient tool against colonial weapons, government, and institutions, are the stories that connect the colonial past with a future hope of emancipation. The stories are a recognition of the past which weave together culture and history, but they also signify a recognition of the future where new spatial possibilities outside of colonialism become possible, and where indigenous peoples can cultivate these non-European spaces.

I have elaborated on how the almanac rejects categorization within a Western framework, but I wish to suggest that it goes even further: rather than becoming an aesthetic object that has had European values project onto it, the almanac actively *absorbs* and

[27] H. Gene Blocker, "Non-Western Aesthetics as a Colonial Invention." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 35, no. 4 (2001): 5.

incorporates colonial history into its own tradition. This is, essentially, an act of appropriation in which the structures of colonial hegemony are removed from the dominant discourse and are instead placed within a framework of critical and cultural interpretation. In doing so, the almanac becomes a map that conflates space and culture, and charts both historical tragedy and future revelations. As such, the almanac presents itself as its own dominating discourse; it presents colonial maps and territories as necessarily contingent and hints towards the eventual total erasure of colonial presence in America.

To this end, Silko and the almanac offer a rhizomatic conceptualization of resistance. Ponte notes that Deleuze and Guattari "attempt to trace a novel cartography of relations beyond the realm of State thought . . . for [them], the rhizome, instead of offering treelike genealogies and narratives of history and culture, charts trajectories, maps poles of attractions, and diagrams intensities."[28] Here, we can link the "State" to the colonial cartographic enterprise, which catalogues, separates, erases, and distorts the spaces on the map. The rhizomatic model instead emphasizes cartography as *in process;* with Silko's almanac, there is no individual map but rather a *mapping* – the almanac continually challenges, reshapes, and reimagines the geographical and cultural boundaries. The exigency of colonial resistance is noted by Beth Piatote, who argues that the novel has focuses on "the retaking of Indigenous territory" and "its interlinking of slavery, colonization, environmental destruction and class-based oppression," and posits that "the counterforce to this drive is the repositioning and the reconceptualization of land, resources, and humans and animate things in relation to each other."[29] Piatote's notion of cartography as resistance is made apparent through the overtly political resistances in the novel,

[28] Alessandra Ponte, "Maps and Territories." *Log*, no. 30 (2014): 64.
[29] Beth H. Piatote, "Seeing Double: Twins and Time in Silko's *Almanac of the Dead,"* in *Leslie Marmon Silko: Ceremony, Almanac of the Dead, Gardens in the Dunes*, ed. David L. More (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 156.

but these political movements fall short of realizing the organic process of this kind of mapmaking. Angelita, who falls in with the Marxists of Chiapas and Mexico City, focus on the problem of land ownership:

> If they could agree on nothing else, they could all agree the land was theirs. Tribal rivalries and even intervillage boundary disputes often focused on land lost to the European invaders. When they had taken back all the lands of the indigenous people of the Americas, there would be plenty of space, plenty of pasture and farmland and water for everyone who promised to respect all beings and do no harm (518).

Angelita's only concern, insofar as her Marxist ideology extends, is a sort of cartographical endpoint – that is, a final state of the distribution of land. Angelita rejects Marxism, as it is a product of Western European ideology, but connects economic Capital with spatial organization and distribution. Her interpretation of the cartography of reclamation coextends with the colonial notion of maps as fixed objects, and that there is static, or final state that potentially exists. Angelita exhibits a precolonial nostalgia for spatial organization that is no longer possible in the 20th century. Silko, in her rhizomatic approach to cartography, breaks away from the narrowness of this perspective through the almanac's state of constant metamorphosis.

If place in *Almanac of the Dead* is rhizomatic, this leads to the problem of what kinds of places can exist at all. Marc Priewe argues that the novel's sense of place is founded upon the 'glocal,' or the notion that the novel "refrains from building a local/global dichotomy," where "[the novel] constitutes an imaginary account of a 'reconfigured globalization,' one in which local and global cultures intersect and play a significant role in a 'bottom-up' social resistance movement against (neo)colonization."[30] Priewe's understanding of the interpolation between

[30] Marc Priewe, "Negotiating the Global and the Local: Leslie Marmon Silko's 'Almanac of the Dead' as 'Glocal Fiction'." *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2002: 225.

local and global spaces echoes Cresswell's identification of place as always "in process." *Almanac of the Dead* resists any notion of centrality; the characters, narratives, and places in the novel are instead satellites that orbit an absent center. The interface between the local and the global forms a fractal that is reflected within the almanac itself, where the contemporary "Fifth World" is part of a larger mythological structure that involves a cycle of epochs, each one containing its own catastrophes and warnings. Here space and time become inseparable; the "Fifth World" signifies a mapping of both cartographical space and epochal time. Thus, Silko's almanac is itself part of the "glocal" phenomenon – it situates itself within a single island in time, where indigenous culture is inseparable from the colonial project, but imagines a much broader notion of space-time that extends beyond colonial influence.

There is an appreciable challenge in locating *Almanac of the Dead* within contemporary discourses of globalism – on the one hand, Silko identifies global systems like neoliberal capitalism as logical continuations of the colonial enterprise. On the other, Silko does not simply pit globalism and local cultural values against one another. Rather, the novel is placed at the interstices of these "glocal" place-identities. One must also consider the place of the novel itself within this discourse. Arjun Appadurai describes a "counterglobalization" initiative which involves a rhizomatic approach to globalization on academic and pedagogical scales. Appadurai argues that

> Such an account would belong to a broader effort to understand the variety of projects that fall under the rubric of globalization, and it would also recognise that the word *globalization*, and words like *freedom*, *choice*, and *justice*, are not inevitably the property of the state-capital nexus. To take up this sort of study involves, for the social sciences, a serious commitment to the study of globalization from below, its institutions, its horizons, and its vocabularies.[31]

[31] Arjun Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination" *Public Culture,* vol. 12, no. 1, Winter 2000: 17.

To break away from the hegemony of this "state-capital nexus," the rhizome must operate across the cultural, academic-pedagogical, and political economic apparatuses. Appadurai's attention to the vocabulary of globalization provides insight into the rhizomatic possibilities of the novel. Silko's use of the encyclopedic genre cultivates global thinking through the heterogeneity of voices, identities, and cultural and aesthetic values, while being mindful of the necessity of global and local interstices.

Appadurai's account of globalization across cultural and academic spaces provides a lens through which the significance of both Gaddis and Silko becomes apparent. Gaddis, while seeking to challenge inherited aesthetic and cultural values, can only approach resistance through the dominant discourse of European ideals. Applying the aesthetic regimes and notions of recognition found in Gaddis to Silko's almanac, however, results in a rhizomatic canvas full of cartographical possibilities. The negotiation of space and place, as demonstrated in these novels, creates a momentum towards the global imagination that has gained traction in the 21st century. Gaddis and Silko demonstrate the progression from cultural and aesthetic critiques that had been confined to the hegemonic discourses that produced them, to the establishment of a framework that is not only outside of this discourse, but necessarily precludes the singularity of institutional legitimization. I will now turn to the cartelization of space and power that emerges from postwar institutional ensembles, and in doing so I hope to expand on aesthetic and cultural hegemony to illustrate the domination of the individual's mental spaces.

Chapter 2

"Mindless Pleasures":

The Cartelization of Mental Space in *Gravity's Rainbow* and *Infinite Jest*

In the previous chapter I examined the idea of Western ideology in America, both cultural and aesthetic, as necessarily a cartographical project. Here, I will expand my examination of this cartography in two ways; first, I will address the more canonical works of postmodern American fiction (or perhaps "post-postmodern," in Wallace's case) by focusing on *Gravity's Rainbow* and *Infinite Jest.* While the connections between these texts seem intuitive in both narrative structure and canonicity or literary tradition, I propose that attention must be paid towards their roles not simply within late 20th century American fiction, but also within the encyclopedic genre and its negotiation of space and place. Second, in this chapter I will scrutinize more closely the phenomenology of space within the framework of institutional hegemony, with closer attention to the mental realms that characters either inhabit or create. Here, I argue that the interior worlds of the characters—Tyrone Slothrop in *Gravity's Rainbow,* and Hal Incandenza in *Infinite Jest*—are not products that *react* to institutional powers, but instead these imaginary or created worlds are processes that legitimize hegemonic forces under the guise of resistance or escapism. In this sense, there is a cartelization of space that occurs; in *Gravity's Rainbow,* this cartelization is quite literal, with conglomerates like IG Farben controlling vast swaths of the war industry. The Cartel model is primarily motivated by profit and control of the economic system, but this model can be extended to encompass the institutional conglomerates of education, media and cultural consumption, and political ideology. Together, these seemingly independent hegemonic forces form an ensemble—or Cartel—which

determines the phenomenological experience of the individual, whether this includes buying a certain product or subscribing to a particular ideology. The construction and inhabitation of mental worlds in these novels are necessarily part of this Cartelization process; rather than serving as a final frontier of individual agency or freedom, the production of mental space is an inextricable part of the institutional Cartel.

Such a model suggests an emergent domination from the cumulative institutional apparatuses, where each institution either knowingly or unknowingly contributes to the phenomenological domination of the individual. The various institutional processes that write the script for an individual's thought process or behavior are linked with Foucault's notion of microphysics. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that

> What the apparatuses and institutions operate is, in a sense, a micro-physics of power . . . Now, the study of micro-physics presupposes that the power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy, that its effects of domination are attributed not to 'appropriation', but to dispositions, manouevres, tactics, techniques, functions . . . in short this power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the 'privilege', acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions.[32]

The role of the institutional Cartel is not, then, to wield concentrated power on the individual (or "body"), but rather to diffuse this power in localized actions and conditioning. It is precisely the summation of contingencies of power (political or otherwise) that make possible an emergent disciplinary apparatus or hegemonic discourse.

Pynchon's Zone and the Cartography of Microphysics

In Thomas Pynchon's 1973 novel *Gravity's Rainbow,* an institutional Cartel known only as "They" seemingly determine the large-scale political and military outcomes of World War II.

[32] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 26.

While They seem implicit in a project of historical fatalism, They also threaten every minute aspect of the life of American lieutenant Tyrone Slothrop. His paranoia is largely connected to the German V-2 rocket program, and Slothrop

> [H]as become obsessed with the idea of a rocket with his name written on it—if they're really set on getting him ("They" embracing possibilities far far beyond Nazi Germany) that's the surest way, doesn't cost them a thing to paint his name *on every one, right?*[33]

Slothrop's "operational paranoia" functions through the irreducible complexity of an institutional ensemble; in addition to Nazi Germany, Slothrop must navigate the labyrinth of military organizations designated by a plethora of acronyms. The matrices of power that determine Slothrop's "quest" are not centralized at any identifiable locus. Rather, his paranoia, motivations—and as we will see, mental spaces—are organized through the microphysics of his Harvard education, the Calvinist history of New England, his military training, and ultimately his adventures through the "Zone" of postwar Europe.

Critics Luc Herman and Steven Weisenburger dedicate a chapter of *Gravity's Rainbow, Domination, and Freedom* to "War as a Cartel Project." Here, the Cartel is described as the omnipotent, omnipresent super-power that permeates the novel. The authors argue that "Cartelized war, hot or cold, affects everything and everyone in *Gravity's Rainbow.* In 'its glutton, ever-nibbling intake,' it literally incorporates the entirety of human experience; its inexorable logic of conditioning dominates all classes and kinds of people in the storyworld."[34] In the novel, the notion of "the war itself as a *laboratory*" (49) is entertained by Allied scientists, which suggests that the Pavlovian conditioning of the individual—here, the literal conditioning

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[33] Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (New York: Penguin, 1973), 25.
[34] Luc Herman and Steven Weisenburger, *Gravity's Rainbow, Domination, and Freedom* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2013), 108.

of Slothrop—is an inevitable result of the cartelization of war. I would argue, however, that the Cartel and the war are not synonymous; rather, there are two poles of cartelized power. At one pole there is the grand scale of political-historical upheaval, guided by conglomerates such as IG Farben. Slothrop's conditioning forms the other pole, where They determine his every action or decision—conscious or otherwise—even down to his erections. The space *between* these two poles forms the stage for cartelized power, which crystalizes as Pynchon's Zone.

The Zone consists of Germany and the surrounding land of the immediate postwar Europe; here, Slothrop constantly attempts to escape the clutches of They while simultaneously seeking his "Grail;" that is, the mysterious V-2 rocket with the serial number 00000. Lawrence Kappel describes the Zone as

> Pynchon's psychic wilderness . . . a place of purgation the fires of which can transform being into something new and magical, not merely "real," but legendary . . . it is a quickening descent into danger, monstrous self-knowledge, and finally oblivion, for Slothrop himself and for European history.[35]

Slothrop's transformations range from Tannhäuser, the legendary Wagnerian *minnesinger*, to Plechazunga, a local mythical pig-hero – and many in between. Slothrop's adoption of these roles, and the absurd narrative events that ensue, are often conflated with the mental worlds he inhabits. The difference between the literal event and the fantasy is constantly eroded until any distinction becomes completely unnecessary. Slothrop's pie fight with Nazis in hot-air balloons—which is supposedly a *literal* event within the novel—is not too distant in theatric hyperbole from Slothrop's mental world of the *Raketenstadt,* which assembles a group of comic-book superheroes. Both instances—the pseudo-battle with Nazis and the imagined superhero

[35] Lawrence Kappel, "Psychic Geography in "Gravity's Rainbow"." *Contemporary Literature* 21, no. 2 (1980): 226.

subplot—are not the products of escapism, where Slothrop momentarily evades the Cartel ensemble. Rather, these moments are produced and executed by the Cartel – the Zone itself is the geographical literalization of postwar institutional power. The Cartel, then, is the spatial distribution of microphysics; Slothrop's fantasies are the representations of his microphysical conditioning instead of his reactions against the hegemonic apparatus.

The Zone itself must be considered as an emerging postwar cartographical project: here, the geographical, political, and psychological topography offers spaces that are seemingly separated from "the System." Steven Best notes that

> As a transitional space, chaos reigns within the Zone, lacking the routinization of power that would soon occur again in the postwar world. As Tanner notes, the Zone is distinguished from the System. Where everything within the System is fixed and categorized, within the Zone we find anomie, chaos, an erasure of boundaries . . . a decentered space of multiple codes populated by lost and displaced persons.[36]

Slothrop can only navigate the chaos of the Zone by constantly reinventing his own identity. These identities are not *constructed* in a non-System vacuum, however; when Slothrop dons the guise of Rocketman—a Zonal superhero—anticipating a "full-scale Rocketman hype, in which the people bring him food, wine, and maidens" (366), he is merely acting out a fantasy that has been rehearsed since his childhood in America. The chaos of the Zone allots Slothrop the apparent freedom to create an identity apart from the System, but his attempts merely reproduce the latent microphysics of the Cartel. Best argues that "Pynchon emphasizes that this transition [between modern capitalism and postwar hegemony] should be understood in terms of a new system of control, an abandonment of overt violent mechanisms of control for more efficient

[36] Steven Best, "Creative Paranoia: A Postmodern Aesthetic of Cognitive Mapping in "Gravity's Rainbow." *The Centennial Review* 36, no. 1 (1992): 76.

covert mechanisms" (76). Slothrop's mock-hero caricatures reproduce or simulate the cultural archetypes he has been conditioned to admire, and thus within the Zone there is little need for intervention by They as Slothrop becomes a self-enforcing agent of the Cartel.

Pynchon's Zone seems to indicate a movement towards a self-generating cartography, where space is constantly being reconstructed, boundaries are being dissolved, and individuals must reevaluate their relationship with the geography they inhabit. However, the Zone is not a project in *mapping* but rather an exercise in *tracing*. Deleuze and Guattari make this distinction in *The Thousand Plateaus:* "What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious" (13). In the Zone, Slothrop's quest for the V2 rocket is precisely a reproduced unconscious; he has, since his early childhood, been conditioned to respond to the stimulus of the rocket. He is merely tracing this phenomena within the stage rehearsal of the Zone. The Zone is not, then, an apolitical vacuum; it is a tracing of European hegemony, where the death-cult of Europe continues to exercise its micropolitical functions. It is a pseudo-rhizomatic space – Slothrop escapes from the metropolis of London only to find the apparatus for control has seemingly vanished, but the control of Slothrop continues locally. The Zone simulates the rhizome in that it approximates Deleuze's notion of "the 'body without organs,' the decentralized political formation that replaces the city as state."[37] The larger machinations of political enterprise are, however, unavoidable for Slothrop, who cannot help but think (in song) that "Whin this war is over, / How happy Ah will be, / Gearin' up fer thim Rooskies / and Go-round Number Three . . ." (GR 314). Here, Slothrop still reckons in

[37] Simone Brott, "Deleuze and "The Intercessors"." *Log*, no. 18 (2010): 137.

the large-scale historical-political model of political control, while unaware that his mental world is constantly under microphysical policing, even if this policing is not immediately apparent.

The pseudo-rhizomatic structure of the zone allows for the pursuit of Slothrop's "mindless pleasures"—coincidentally, the working title for the novel. Pynchon equates "mindless" with the profane and obscene, which culminates aboard the Zone-cruising yacht *Anubis*. Here, any sort of sexual deviancy is permitted and celebrated, which results from the divorcing of place and identity. The Zonal dissolution of spatial boundaries and coordinates allows for the pursuit of grotesque pleasure, where They, or the System, is not present to distribute punishment. An apparent mental liberation from System-thinking triggers the reactionary abandonment of ethical constructs. Christopher Ames connects the language and actions of obscenity in the novel, observing that "for those who use the obscenity, the forbidden expression also becomes a code of solidarity, a union of the excluded consecrated in the act of transgression . . . the equation epitomizes the dynamics of the privileged discourse of power; the language of the powerless takes the shape of obscene statements of profanations."[38] Any sort of Counterforce that arises in response to political or cultural domination, then, must take the form of the obscene. The obscene acts that occur aboard the *Anubis* and elsewhere in the novel, including

> Pynchon's stunningly explicit figurations of pedophilia, coprophagia, sadomasochism, and homosexual and heterosexual rape" which are "vital to his critique of fascist domination," are amplified by Slothrop's "fuck you," his personal spell against agents of the System.[39]

[38] Christopher Ames, "Power and the Obscene Word: Discourses of Extremity in Thomas Pynchon's "Gravity's Rainbow"." *Contemporary Literature* 31, no. 2 (1990): 193.
[39] Herman and Weisenburger, 200-201.

Slothrop's verbal utterance and thoughts of "fuck you" throughout the novel suggests the inescapability of the Cartel; the futility of obscenity becomes increasingly apparent, as Slothrop's only method of liberation is through annihilation – a disintegration that results in a self-erasure from the System. The "pleasures" that Slothrop partakes in are merely reprieves from the inexorable hands of the Cartel; these pleasures fail to lay the groundwork for any effective resistance.

If the *Anubis* epitomizes a discourse of obscenity against the forces of the Cartel—one that is ultimately futile—then Pynchon's Holy Centers form another pole of critical discourse against the dominating powers. Slothrop searches the Zone for the Schwarzgerät, a component of the mysterious and quasi-mythical 00000 rocket. He believes that this rocket holds a secret about the core of his identity, namely his psychological conditioning as a child at the hands of Dr. Laszlo Jamf, a plastics chemist and crucial asset to IG Farben. In a moment of apparent clarity, Slothrop realizes that "the Schwarzgerät is no Grail, Ace . . . and you are no knightly hero. The best you can compare with is Tännhauser, the Singing Nincompoop" (GR 364). Here Slothrop works within a mythical framework to understand his connection to the Zone; every identity he adopts is, inexorably, a cultural reproduction that is always traced – never a true mapping. The failure of a generative mapping *outside* of the hegemonic cultural discourse prevents the Zone from becoming rhizomatic, meaning that the Holy Centers in *Gravity's Rainbow*—like Slothrop's "Grail," can only be approached asymptotically. Slothrop's anti-Grail quest is inherently unmappable; as José Lista Noya notes,

> The figural charting of the "unmappable," the objective of the fantastic, remains inevitably a strategy of "mapping," though one that displays a heightened awareness of the paradoxes of its representational processes. This explains in part the ambiguities of Pynchon's Zone, which seems to subsist as both a realm of possibility for those preterite areas unrepresented on the official map of the real

> and as a site threatened with imminent assimilation within the representational scope of a more totalizing cartography.[40]

Here, it seems that the greater project of the postwar Cartel is inherently cartographical in nature. The Zone can only exist as a temporary vacuum produced by the War, but must eventually collapse in the larger historical project of global Cartelization.

Meanwhile, the Holy Centers of the Zone provide fertile ground for other attempts of resistance. In the heart of the Zone there are the Schwarzkommando, group of Herero rocket technicians brought to Germany after the genocide of their people in the African Südwest. Like Slothrop, the Schwarzkommando are obsessed with the V2 rocket, and search across the Zone for rocket components. Their goal, spearheaded by Enzian, is to assemble and fire the "00001" rocket, "the second in its series" (GR 724). Enzian and his comrades are attempting to develop an anti-rocket, one without a specified target, but perhaps aimed at the Cartel, or the Zone itself. The Schwarzkommandos' project, then, is not to find or approach a Holy Center, as Slothrop attempts, but rather to create one through their actions. Molly Hite argues that "the Holy Center, the ultimate guarantor of meaning, is unavailable . . . the absence of the center opens up a space in which freedom creates and explores its own prospects."[41] The absent center thus allows for the closest approximation of rhizomatic space, but this is squandered in *Gravity's Rainbow* because the characters are only able to create a map with a necessary center – it is the microphysics of cartography that has established a hegemonic map in the minds of these characters. As Noya points out, mapping the Zone is an exercise in Baudrillardian simulacra, where "everything

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[40] José Lista Noya, "Mapping the 'Unmappable'": Inhabiting the Fantastic Interface of 'Gravity's Rainbow.'" *Studies in the Novel* 29, no. 4 (1997): 515.

[41] Molly Hite, ""Holy-Center-Approaching" in the Novels of Thomas Pynchon." *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 12, no. 2 (1982): 128.

becomes a map: 'the territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory.'"[42] The process of mapping, and one's interpretation of maps, is determined by the microphysics of the Cartel, because the Cartel constructs the hegemonic cartographical mode. The failure of the Zone to produce any meaningful resistance is a consequence of the microphysics of cartelized thought.

The Cartel's ubiquitous infiltration of thought throughout the Zone demonstrates that direct control through force or coercion is unnecessary when thought and language produce self-enforcing agents. Indeed, one of Slothrop's "Proverbs for Paranoids" is "if they can get you asking the wrong questions, they don't have to worry about answers" (GR 251). The Counterforce that emerges to combat the System is farcical, and

> [A]t their best, the Counterforce's pursuits never go beyond mildly subversive performance, silly skirmishes They effortlessly brush aside or tacitly moot through repressive tolerance . . . No wonder the Counterforce does not get very far: it plots within Their logic, within parameters They control.[43]

The scope of resistance in *Gravity's Rainbow*—from the orgiastic pleasures of the *Anubis* to the juvenile displays of the Counterforce, which amounts to little more than a middle finger—is limited by the parameters of the System. Slothrop, as has been shown, has been conditioned physically and psychologically to do the Cartel's bidding, or at the very least not to interfere with Their project of postwar globalization. But perhaps the most effective tool of the Cartel's arsenal is not psychotropic interrogation nor constant military surveillance, but a healthy dose of pop culture. The language of pop culture—ever-present in a novel that has copious references to the quasi-mythical figures in Hollywood, pop music, and the like—form the mental fantasy-worlds

[42] Noya 516.
[43] Herman and Weisenberger, 190-91.

that Slothrop spends considerable time inhabiting. Pop culture in *Gravity's Rainbow* does not merely serve as an escape from the reality of domination via Cartel, but instead serves to create self-enforcing agents by stripping Slothrop and the Counterforce of any real means of liberation.

Slothrop, well on his way towards mental disintegration in the final part of the novel, constructs the *Raketenstadt* – the Rocket-State, in which his rocket obsession and pop-culture sensibilities combine to stage the mock-battle between Slothrop and his personal Cartel. Here, Slothrop imagines "a City of the Future full of extrapolated 1930s swoop-façaded and balconied skyscraper . . . travel here gets complicated—a system of buildings that move, by right angles, along the grooves of the Raketen-Stadt's street-grid" (GR 674). Slothrop appropriates the cartography of the Zone to produce a cartelized psycho-topography, where boundaries are not clearly defined and pop culture becomes the means of resistance. H. Brenton Stevens argues that "in his Rocketman persona, Slothrop is both the embodiment of the justification of the Rocket State's policies—superhero of the elect—and an emblem of the possibility that fantasy holds an escape from the dictates of these policies—superhero of the preterite."[44] Slothrop, in navigating the cartography he has created, entertains both the self-enforcing nature of the cartel (by imagining himself an "elect" part of that cartel) and the fantasy of liberation through spearheading a resistance that falsely believes it can escape from the System. He revisits the microphysical environments of his conditioning as a child – he and his superhero comrades ("The Floundering Four") seek revenge on his father for selling out young Slothrop to the IG Farben Cartel. However, even in Slothrop's fantasies the prospects of success seem dismal:

> Any wonder it's hard to feel much confidence in these idiots as they go up against Pernicious Pop each day? There's no real direction here, neither lines of power nor cooperation. Decisions are never really *made*—at best they manage to

[44] H. Brenton Stevens, ""Look! Up in the Sky! It's a Bird! It's a Plane! It's... Rocketman!": Pynchon's Comic Book Mythology in "Gravity's Rainbow"." *Studies in Popular Culture* 19, no. 3 (1997): 37.

> emerge, from a chaos of peeves, whims, hallucinations and all-around assholery (GR 676).

The "superheroes" are destined to fail in their crusade against the Cartel because they lack the organization and discipline – like the Counterforce, they are reduced to a sophomoric attempt to radically alter the organization of power. Slothrop's psychological staging of his ur-conflict with the Cartel already fails before any resistance can begin, simply because he envisions his father as the face of the Cartel. Slothrop is unaware or unable to acknowledge the ensemble of institutional microphysics that have determined his psychological and cultural DNA. His failures lead to his final disintegration, which is not so much an escape from the System but a succumbing to it.

A similar disappearance occurs with Slothrop's Nazi counterpart – Major Weissmann, better known under his moniker Dominus Blicero, escapes the Nuremberg trials and, as Pynchon has the reader believe, successfully emigrates to America. There he is to be found "among the successful academics, the Presidential advisers, the token intellectuals who sit on boards of directors" (GR 749). Blicero's disappearance, unlike Slothrop's disintegration, is possible because he is among the elect of the Cartel – that is, his power derives from the system-building that Slothrop can only crudely approximate. According to Herman and Weisenburger, Blicero (along with Fahringer, another rocket technician and "ideal Nazi"),

> [B]est represents fascism's ideal mode of domination. Its grand project is to devise means for asserting cultural and social control over masses of individuals. Optimally this means governing those masses by installing control *within* each citizen-subject, who also thinks of her- or himself as being fully invested in freedom" (127).

Blicero understands that his personal success stems not merely from the fact that he operates within the System, but indeed that he *is* the System. Here we encounter the seeming paradox of the novel – the Cartel (or They, as Slothrop refers to them) are apparently irreducible in power structures; in fact, these power structures can only exist insofar as they are codependent on the total institutional ensemble. However, Pynchon installs Blicero as the figurehead of the Cartel; the inscrutable force or watchful eye that is synonymous with cartelized power. He is, as Pynchon states, "the father you will never quite manage to kill" (747). Blicero is not, though, the scope and extent of the Cartel. Instead, Pynchon suggests a shift from political-military hegemony where the threat is a monolithic (here, Nazi Germany) to the postwar Cartel where every institution has a piece of the pie. Blicero's disappearance, like Slothrop's, is a kind of scattering, but where Slothrop disintegrates into nothing except an obscure Zone legend, Blicero merges with the omnipresent power of American institutions.

Slothrop is not merely controlled by They towards the attainment of a postwar capitalist cartel, but he is also literally the product of an economic transaction. He comes to realize that his father agreed to have him participate in an experiment by IG Farben as "infant Tyrone" in exchange for his Harvard education, and Slothrop remarks "I've been sold, Jesus Christ I've been sold to IG Farben like a side of beef. Surveillance? Stinnes, like every industrial emperor, had his own company spy system. So did the IG. Does this mean Slothrop has been under their observation—m-maybe since he was born? Yaahhh…" (286). Capitalism has already begun to eclipse the nation-state as the primary organizer of cartelized power before World War II has even begun, and Slothrop's transaction suggests, as Herman and Weisenburger observe, "the starkly real *Gesellschaft* of that world, its symbolic and institutional presence in their lives as a logic and practice of sovereignty and domination, and the endless war which They regulate"

(113). The Cartel's ideal environment, then, is a permanent Cold War through which international conglomerates become the successors to institutional power, effectively making the nation-state obsolete. Blicero/Weissmann exemplifies this model; he is unconcerned with the downfall of Nazi Germany precisely because he knows a new role awaits him in America where the Cartel continues to thrive.

Blicero and Slothrop, though they never meet and are perhaps even unaware of each other's presence, are connected through knowledge of the V2 rocket. It is their encyclopedic knowledge of the rocket that organizes them within the rocket-cartel of the novel. However, Blicero and Slothrop are on opposite sides of the spectrum; Blicero is indisputably a member of the elect, while Slothrop is destined (or, according to his Calvinist paranoia, *pre*-destined) for preterition – that is, oblivion at the hands of the Cartel. Encyclopedic knowledge, then, is a microphysical tool for maintaining the balance of power across the institutional Cartel. Hilary A. Clark notes that

> Foucault's 'archive' is another term for the encyclopedia—that practice institutionalizing both the multiplicity of things to be known and said, and the control of this potentially disordered mass as an organized, intelligible body of knowledge. The encyclopedia or archive of a particular epoch, like the canon, is the law of what can be said, known, and taught at that particular time (97).

The encyclopedia itself becomes a component of microphysical control – although initially concerned about someone like Slothrop running loose in the Zone with classified information about the rocket, people like statistician Roger Mexico understand that Slothrop is merely "another rocket-creature . . . they can sit and drink beer, tell rocket stories, scribble equations for each other. How jolly" (GR 629). Slothrop poses no threat to the rocket-cartel because his identity—Lieutenant Tyrone Slothrop and Rocketman—has been created through the

microphysics of the rocket itself. If the rocket is Pynchon's holy text, then Slothrop is its zealous acolyte – a servant rather than a master.

In *Gravity's Rainbow,* Pynchon thus adopts the encyclopedic form as a means of cartelized knowledge. If the encyclopedia, or Foucault's archive, creates an "intelligible body of knowledge" from the "potentially disordered mass," then the total control of knowledge can only be an emergent property of the Cartel. Slothrop's encyclopedia—which, with its knowledge of pop culture and Calvinist history, is not simply limited to the rocket—does not allow the possibility for any liberation from the System. The encyclopedic body of knowledge becomes the ultimate tool in enforcing the Cartel's agenda; while Slothrop is occupied with his Rocketman fantasies and libidinal pursuits, the Cartel is organizing a postwar enterprise where individuals like Slothrop become the self-enforcing agents of a 20th-century global hegemony. There need be no rocket pointed at Slothrop's head; the mechanisms for control have been internalized. Now that the encyclopedic mode has been demonstrated to serve as a mechanism of cartelized power, I will turn to David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* to examine how this mechanism can lead to a model of control centered on incarceration via pleasure.

Pleasure and Incarceration in *Infinite Jest*

Much like *Gravity's Rainbow,* David Foster Wallace's encyclopedic novel *Infinite Jest* (1996) features a heavily-cartelized society where the primary institution—academia—has several microphysical tools at its disposal. However, unlike Pynchon's novel, the mindless pleasures in *Infinite Jest* are not simply in place to serve as distractions, or means of pseudo-resistance, from the larger project of the Cartel. Where Pynchon's notion of pleasure in *Gravity's Rainbow* demonstrates the illusion of freedom—as is seen with Slothrop's Rocketman fantasies—this illusion is dispelled in *Infinite Jest,* where pleasure becomes much more directly

carceral. Thus, the pursuit of pleasure in Wallace's novel—often synonymous with capital E "Entertainment"—is a *direct and necessary measure of control* instead of merely a means to misdirect any real challenges to institutional power. The novel's dystopian tone, which is formed through both its pleasure-as-slavery narrative and its future timeline, on the surface seems to be a Huxleyan warning against self-destruction through the search for pleasure. But, unlike *A Brave New World,* which depicts pleasure as the numbing agent that prevents the realization that one is living in a dystopia, Wallace suggests that pleasure itself *creates* a dystopian space, rather than merely concealing it. The suspended states of pure pleasure in *Infinite Jest* thus bear a striking resemblance to Foucault's concept of incarceration:

> The body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it, or to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property. The body, according to this penalty, is caught up in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions. Physical pain, the pain of the body itself, is no longer the constituent element of the penalty. From being an art of unbearable sensations punishment has become an economy of suspended rights.[45]

The states of catatonic pleasure in *Infinite Jest*—in its most literal form, triggered by the eponymous video cartridge—demonstrate the power of the institutional Cartel to *produce* dystopian space that operates on a local and individual level. If the goal of the Cartel in *Gravity's Rainbow* was to create a self-enforcing and localized system of control from the prewar political-economic model, then this goal is fully realized in *Infinite Jest.*

The premise of the "Entertainment" is a tape titled "Infinite Jest" filmed by the late James Incandenza. The tape, when viewed by an unknowing victim, produces such an intense sensation of pleasure in the viewer that he or she will keep watching the tape—releasing their bladder or bowels as necessary—until death. Philip Sayers, who draws on Barthes and Lacan, notes that the

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[45] *Discipline and Punish,* 11.

former "draws an analogy between the relationship of the spectator to the image onscreen and the relationship of the infant to his reflection in the mirror."[46] Here, the link between the Lacanian *mirror* and the Entertainment of *Infinite Jest* is obvious. Sayers argues that "it is narcissistic identification with an infant that seems to provide one of the keys to the power of the Entertainment . . . the viewer (or at least one viewer in particular) is meant to identify with the infant, sharing his or her emotional, as well as optical, point of view."[47] Reversion to an infantile state in the presence of the Entertainment here aligns with Foucault's "economy of suspended rights" – the Entertainment (and, to Wallace's broader point, entertainment in general) becomes a form of *punishment* where the relationship between the Cartel and the individual has been abolished. The Infinite Jest cartridge—although recognized for its potential weaponization by a Quebecois separatist group—remains outside of the institutional system and has yet to be mass-produced and distributed. The cartridge, however, is little more than the perfect mimesis of microphysical tools already in use by the Cartel: entertainment and commercialism that has infiltrated the home and constructed an ideology of unadulterated consumerism in the mind of the typical citizen. The Entertainment, then, is not simply an unassuming experimental film created inadvertently by James Incandenza, but the perfect execution of the tools available to the institutional ensemble; it is the ultimate realization of cartelized control.

Before the reader is introduced to the novel's namesake, however, Wallace grapples with the notion of carceral states with the condition of Hal Incandenza, son of filmmaker James and tennis prodigy. The first section of the novel (although the last chronologically) introduces Hal

[46] Philip Sayers, "Representing Entertainment(s) in "Infinite Jest"." *Studies in the Novel,* 44(3): 348.
[47] Ibid.

as a young man with an encyclopedic knowledge of the English language. Hal attempts to describe his erudition to the admissions faculty at the University of Arizona:

> I'm not a machine. I feel and believe I have opinions. Some of them are interesting. I could, if you'd let me, talk and talk. Let's talk about anything. I believe the influence of Kierkegaard on Camus is underestimated. I believe Dennis Gabor may very well have been the Antichrist. I believe Hobbes is Rousseau in a dark mirror . . . I'm not just a creātus, manufactured, conditioned, bred for a function.[48]

Here, at the very beginning of Wallace's colossal novel, is perhaps the most direct and impassioned critique of microphysical conditioning. However, after Hal delivers his monologue, it becomes apparent that something is horrifically wrong – his words come out as ungodly sounds and noises. The admissions faculty accuse Hal's academic caretakers of attempting to "dope him up, seek to act as his mouthpiece, muzzling, and now he lies there catatonic, staring" (15). Much like the victims of the Infinite Jest tape, Hal is locked into a catatonic state which strips him of any individual agency. However, unlike the victims, Hal is fully cognizant of this carceral state. His rejection of being "manufactured" or "conditioned" suggests the closest approximation of resistance to the microphysics of academics—and, by extension, the larger ensemble of disciplinary institutions—that the novel offers.

The disconnection between internal states or mental worlds and external realities is essential to the success of the Cartel's project in *Infinite Jest.* Elizabeth Freudenthal notes an emergent "anti-interiority" that arises from the "compulsiveness" of the novel:

> The novel uses compulsiveness to depict not an erasure of self within an overpowering commercial culture, as some critics argue, but a continuous reestablishment of selfhood contingent on external material reality. Anti-interior

[48] David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1996), 12.

> selfhood exists as a paradoxically dynamic thinghood between material and subjective realms."[49]

I would argue that the "erasure of self," or at least the total separation of self from external reality, is the final state of cartelized control: when an individual is incarcerated in a state of mindless pleasure, they can pose absolutely no threat to any existing power dynamic. The leverage of control extends to the copious use of drugs, both prescribed and illicit, throughout the novel. These drug episodes constantly reconfigure the relationship of the self with the external reality, to the point that this reality itself is contingent. However, substance use and abuse within the novel is more complex than being simply a tool for hegemonic control and warrants closer examination.

Much of the encyclopedic elements of *Infinite Jest* stem from its function as a veritable pharmacopeia, and many of the endnotes describe the pharmaceutical properties of these drugs. However, the use of drugs in *Infinite Jest* is fundamentally different from the escapist pleasures found in *Gravity's Rainbow.* While Pynchon uses drugs and sex as a temporary reprieve from the powers of the Cartel, Wallace often describes the use of drugs as inherently paranoiac. Erdedy, a character seeking to have (another) weekend marijuana binge before quitting (again) altogether, is absolutely paranoid about the conditions surrounding the binge to the point where it seems incredibly unlikely that any enjoyment could be attained. Similarly, Hal has complex motives for secretly getting high in the academy's basement:

> When he gets high he develops a powerful obsession with having nobody – not even the neurochemical cadre – know he's high . . . like most North Americans of his generation, Hal tends to know way less about why he feels certain ways about

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[49] Elizabeth Freudenthal, "Anti-Interiority: Compulsiveness, Objectification, and Identity in Infinite Jest." *New Literary History* 41, no. 1 (2010): 192.

> the objects and pursuits he's devoted to than he does about the objects and pursuits themselves (54).

Hal's question of selfhood is negotiated through these intensely private moments, literally in the underbelly of the institution. Wallace's remark on Hal's inability to understand his own motivations reflects the microphysical transactions that occur within these institutions – Hal understands that he is expected to fulfill his role as a promising tennis player but disassociates his private self from the public expectations of his "conditioning." Hal wishes to carve out a space that is separate from institutional power, but in doing so finds himself incarcerated not by drug use itself but instead by his obsession for privacy.

Hal's attempt to negotiate institutional and non-institutional space reflects Wallace's larger project with the format of the encyclopedic novel. With nearly 400 footnotes, *Infinite Jest* is perhaps the epitomized version of the literal encyclopedia. Wallace establishes the narrative itself as a pseudo-institutional space within which the reader must navigate and decide which information is relevant, while adopting the guise of an authoritative text – that is, *all* the information is ostensibly relevant. David Letzler points out the inherent paradox in the format of encyclopedic fiction:

> [H]owever, fiction's importance lies in the material that *is* original and is not contingent upon that type of reference. As a result, it should seem very strange for a writer to choose the novel to communicate a "mastery" of information, given how the form disavows its text's accuracy. For the same reason, though, the novel's rejection of factual standards prevents it from directly critiquing textual knowledge the way many critics claim it does: that one can imagine a world where all is nonsense says nothing about whether the one we inhabit is sensible.[50]

[50] David Letzler, "Encyclopedic Novels and the Cruft of Fiction: "Infinite Jest"'s Endnotes." *Studies in the Novel* 44, no. 3 (2012):307.

Infinite Jest invites critique of its referential mode – as Letzler suggests, one would be hard-pressed to find *all* the endnotes meaningful. The encyclopedia, as Wallace uses it, appropriates the codifying-force of the institution to validate the information of the text. The encyclopedic mode becomes the authoritative voice of the arch-academic, but Wallace employs this mode as a critique of academia rather than a reiteration. If academia itself is a catatonic, carceral state—which Wallace makes apparent in Hal's lack of volition in determining his future, and eventually in communicating at all—then the novel's self-reflexive format suggests an inherent resistance to academia's integral role in the institutional cartel.

While *Infinite Jest* provides a cartographical narrative that requires the reader to literal navigate through footnotes, it also provides a map of the quasi-dystopian future where Canada, the United States, and Mexico have joined the super-state known as O.N.A.N., or Organization of North American Nations. Much like *Gravity's Rainbow*'s IG Farben—the institutional heir-apparent to the traditional nation-state—Wallace describes the marriage of political organization and capitalism through newspaper clippings that describe "certain developments leading up to Interdependence and Subsidized Time and cartographic Reconfiguration and the renewal of a tight and considerably tidier Experialist U.S. of A." (391). Contrary to the imperialist model of acquiring satellite nations and importing wealth and resources, the "experialist" model involves the exporting of waste. A major element of *Infinite Jest's* setting is the Great Concavity (or the Great Convexity to Canadians) – this is a wasteland region in the northeastern United States and southern Canada which has become hazardously polluted. The Great Concavity represents a literal cartographic disfigurement; America's inability to deal with the residue of hyper-capitalism results in a cordoned off non-space that, nonetheless, America forces Canada to

annex. N. Katherine Hayles dispels the illusion of "interdependence" between the nation-states and observes that

> Like Onan wasting his seed upon the ground, the cycle of imperialism and experialism uses the Other merely as an occasion for a masturbatory engagement with one's own interests. There is no real 'inter' in this version of Interdependence, only a pretense of hygiene created by the refusal to recognize those parts of oneself that are considered unclean.[51]

Here the split between self and reality is applied to national identity, and much like the Infinite Jest victims, the nation is reduced to infantilism in its failure to deal with its own waste.

Wallace subordinates both the nation and the individual to the capitalist Cartel in *Infinite Jest* – the Cartel, because of its irreducible complexity, is not required to sanitize the waste it produces. The objective of O.N.A.N. is primarily cartographical – it demarcates space, creates boundaries, and provides a rationale for the space wherein it operates. Ryan David Mullins argues for an objective phenomenological approach to the spaces in *Infinite Jest:* "while configuration spaces and configurations are, of course, human inventions, highly successful ones at that, we should nonetheless not shy away from advocating their reality. That is, they exist."[52] The map, then, is a construct, but one with tangible consequences. The Cartel, in promoting its rabid-consumerist agenda, extends beyond configurations of space with the notion of subsidized time. The calendar of O.N.A.N. replaces numbered years with annually-subsidized increments of time, including "The Year of the Whopper" and "The Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment." Time, like Mullins' understanding of space, must also be reckoned with as a phenomenologically-objective construct. Thus, it is not only the pleasure-as-incarceration model

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[51] N. Katherine Hayles, "The Illusion of Autonomy and the Fact of Recursivity: Virtual Ecologies, Entertainment, and "Infinite Jest"." *New Literary History* 30, no. 3 (1999): 685.
[52] Ryan David Mullins, "Theories of Everything and More: Infinity is Not the End," in *Gesturing Toward Reality: David Foster Wallace and Philosophy*, ed. Robert K. Bolger and Scott Korb (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 236.

that the Cartel establishes through consumerist avenues, but time itself becomes a prison that totally encompasses individuals.

Subsidized time in *Infinite Jest* suggests a post-Panopticon model of surveillance and discipline – if one is living in the Year of the Whopper, it no longer becomes necessary to enforce consumerist attitudes, as they become self-enforcing. In *Gravity's Rainbow,* Slothrop's paranoia stemmed from the fear of constant surveillance and tracking by They. Here, surveillance has been taken out of the carceral equation: consumerism becomes a *phenomenologically-objective* reality. This is not so much an abandonment of the panoptic model, but rather its logical continuation: Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish,* describes the role of the Panopticon

> [T]o induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures to automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary (201).

In *Infinite Jest,* consumer surveillance by the Cartel is unnecessary because the consumer *participates* in their own incarceration. The major corporate entity of the novel is InterLace TelEntertainment, which distributes entertainment cartridges both via physical copies and the "InterLace Subscription Pulse-Matrix," which allows "spontaneous disseminations" (35). The centrality of entertainment in *Infinite Jest* inverts the panoptic model by transforming the consumer from the subject of surveillance to viewers themselves. Incarceration is effective when the prisoner is not aware of their own imprisonment; therefore, not only is the "actual exercise" of power unnecessary, but surveillance itself is rendered obsolete.

A post-surveillance model where incarceration via entertainment becomes the self-enforcing system does not mean that there are not challenges to the cartelized regime, however. A major narrative plot of the novel centers on "Les Assassins des Fauteuil Rollents," otherwise known as the Wheelchair Assassins. The Wheelchair Assassins are an extreme terrorist cell of Quebecois separatists who resent Canada joining O.N.A.N. and the subsequent annexation of the Great Concavity, and they seek complete secession from O.N.A.N. In the novel, The Wheelchair Assassins search for the master copy of Infinite Jest, so that they might weaponize the tape against O.N.A.N. and the United States. The tape of Infinite Jest becomes recognized as not only a weapon, but a freak occurrence of absolute institutional power that has been thrown haphazardly to chance and randomness. During the events of the novel, the tape is not wielded by the Cartel, but instead circulates more or less by chance. This implies that while states of incarceration are perennial in a consumer-cartelized society, there is a possibility of a transfer of this cartelized power. Like Weissmann/Blicero of *Gravity's Rainbow,* who supposedly emigrates from Nazi Germany to join the institutional powers in America, it is entirely plausible that the Wheelchair Assassins could achieve their goal and disseminate Infinite Jest, thus appropriating the institutional means of control. There would be almost no disruption to the Cartel's project, as the upheaval caused by the weaponization of Infinite Jest would only extend to the political realm: Fortier, an agent of the Assassins, "imagines M. Tine holding the hand holding the pen of President J. Gentle as the O.N.A.N.ite President signs declaring war. He imagines teacups clinking thinly beneath trembling hands in the interior sanctums of Ottawa's sanctum of power" (728). The Entertainment allows the continuance of cartelized power despite political disruption – the transfer of political power from the O.N.A.N.-backed United States to Canada is inconsequential because the Cartel is not reducible to nation-states.

The Assassins, and their political undertakings, signify a rupture from historical context. Adam Kelly suggests that "the contrast between the United States and Quebec that the agents embody and espouse remains vaguely cultural rather than specifically historical. *Infinite Jest* is clearly not a historical novel."[53] Kelly goes on to discuss the conversation between Marathe (a Wheelchair Assassin "quadruple agent") and Steeply (an American agent disguised as a female reporter):

> [O]ne important effect of this vagueness about American intellectual history in *Infinite Jest* is that the ideological differences that separate Marathe and Steeply end up depending upon the policing of cultural borders that remain necessarily weak and permeable, open to contradiction by empirical historical realities."[54]

Cultural boundaries—much like the cartographical/spatial boundaries that constitute O.N.A.N.—become phenomenologically objective even if the borders can be questioned. Cultural-historical spaces become necessary to the Cartel's enterprise – Mark Poster, in addressing Foucault's Power-Knowledge configuration, argues that

> The form of domination characteristic of advanced capitalism is not exploitation, not alienation, not psychic repression, not anomie, not dysfunctional behavior. It is instead a new pattern of social control that is embedded in practice at many points in the social field and that constitutes a set of structures whose agency is at once everyone and no one.[55]

The Cartel's ensemble of institutional power thus extends beyond the political-economic sphere and seeks to infiltrate every social and cultural space. More importantly, these spaces are not merely being infiltrated by institutional power, they necessarily *construct* the Cartel. As Poster

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[53] Adam Kelly, "David Foster Wallace and the Novel of Ideas," in *David Foster Wallace and "The Long Thing:" New Essays on the Novels,* ed. Marshall Boswell (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 13.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Mark Poster, "Foucault and History." *Social Research* 49, no. 1 (1982): 122.

observes, “knowledge or reason is no longer a repressing or denying force but a creating, shaping, or forming force.”[56] The incarcerated individual is both the victim and constituent of the Cartel.

Pleasure in *Infinite Jest* is a carceral model that leads either to death, in the case of the Entertainment, or, more broadly, the failure to recognize one’s own constituency of the Cartel. Hal’s development throughout the novel demonstrates the emotional exigency of this kind of incarceration: Hal is incredibly withdrawn and introspective during the (chronologically) first part of the novel but becomes incarcerated within his own body as he seeks to exercise agency and express his convictions. His insistence that “I am in here” (3) at the very beginning of the novel refers not only to his location in space—a meeting room at the University of Arizona—but to his unutterable expression of volition. Hal denies that he is simply a “product” of academia and rejects the capitalist commodification of self in which he is expected to become a rising tennis star. The futility of Hal’s resistance is linked with Wallace’s larger critique of the commodity-based culture in which the Cartel can thrive. If it is possible to escape the cartelization of culture, political economics, cartography, and academia, it can only be achieved through a new and emergent phenomenology. This phenomenology would involve thinking outside of carceral entertainment and consumerism; essentially, this would require the recognition of the possibility of non-cartelized thought. It is unclear whether a post-Cartel system is possible.

Both *Gravity’s Rainbow* and *Infinite Jest* suggest a progression of Cartel systems; in the former, Pynchon creates a sense of historical progression from the original Calvinist conspiracy,

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[56] Ibid.

to the nation-state model of political cartels, and finally to the postwar Cartel that is not reducible to political entities but instead married to capitalism and the commodification of individuals. In *Infinite Jest* Wallace expands on Pynchon's Cartel model to illustrate the primary condition of incarceration through entertainment. The locus of power is within the mental state of the individual; here, Slothrop is seemingly free to pursue his Rocketman fantasies, while the stimulation of pleasure caused by viewing the Infinite Jest tape locks the viewer into a catatonic state of euphoria. In both cases, the Cartel succeeds in removing threats to the System: the Cartel tolerates the emergence of a Counterforce in *Gravity's Rainbow* because it knows that any resistance will be farcical and allow the Counterforce members to think they are "sticking it to the man." Wallace extends this in *Infinite Jest* to acknowledge the impossibility of any Counterforce arising; even assuming the separatist cell obtains the Entertainment, it would only represent a transfer of institutional power where the Cartel continues its project despite political upheaval. This chapter has traced the genealogy of cartelized power and its influence on spatial configurations through the latter half of the twentieth century; I will now turn to examine how these configurations give rise to cartographies of violence and alternative institutional power in the contemporary encyclopedic novel.

Chapter 3

Cartographies of Violence:

Power, Space, and Globalism in the 21st Century

In the previous chapter, I examined the emergence of the Cartel – that is, the irreducible and polysystemic ensemble of institutional power that extends beyond any individual political or economic institution. To extend this line of thought with the emergence of globalism, I will now turn to Roberto Bolaño's novel *2666* and Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings.* Unlike *Gravity's Rainbow* and *Infinite Jest*, these novels move the locus of space from American culture and ideology to the borders and margins of the Americas. Similarly to Silko's *Almanac of the Dead,* these two novels seek to establish a new cartography that disrupts margins and centers. Power shifts from the "legitimate" operations of corporate conglomerates to the drug cartels of Mexico and Jamaica. Beyond the Cartel, the systems of violence that emerge in the late-20th to 21st centuries suggest a return to more direct forms of punishment. Foucault, in describing the evolution of punishment, remarks that "at the beginning of the nineteenth century, then, the great spectacle of physical punishment disappeared; the tortured body was avoided; the theatrical representation of pain was excluded from punishment. The age of sobriety in punishment had begun."[57] The disappearance of the spectacle, and the replacement of public displays of punishment by less direct means—such as the Panopticon—became preferable to the State because it required much less direct attention and energy. In these novels there is a return to more directly coercive forms of punishment that requires the threat of physical violence. The key distinction between this system and the Cartel, or "They," from previous chapters is that the

[57] *Discipline and Punish* 14.

power structures of *2666* and *A Brief History of Seven Killings* specifically target marginalized groups. These groups—such as the maquiladora workers in the former novel, and the inhabitants of the Kingston slums in the latter—live in carceral states not because of an unseen power, like Pynchon's They, but because of the urgent presence of systemic violence.

The emergence of neoliberal globalization requires the consideration of new cartographies of power. Doreen Massey, in her seminal paper "A Global Sense of Place," describes a consequence of globalization known as "time-space compression":

> As well as querying the ethnocentricity of the idea of time-space compression and its current acceleration, we also need to ask about its causes: what is it that determines out degrees of mobility, that influences the sense we have of space and place? Time-space compression refers to movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching-out of social relations, and to our experience of all this.

Massey is concerned with the inequalities inherent in the concept of time-space compression, which determines the ease of global mobility between classes, nations, and groups of people. Bolaño and James describe two ways in which power systems intersect with time-space compression to maintain a sense of inescapability in marginalized communities. First, Bolaño offers a fictionalized account of the Ciudad Juárez *feminicidio*, where hundreds of young female factory workers are kidnapped, raped, and murdered over the course of several years. Second, James describes the movement of Nina Burgess from the heart of Kingston to Montego Bay, and ultimately to New York City. Bolaño describes the inability of geographical escape—that is, the economic status of the maquiladora workers prevents them from emigrating to safer areas where they might not have to worry about becoming a corpse in the Sonoran Desert. Meanwhile, James' depiction of Nina suggests that despite her ability for global movement, she is still unable

to escape the systematic violence which rises to confront her. I will now turn to a closer examination of the cartographies of violence in Bolaño's *2666.*

"The Part About the Crimes": ***2666's*** **Heart of Violence**

Bolaño begins *2666* as a detective novel, although not about the crimes committed around the Sonoran Desert. Instead, an intimate circle of literary critics search for Benno von Archimbold, a quasi-mythical German author and apparent recluse. The novel's sequence of events creates a loose sense of free association – the critics, on the trail of Archimboldi, meet Amalfitano, a Chilean professor of philosophy in Mexico. Amalfitano's daughter meets Oscar Fate, an American reporter who visits Santa Teresa to ostensibly cover a boxing match. While in Santa Teresa, Fate becomes increasingly interested in reporting on the murders he learns about. It is only after Fate's section of the novel—about 350 pages into the novel—that the details of the crimes are described and investigated. This section, "The Part About the Crimes," is the longest and most encyclopedic stretch of the novel. Bolaño describes the activities of the Santa Teresa police investigators, and accordingly adopts a police report style to announce the crimes to the reader. Typically, Bolaño reports the name of the victim, where her body was discovered, what clothes she was wearing, how she was raped, and how she was killed.

Over the course of nearly 300 pages, dozens of such cases are described in gruesome detail. This has the paradoxical effect of both normalizing the murders as a nearly everyday occurrence and also horrifying the reader by the sheer quantity and brutality of the murders. Bolaño, after his first entry into the encyclopedic compendium of the murders, describes others who might not have been discovered:

> The name of the first victim was Esperanza Gómez Saldaña and she was thirteen. Maybe for the sake of convenience, maybe because she was the first to be killed

> in 1993, she heads the list. Although surely there were other girls and women who died in 1992. Other girls and women who didn't make it onto the list or were never found, who were buried in unmarked graves in the desert or whose ashes were scattered in the middle of the night, when not even the person scattering them knew where he was, what place he had come to.[58]

Bolaño, in describing the women who have not been and may never be discovered, illustrates a system of violence where women, like the killers themselves, become a monolithic entity. The motivation for the killings are not clearly defined; perhaps a killing was related to the drug cartel, or simply a domestic dispute gone horrifically wrong. This effectively eliminates the necessity for motivation at all – the violence here is no longer merely polysystemic, ranging from the domestic sphere to the organized cartel. Rather, it is *itself* a system that not only defies explanation but requires none. The system extends beyond criminology into the cultural environment and is entirely dependent on the lack of resources and mobility of the women of Santa Teresa. The killings challenge ideas of what place means and what determines placehood; the bodies that are found are tied to the emergent space of neoliberal globalism, but they can also exist within non-places, as I will examine. The kinds of spaces that appear in *2666* cannot exist on their own; rather, they are dependent on political-historical, cultural, and ideological contexts. Furthermore, spaces are dependent on *each other* if they are to be defined; thus, the spaces and non-spaces that constitute the system of violence in *2666* are necessarily coextensive.

Despite the quasi-parochial nature of the murders—all of which occur in Santa Teresa and its environs—the violent system set in place exists largely due to neoliberal economics and an increasingly globalized sense of place. Velasco and Schmidt argue that "Bolaño explicitly points to the structure of neoliberal economics – what Alicia Gaspar de Alba refers to as the

[58] Roberto Bolaño, *2666,* trans. Natasha Wimmer (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008), 353-54.

structures of dominance that oppress and commodify women—that makes it possible for a city to be both the 'murder capital of the world' and a 'model of globalization.'"[59] Beyond the spectacle of the murders lies the neoliberal project that, while not diminishing the horror of the murders, makes such a phenomenon less surprising. Guadalupe Taylor describes the bodies of maquiladora workers: "despite their dreams of becoming independent and self-sufficient, maquiladora workers have turned into abject bodies, women who are not 'subjects' but unworthy objects, and for that reason disposable."[60] The rationale here is that neoliberal capitalism *designates* these women as disposable, so in *2666* the culprit becomes not only the murderers themselves, but the maquiladora and its place within this global network. Bolaño rarely describes the maquiladoras themselves, although in describing the death of a twelve-year-old he relates that "both her mother and father worked at Madéras de Mexico, a maquiladora that built colonial and rustic-style furniture that was exported to the United States and Canada" (412). From this, the reader learns both that maquiladora labor is generationally-transmitted, and that often this work involves supplying resources to wealthy nations. Thus, space-time compression allows maquiladora workers to support an international economy while simultaneously preventing any mobility for the workers themselves. This lack of mobility coupled with the abjection of the maquiladora worker's body creates a violent system that—while allowed to take root from neoliberal policies—is primarily cultural and not reducible to a single cause or phenomenon.

The cultural elements of the killings form at the intersection of the creation of maquiladoras through global markets and the subsequent immigration to the U.S.-Mexico border,

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[59] Juan Velasco and Tanya Schmidt, "Mapping a Geography of Hell: Evil, Neoliberalism, and the Femicides in Roberto Bolaño's 2666." *Latin American Literary Review* 42, no. 83 (2014): 107.
[60] Guadalupe Taylor, "The Abject Bodies of the Maquiladora Female Workers on a Globalized Border." *Race, Gender & Class* 17, no. 3/4 (2010): 351-52.

and the expectations of traditional Mexican family life. Laura Barberán Reinares, in discussing Rosa Linda Fregoso's book *MeXicana Encounters*, notes that

> The official discourse initially constructed the victims of the femicides among the US-Mexican border as naïve or irresponsible individuals who transgressed the normal order: in Mexico, the place of a respectable woman is still within her family, be that with her father or her husband, so those who dare leave the sanctity of the familial unit in search of work and more economic independence pose a threat and, in a way, deserve their fate for contravening established norms.[61]

The attitude toward the victims here is largely a response to the shift in individual economic power. Women who now have obtain a small degree of agency—even though this usually means submitting to another economic power system—are seen as non-traditionalists, and from here it becomes easy for the system of violence to identify them as little more than whores or prostitutes who willingly invite the danger that encompasses them. Integration of victim-blaming into the duration and scale of the murders allows for the perpetuation of a violent system because it is a sanitizing force – it eliminates the women who are stereotyped as promiscuous while securing a male-dominated familial model by creating severe, unfathomably consequences for those who seek to leave the traditional model.

The cultural conservatism that is promoted by the system of violence is complemented by Santa Teresa's (or its real-world cognate, Ciudad Juárez's) proximity to the United States border. This creates an illusion of mobility that is often denied in Bolaño's account of the murders. In describing the murder of Gabriela Morón at the hands of her boyfriend, Bolaño suggests that the murder was due to her refusal to emigrate to the United States: "Gabriela Morón, on the other hand, had never crossed the border, and after finding work and Nip-Mex, where she was well

[61] Laura Barberán Reinares, "Globalized Philomels: State Patriarchy, Transnational Capital, and the Fermicides on the US-Mexican Border in Roberto Bolaño's 2666." *South Atlantic Review*75, no. 4 (2010): 60.

liked by her bosses, which meant she had hopes of a quick promotion and a raise, her interest in seeking her fortune across the border dropped practically to zero" (390). While Gabriela's employment situation is certainly not lavish, it provides a modicum of stability whereas her employment opportunities are not guaranteed across the border. Bolaño also describes the difficulty of emigrating, as Gabriela's boyfriend and murderer "had already made two attempts [to emigrate] and had been sent back each time by the American border police, which hadn't diminished his desire to try his luck for a third time" (390). Not only would Gabriela's prospects be uncertain in America, her ability to cross the border is dubious. Gabriela's rejection of her boyfriend's plan suggests another rebellion against a patriarchal model that must be met with extreme violence. Bolaño's depiction of these murders creates the sense of a forced parochialism in the Mexican borderlands – the presence of the United States, both physically and economically, is always present, despite the lack of mobility regarding the maquiladora workers.

The spatial and cartographical elements of the Santa Teresa killings are compounded by the nature of the deaths themselves in relation to the map – some of the bodies are discovered almost immediately, some are not recovered for months or years, and some, as Bolaño surmises, can never be discovered. Death itself becomes unmappable. Grant Farred points out that

> What *2666*'s death scene violently precludes is the unknowability of the place of death . . . There can be, in this maquiladoran horror that eviscerates any trace of the place of death, no place of eternal rest because the women's death constitutes a fatal place—the neoliberal state—and time that is unto itself, unto the unknowable death alone.[62]

[62] Grant Farred, "The Impossible Closing: Death, Neoliberalism, and the Postcolonial in Bolaño's 2666." *Modern Fiction Studies* 56, no. 4 (2010): 701.

Just as neoliberal globalization becomes unmappable in its political, economic, and cultural influence, here the deaths of countless women are spatially disconnected from their prior lives, and as Farred argues, death becomes unintelligible. The killings in Santa Teresa are set against the atrocities of the holocaust, as the reader later learns that the elusive author Archimboldi—whose name is really Hans Reiter—served as a German soldier during World War II. Reiter, who is sympathetic towards the Jews he encounters, is nonetheless charged with burying their corpses. When his men are digging and discover corpses that are previously buried, Reiter recollects that "each time someone is found I repeated the same thing. Leave it alone. Cover it up. Go dig somewhere else. Remember the idea isn't to find things, it's to *not* find them" (764). The mass accumulation of corpses poses a logistical problem for the Germans, but it also signifies the spatial disconnect between the corpse—who is not *meant* to be found—and the person who was once alive. The spatial disassociation of the corpse is the final stage of abjection, and in Santa Teresa this abjection is necessary to validate the systematic violence as an inherently cartographical enterprise.

Mapping the corpses of Santa Teresa quickly becomes an impossible exercise – many of them are hidden so that they will never be discovered, and the classification of the corpses also proves difficult because of the impracticality of discerning whether the murders were a result of domestic violence or an organized cartel. The distinction and details of the deaths become a matter of forensic investigation where the immediate response is abjection. Julia Kristeva, in her seminal *Powers of Horror,* describes confronting the corpse as "show[ing] me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death. There, I am at the border of my

condition as a living being."[63] Here again a cartographical boundary appears – a border, not simply between life and death, but between the intelligible self and the unintelligible refuse. If the maquiladora worker is already abject by eschewing traditional familial and economic roles, then the corpses discovered in Santa Teresa represent the absolute attainment of abjection. The killings and disappearances are themselves cartographical mutilations; it falls to the police investigators to establish a link between the corpse and the person, sort out the details of the murder, and attempt to explain the motivation behind the killing. Bolaño's encyclopedic detachment from the crimes coupled with their repetition creates a sense of place that, while imbricated with the systematic violence produced by neoliberal capitalism, becomes its own abject space.

The abject spaces of *2666* are, in a sense, *non-places*; the victims' bodies are often found in the outskirts of Santa Teresa and the surrounding Sonoran Desert – they become waste in a wasteland. And yet they form the placeness of Santa Teresa through which the city attracts international attention. Marc Augé argues that despite the polarity of place and non-place, they constantly encounter one another: "place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten" (79). While Santa Teresa is known as the female murder capital of the world, the abject space is lost in the notion of the spectacle – that is, the sheer quantity and frequency of these homicides. However, the discovery of the bodies, as Bolaño documents them, creates an intimate link between the non-

[63] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 12.

space where the body is found and the abject space which often denies the corpse personhood. Many of the corpses are difficult to identify, as Bolaño relates:

> The body of another woman was found in the desert, a few yards from the highway between Santa Teresa and Villaviciosa. The body, which was in an advanced state of decomposition, was facedown . . . the killer or killers didn't bother to dig a grave. Nor did they bother to venture too far into the desert. They just dragged the body a few yards and left it there" (391).

This account is typical for many of the victims, and it suggests the overlap of abject spaces and non-places. Here, the victim is found at a desert highway, which constitutes a non-place as it only exists on the periphery of the cities. The nature of discovery involves a transformation from non-space to abject space – the corpse becomes a locus of horror and revulsion.

Abject space in *2666* becomes paradoxical in its placeness – it is, at once, both a non-place and ubiquitous. The collective consciousness of Santa Teresa can think of little else the murders, and yet the murder sites are isolated and amputated from the city itself. Additionally, abject space denies the bodies personhood, thus severing—often permanently—the woman who was murdered and the corpse that is discovered. In describing another killing, Bolaño relates that

> [T]he body of an unidentified woman turned up next to the Santa Teresa-Cananea highway. The dead woman must have been about twenty-five and she had a congenital dislocation of the right hip. And yet, no one missed her, and even after the details of her deformity were published in the press, no one came too the police with new information that might lead to an identification (466).

The woman here is not merely dead, but completely erased from any spatial relationship. The police, as well as the reader, will never know who this victim was. Here is the abject corpse in perhaps its purest form; the discovered corpse is horrifying not because of its resemblance to a person, but because it is totally disconnected from intelligibility – it cannot be known who the

corpse actually was, and so the corpse is not merely severed from a historical personhood, it *cannot* be a person.

Abjection, then, works to marginalize the marginal in *2666*. Bolaño's descriptions of the killings—often themselves detached in an attempt to approximate clinical objectivity—transform the maquiladora worker, an already marginalized figure, into the most absolute form of marginalization – the unknown corpse. In describing the kind of violence that is perpetuated in the novel, Sol Peláez notes the significance of "minor violence":

> In the case of *2666*, this horror fully emerges not just because of the narration of classical 'political' violence, but from giving an account of what seems to be minor violence. Political violence—i.e., war, mass murder, slavery, political assassination, torture, treason, dictatorship, terrorism—has been a visible problem . . . Violence against women entails extreme brutality and sadism, yet it is not seen in all its visibility; that is, it is not registered in everyday life as *important* violence, or even *as* violence.[64]

Bolaño balances the crimes committed in Santa Teresa with the atrocities perpetrated during the holocaust, and in doing so creates a "destabilized cartography," where Peláez argues that the deterritorialization of violence by minor violence "allows us to map violence in a territory, in its history and its singularity, and in relation to other violences; and on the other it lets us destabilize this cartography by refusing to give us a map with a fixed central point" (35). Thus, Bolaño does not simply describe the unmappability of these events of minor violence, he instead levels any scale or hierarchy of violence. This is apparent in his account of the crimes – the victim of domestic homicide is treated equally to the victim of cartel violence. Bolaño, in dismantling the ways in which some violence is privileged over others in terms of importance, also dismantles

[64] Sol Peláez, "Counting Violence: Roberto Bolaño and 2666." *Chasqui, 43*(2): 34.

the systems that perpetuate this violence. Instead, the reader is left with violence itself as a system, but one that defies categorization or hierarchy.

Peláez's recognition of the resistance to centrality in *2666* reveals the major dilemma of the novel; it is an interlacing of detective narratives that end in failure and can never be solved. The literary critics will never meet Archimboldi, and the crimes in Santa Teresa will never be brought to an intelligible resolution. Bolaño also teases a greater mystery to be found through the Santa Teresa killings: "no one pays attention to these killings, but the secret of the world is hidden in them" (348). The seeming apathy towards the killings is later reinforced when, in describing the final corpse found in "The Part About the Crimes," Bolaño remarks that "both this case and the previous case were closed after three days off generally halfhearted investigations. The Christmas holidays in Santa Teresa were celebrated in the usual fashion. There were *posadas,* piñatas were smashed, tequila and beer were drunk" (633). Bolaño, then, creates an *anti*-detective narrative where the crimes are not depicted as the center of political violence but instead as normal occurrences that work to reestablish what normalcy means. The bodies that are discovered are not being searched for but emerge as the refuse of the violent system. Bolaño subverts the detective narrative—which is inherently dependent on some central culprit or phenomenon—and denies both that the center of the mystery could be revealed and that this center exists in the first place. The system of violence present in *2666* is unique because there cannot be a central organizing principle.

In resisting centrality, Bolaño conceptualizes Santa Teresa as an anti-center which cannot be self-defining; instead, the city relies on outside agents and forces for the creation of its identity as a place. Andrew McCann observes that the character Espinoza, one of the literary critics searching for the elusive Archimboldi, arrives in Santa Teresa and "seems to drift into a

grey zone where his intimacy with a working-class Mexican girl brushes up against the sex tourism that his prior existence in Madrid has in fact anticipated," and McCann argues that "in this scenario the cosmopolitan intellectual and the denationalized, subaltern woman are two sides of the same coin: the freedom of the one assumes the servitude of the other."[65] The attitudes that Espinoza imports to Santa Teresa are not very remote from the same attitudes that view subaltern violence as permissible. Bolaño describes Espinoza's daily routine with Rebeca, the working-class girl: "in the mornings Espinoza would pick Rebeca up at her house. He'd park the car out front, have a coffee . . . then the girl and her brother would come out of the house and Espinoza would open the passenger door for them, without a word, as if they'd had the same routine for years" (149). Espinoza adopts the routine of assisting Rebeca with her market stall which culminates in their sexual encounters. He essentially procures her sexual favors in exchange for both his help in setting up the stall and his custom in purchasing several rugs. Espinoza's mobility is also implicit his pending return to Madrid, despite the development of this routine. His interactions with Rebeca reveals attitudes towards the subaltern that are not localizable but transgress borders, nationalities, and circles; Espinoza, who is an esteemed professor at Madrid, displays the same expectations of how these women should be treated as the cartels or the patriarchally-obsessed boyfriends and husbands that commit the murders. Although Espinoza is not explicitly violent at any point, he exports his behavior and expectations from metropolitan Madrid and enacts these fantasies in Santa Teresa because it is a space wherein sexual exploitation becomes permissible. The city, then, is not a self-contained system where violence is

[65] Andrew McCann, "Discrepant Cosmopolitanism and the Contemporary Novel: Reading the Inhuman in Christos Tsiolkas's "Dead Europe" and Roberto Bolaño's 2666." *Antipodes* 24, no. 2 (2010): 138.

localized to the immediate cartography; Santa Teresa is instead constituted by a sense of permissibility that is imported from cultures that are deemed more affluent or intellectual.

Although Espinoza's relationship with Rebeca only obliquely encounters the sexual violence surrounding Santa Teresa, he and his literary cadre are not exempt from more explicit representations of this violence. Prior to their expedition to Santa Teresa, Espinoza and his literary friends Pelletier and Norton, in a xenophobic outburst, violently beat a Pakistani cab driver nearly to death in London. Bolaño's language is overtly sexual in this encounter: "Pelletier felt as if he had come. Espinoza felt the same, to a slightly different degree. Norton, who was staring at them without seeing them in the dark, seemed to have experienced multiple orgasms" (74). What occurs here is not sexual violence in the same sense as the rape of the Santa Teresa victims, but instead the notion of violence itself as inherently sexual. Thus, Bolaño offers an interpretation of sexual economy that is transacted through violence, and this violence is legitimated through both self-gratification and the understanding that the victim is a disposable "other." Hermann Herlinghaus relates this sexual economy to a "pharmacological" understanding of addiction:

> The "Critics," following their brutal behavior, enter a period of remorse which they succeed to repress. In the end, they feel that theirs is the pivotal space, the core of a sublime and enlightened humanity. A moral system, catalyzed into a deeper drive in the shape of an addiction, speaks out of their subconscious that can make them forget the ugly "means" that are sometimes an inescapable part of existence.[66]

Espinoza and company are not, then, separate or tangential from the crimes that occur in Santa Teresa; on the contrary, they are implicit in a system of sexual violence that transcends

[66] Hermann Herlinghaus, "Placebo Intellectuals in the Wake of Cosmopolitanism: A "Pharmacological" Approach to Roberto Bolaño's Novel 2666." *The Global South* 5, no. 1 (2011): 116.

boundaries. While Bolaño structures the majority of *2666* around the literal crimes that are documented in Santa Teresa, attitudes surrounding this violence are repressed through both the "moral system" that the critics refine as well as their global mobility. Violence is not, then, localized to the city, but a symptom of a global interplay of irreducible forces.

Bolaño's apparent search for an answer to the violence in *2666* is one that is certainly doomed to failure, and he is aware of this. Like the Cartel of *Gravity's Rainbow* and *Infinite Jest*, the culprit is not a single mass-murderer that emerges as a freak occurrence. Rather, there is an ensemble of forces—both institutional and otherwise—that make the violence of *2666* permissible. However, the interplay of neoliberal capitalism, cultural traditions and expectations, and border politics not only maps a cartography of control that disproportionally targets subaltern groups—here, working-class Mexican women—but also participates in the creation of abject space by designating their corpses to occupy the non-spaces in the surrounding Sonoran Desert. The burgeoning system of globalism allows for the participation of the maquiladora workers in an international project of capitalism, but in turn strips the workers of their agency and mobility. I have demonstrated how global systems of capital work to constrain and localize the mobility of subaltern populations in *2666;* I will now turn to Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings* to examine how transnational mobility, when permitted, is still inseparable from the violent systems that allow and require this mobility.

Microborders and the Reproduction of Space in *A Brief History of Seven Killings*

The first section of Marlon James' 2014 novel *A Brief History of Seven Killings* addresses the violent crimes carried out by the Jamaican posses in Kingston during the political tumult of the 1970s. Contrary to the violent system of *2666*, which localizes the crimes that are symptomatic of neoliberal globalization, *A Brief History* exhibits a radiation of violence out from

the center of Kingston. As the novel progresses, James leaves Kingston, and eventually Jamaica, to illustrate the extent of the Jamaican drug syndicate in New York City and Miami. Rather than reproducing global attitudes of violence in local spaces--like the phenomenon of the *feminicidio* in *2666*—James instead demonstrates how spaces of violence are reproduced across borders to fulfill the purpose of the drug cartel. However, if the Jamaican posses are using Kingston as a template to emulate in the United States, it becomes apparent that the city fails to serve as the center of this system because Kingston itself is constantly undergoing metamorphoses that alter the microborders within the city. Microborders, as I define them, are the global-political conflicts that are miniaturized to form the boundaries of neighborhoods and local places of belonging. These boundaries are constantly being rewritten through the shifts in political power – in James' novel, the struggle between the People's National Party and the Jamaica Labour Party serve as a cartographical palimpsest that determines strategic alliances—both local and international—as well as the local parameters of neighborhood configurations. Thus, international influence on the Jamaican government manifests itself in the local sense of place, and this constantly shifting sense of place is reproduced overseas in the neighborhoods of New York City and Miami.

Institutional power in *A Brief History*, while having the ability to forge local and international place-identities, is not the cohesive superpower that is present in *Gravity's Rainbow* or *Infinite Jest*. Rather than a competent They that plans every minute detail with a goal of absolute dominance, the cartelized power of *A Brief History* instead demonstrates a decoherence in which domination of the subaltern is an emergent phenomenon—individual domination is not the goal here, as a paranoid Slothrop might think, but rather a necessary measure in the pursuit of global political power. In the novel, Barry Diflorio, a CIA agent in Kingston during the political turmoil of 1976, remarks that "shit is blowing up all over the world. Chaos and disorder, disorder

and chaos . . . meanwhile, shit of a totally different kind blew the fuck up in Yugoslavia. And NATO boy didn't even know. He's the head of the fucking CIA and he didn't even know."[67] In their attempts to establish political footholds around the globe, these government agencies are at the mercy of unknown variables. The Cartel, if it can still be recognized as a singular hegemonic entity, begins to become decentralized. What emerges in place of the omniscient, omnipotent They is what Emily Apter refers to as "oneworldedness," a global system that still operates on a basis of paranoia. Apter argues that

> This is a globalism in which there are no front lines in war, in which civilian and military cultures are interchangeable . . . in this picture, as the world expands to include everybody, it paradoxically shrinks into a claustrophobic all-inclusiveness. Paranoid oneworldedness obeys a basic law of entropy that posits that increased disordered diminishes available energy within the confines of a closed system.[68]

This world system relies on a "connect-the-dots" approach that Apter describes as necessary in a paranoid's perception that "everything's connected." But this model of globalism does not point a finger at some shadowy superstructure that wishes to control the population via its institutions; here, like in James' novel, it is global space itself that forms the stage wherein geopolitical struggles take place. Thus, global space itself has become cartelized – like a palimpsest, the variables of global domination are always shifting, but the local effects result in the suffering of subaltern groups.

In *A Brief History,* the global stage does not belong only to the political agencies that seek to influence Jamaica's election, but also to Jamaica's cultural representation. The narrative style of the novel separates each section by the point of view of different characters, and James

[67] Marlon James, *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2014), 314.
[68] Emily Apter, "On Oneworldedness: Or Paranoia as a World System," *American Literary History* 18, no. 2 (2006): 369-70.

creates a narrative web surrounding the legendary "Singer." Like Bolaño's Archimboldi, the Singer represents the quasi-mythical cultural center of the *A Brief History.* Although never mentioned by name, The Singer is reggae superstar Bob Marley, who both represents the cultural identity of Jamaica on the international stage and is also inseparable from the political turmoil surrounding the 1976 election. Many of the subplots of the novel are set into motion by the attempted assassination of The Singer, orchestrated by Josey Wales and his cadre of gang members. The Singer is representative of the cultural capital of Jamaica—indeed, he is the international face of Jamaican culture. Throughout the novel James criticizes the search for the "essence" of Jamaica; American journalist Alex Pierce becomes interested in The Singer, and Sheri-Marie Harrison notes that "Believing The Singer is key to accessing 'the real Jamaica' Alex falsely imagines that Jamaican realness can only be found in hyper-local sites like downtown ghettos or dancehalls, ignoring completely the presence and influence of operatives from a government intelligence agency from his own country."[69] James defies the notion of "the real Jamaica" in the sense that such a concept could exist in the first place. Globalized culture promotes the necessity of an essential local culture; tourists visit places like Jamaica so that they might experience this "hyper-locality" that is promised through images such as Bob Marley and the reggae movement. However, a local sense of place is abolished through the same means in which tourists are indoctrinated with a sense of global culture. The instant a locality is represented on the global stage through a cultural medium—like *A Brief History's* Singer—that sense of locality is already distorted.James reveals that there is no true "local" Jamaica, that the very idea is impossible because of global interactions, influences, and expectations. As Tim Cresswell suggests,

[69] Sheri-Marie Harrison, "Excess in *A Brief History of Seven Killings*." *Post45* (2015).

> [P]aradoxically, in order for localization to occur the place has to project itself onto the global scale of capital and modernity. This is not simply the substitution of place-based authenticity for global appropriation but a recognition that place can play a strategic role in a world of hypermobility" (119).

Like the projection of a cultural "essence" of Jamaica through the medium of The Singer, Kingston reproduces its criminal-political syndicate in America by establishing territories in New York City and Miami, where Josey Wales can keep an eye on the operations even from across the seas. If The Singer represent the distortion and reproduction of cultural capital across the globe, then Josey Wales wields the political and economic capital of the Jamaican drug syndicate. The gangsters who work for Josey Wales' posse are allowed a degree of global mobility – something that was not available to the disenfranchised maquiladora workers in *2666*. However, the global movement in *A Brief History* merely reproduces the local; the gangsters in New York and Miami never really escape Kingston, as their movement is entirely lateral. As Josey Wales ponders, "I still working my brain on how Jamaicans can come to a ghetto five times as big and with tenement three time as high and think they're better off. What, nobody know the difference between a good thing and a bigger bad thing?" (570). He understands that for the drug cartel to be successful, it must reproduce the kinds of places where the drug trade thrives. The ghettos of New York are not a result of the drug trade but instead a prerequisite for it. The territories are still being redrawn, alliances are being broken and reforged, but the true power of the drug cartel is in its ability to recreate the local microborders and territories of Kingston in America.

What arises, then, is the contact between the "legitimate" cartel of American imperialism and the illegitimate drug syndicates that form satellite neighborhoods around the metropolitan

areas. By challenging the nation-state model of globalized hegemony, Harrison argues that the novel

> Inquire(s) into the limits of the national framework. If understanding problems of sovereignty solely in national terms works to depoliticize larger and transnational forces of disempowerment such as uneven international trade agreements or discriminatory immigration and labor policies, it also works to obstruct the recognition of the various commonalities among fledgling nations, the world over, that have never really been independent of the influence of larger industrialized nations such as the United States.

What is at stake here is a model that relies on globalization as merely the expansion of national projects; James instead offers a model of globalization that does not rely on national boundaries to operate – in fact, it necessarily erases them. The distinction between "developing country" and "developed country" is abandoned here through the production of localized hegemonic space which is constantly being reordered through developments between the posses. These local spaces demonstrate the inescapability of Kingston: as Tristan Phillips, an incarcerated posse member, remarks "haha. As if me can leave Ranking Dons. My life do stay like yours, Pierce. People like me, our life write out before we, without asking we permission" (568). Unlike the mode of incarceration in *2666,* which prevented any global mobility whatever, James describes the illusion of global mobility, where gangsters and non-gang members alike are perennially controlled by the micropolitics of Kingston's drug syndicate.

Central to *A Brief History*'s narrative is Nina Burgess, a Kingston native who constantly seeks an escape from the violent systems that occupy Jamaica. During the novel's fifteen years, Nina moves from Kington to Montego Bay, and ultimately to New York City in an attempt to evade Josey Wales. Her encounter with Josey Wales, retold near the end of the novel in Nina's stream of consciousness, elevates him to an omnipresent figure synonymous with the Jamaican

posse itself: "*But Kingston Small. Jamaica small but Kingston smaller him going hunt like a dog that must be why he was sniffing me he's going to hunt me down and shoot me like a dog tonight . . . Don't turn on the radio, don't turn on the TV he will find you through the TV he will smell you out and kill you*" (652). For Nina, Josey Wales is not merely the head of the Storm Posse, but he represents the very system of violence that holds her and everyone else in Kingston captive. Here, like in *2666*, Doreen Massey's notion of space-time compression is at play, although to opposite ends. Rather than limiting the individual to a certain geographic location—such as the immobility of the maquiladora workers in Santa Teresa—space-time compression in *A Brief History* instead works to *extend* localities so that Kingston becomes inescapable no matter where Nina, or the Jamaican posse, might take root. Massey points out in her article that

> The 'time-space compression' which is involved in producing and reproducing the daily lives of the comfortably-off in First World societies - not just their own travel but the resources they draw on, from all over the world, to feed their lives - may entail environmental consequences, or hit constraints, which will limit the lives of others before their own. We need to ask, in other words, whether our relative mobility and power over mobility and communication entrenches the spatial imprisonment of other groups.

James critiques the homogeneity of "First World" societies in his novel; rather than serving as a land of opportunity for Jamaican immigrants, the immigrants find the same barriers and microborders reproduced in the ghetto spaces of America. For James' characters, mobility *is* imprisonment, which is achieved through the reproduction of spaces of control.

When surveying the reproduction of so-called Third World spaces within First World countries, something approaching a malignant rhizome arises. As Deleuze and Guattari argue in *The Thousand Plateaus,*

> The rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots . . . the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is

> always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight. It is tracings that must be put on the map, not the opposite. In contrast to centered (even polycentric) systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system" (21).

Thus, the global phenomenon of spatial reproduction in *A Brief History* assimilates several elements of the rhizome: it is acentered, constructed, and constantly in a state of modification from its internal microborders. In the previous chapters, I explored the ways in which rhizomatic space challenges the hegemonic or "treelike" configurations of space. Here, James puts forward a model through which the rhizomatic expansion of space ultimately serves the needs of the Jamaican drug cartel – while challenging the "legitimate" dominating force of American consumerism, the cartel seeks to reestablish the same hierarchies that are present in Kingston. The pseudo-rhizomatic duplication of space, coupled with Massey's space-time compression, necessarily abolishes the distinction between First and Third Worlds – the cartography becomes much more complex. Jamaica itself, as an island, imprints many "islands" within the United States; these communities and neighborhoods, while produced seemingly rhizomatically, are still maintained and organized through a hierarchical structure that globalism makes ubiquitous.

During the process of spatial duplication—which also duplicates contingent spaces and microborders—abject spaces are also duplicated in a manner that maintains a strict hierarchical structure. In *A Brief History,* Josey Wales' confrontation with the abject in a New York ghetto sparks his murderous rampage within the crack house. Josey describes the house: "like certain house in downtown Kingston where if you look hard, you can see it used to be posh. Three floor but the steps take you up to the second floor. All sort of shit and garbage and what look like a dog scratching himself at the bottom" (574-75). Josey then encounters one of the crack house's inhabitants: "I turn around and smell him first, sweat, shit and vomit. Newspaper chunk popping

all over his hair. Black man in a coat and scratching him left leg. The other hand holding a gun at my face" (575). The gun is actually a squirt gun filled with urine, and when Josey realizes the abjection of the mock-robbery, he proceeds to slaughter the people inside the crack house. In this scene James clearly illustrates Josey's disconnection between his figurehead status within the cartel and the abject spaces that are produced by the cartel's activities. Josey's confrontation with the abject in *A Brief History* is entirely unlike the abject spaces in *2666*; whereas in Bolaño's novel, forces like neoliberal capitalism and cultural expectations are entirely separate from the abject spaces they produce – the bodies left behind are always within a marginal space. In James' novel, Josey Wales experiences both the disgust at confronting the abject as well as indignation at the failure of the people to recognize his authority. As Kristeva suggests in *Powers of Horror,* "essentially different from "uncanniness," more violent, too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a memory" (5). Josey's failure to recognize the abject space here as a necessary product of the cartel demonstrates his own inescapability from the abject. Even as the leader of the Storm Posse, Josey's global mobility is limited to the spaces that are created by the drug cartel.

Josey Wales' position in *A Brief History* is thus that of a false center of power; while he certainly wields immense influence in the cartographical makeup of the cartel, determining the microborders and business affairs on a transnational scope, he is ultimately disposable. His death in prison obviously does not dissolve the drug cartel. Much like the decentralization of space through which the cartel operates, there must also be a decentering of power. Josey's power, then, is *transformative*; as Kevin Jon Heller remarks of Foucault's Power/Knowledge, "'Power is everywhere': because power 'is nothing other than a certain modification . . . of a series of clashes which constitute the social body,' *power is, for Foucault, coterminous with social*

change."[70] Unlike the violent system in *2666*, which emerges from global forces and is localized in Santa Teresa, James in *A Brief History* illustrates the branching out of local spaces, and the actions of Josey Wales and his cadre are not insignificant. Indeed, Josey's attempted assassination of The Singer establishes much of the political struggles that make up much of the novel. However, the actions of the cartel in the novel do not simply suggests a struggle between legitimate—i.e. neoliberal capitalist—cartels and the illegitimate drug trade, but instead suggest a total network of power that is produced from the disintegration of a singular "Cartel." The all-seeing They of *Gravity's Rainbow* has fragmented, but the power produced does not disappear in a vacuum. Rather, power itself is a cartography that constantly shifts and finds new niches.

The only constant that emerges within these relations of power is that they consistently target subaltern groups. In addition to creating a cultural-aesthetic hierarchy like the model I examined in the first chapter, here it determines both the literal and mental spaces that one is permitted to occupy. In the novel, as Nina Burgess adopts several identities, she is unable to escape from the psychological terror that Josey Wales has inflicted upon her. Similarly, she is also confronted with the physical violence that has erupted due to the killing of Josey's son; while she works as a nurse in New York City, she is confronted by a woman whose husband was shot in the uproar of violence. The woman remarks to Nina that "you lucky you manage to run far away from Jamdown, but for the rest of we Jamdown follow right back o' we" (635). Thus, it is not Josey Wales who creates the power of the cartel; it is rather the placeness of Kingston that carries this power. It matters little who controls the posses, the networks of power in *A Brief*

[70] Kevin Jon Heller, "Power, Subjectification and Resistance in Foucault." *SubStance* 25, no. 1 (1996): 83.

History lie instead within places themselves and control is exercised through the reproduction of places such as Kingston.

The death of Josey Wales allows Nina to begin to exercise some agency in her own immediate space; after she discovers the news, she thinks that "I really should get a cover for this sofa. And maybe a painting or something for the living room" (686). Up until this point, her psychological terror surrounding Josey Wales had transplanted itself from Jamaica to her permanent local space. The novel ends with Nina attempting to call her sister in Jamaica whom she has not contacted in years; here, the power structure of the cartel has shifted to allow Nina to reconnect to her past through a new global space that has opened for her. However, the shifting microborders of the cartel, while granting a reprieve for Nina, are necessarily dependent on the violence inherent in the system. As James suggests, quoting the legendary "Singer," "many more will have to suffer. Many more will have to die" (111). Despite the contingency of cartelized power—the constantly shifting borders, creation and reproduction of abject spaces, and the obliteration of boundaries between First and Third Worlds—the link between power and violence within the cartel system, like the violence that appears in *2666,* is a necessary component of global violence.

In this chapter I have attempted to demonstrate a model of cartelized power that is distinct from that of the previous chapter – instead of an inscrutable, omnipresent, and monolithic cartel, like that of *Gravity's Rainbow* or *Infinite Jest,* in Bolaño and James there is a decentralization of the cartels themselves. Government agencies, drug cartels, and neoliberal enterprises pursue their own aims while still producing an emergent system of violence. Power here works to incarcerate and punish the individual, but unlike the incarceration via pleasure and consumption in *Infinite Jest,* a developing sense of globalism determines the spaces in which

individuals are permitted to exist. In *2666,* the maquiladora workers are granted no possibility of global mobility, while in *A Brief History* this mobility is almost completely illusory as the places through which the characters move are all created from the same template. A global cartography in the 21st century inexorable produces marginal spaces through which cartelized power and control is localized. Global power is then produced from a large-scale emergent process through various institutions and cultures and then exercised on the local scale of bodies, neighborhoods, and microborders.

Conclusion

In this project I have attempted to trace a genealogy of the relationship between cartographical power and the control of various spaces—cultural, aesthetic, political, and individual—through the lens of the postmodern and contemporary encyclopedic novel. Building on Tim Cresswell's establishment of place as always "in process," I have sought to acknowledge institutional power as an inherently cartographical enterprise. In comparing Silko and Gaddis in the first chapter, what seems like a relatively unintuitive match demonstrates the extent through which aesthetic regimes organize cultural space. We encounter these spaces daily, whether it is through advertising space or a deep recognition of cultural history. I have suggested that Deleuze's rhizomatic model can serve to resist cartographic hegemony; particularly in Silko, the acknowledgement and celebration of cultural pluralism can give rise to the interconnected nodes of the rhizome. In the second chapter I transitioned from cartographical control via aesthetic regimes to the organization of mental spaces through the Cartel. Comprised of the broad ensemble of institutional powers, the Cartel emerges from the Second World War as an irreducible force that exercises control through microphysics. The obvious indication of microphysics, in *Gravity's Rainbow,* is Slothrop's Pavlovian conditioning. However, the Cartel's omnipresence and unshakeable control prevents any meaningful resistance. In *Infinite Jest,* this control becomes even less direct through the process of incarceration via pleasure. I form a bridge between these first two chapters by moving from the larger cultural-historical project of cartographical hegemony—that is, how Western institutions determine the value and economic systems of aesthetics—to the irreducible institutional force that extends its control to every single person.

In my final chapter I traced the emergence of the postwar Cartel to its synthesis with a burgeoning global neoliberalism; here, I sought to investigate a return to more direct forms of punishment in the violent systems of *2666* and *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. These violent systems, I argue, develop from the contact between legitimate and illegitimate cartels – unlike the Cartel of the second chapter, the polysystemic apparatus of control that arises from globalism is not a cohesive or coherent whole. Rather, the legitimate system of political economics and the illegitimate system of the drug cartels, even when they are at odds with one another, still produce an emergent system of violence that targets subaltern groups such as Mexican working-class women and inhabitants of the Kingston ghettos. A significant result of this violent system is both the lack of and illusion of global mobility. The maquiladora workers of *2666* have little to no choice in their careers even though there is always the looming threat that they might end up as bodies in the Sonoran Desert. Those affected by the gang violence in Kingston, as is seen in *A Brief History*, can only ever move laterally – the spaces they come to inhabit in America are indistinguishable, in terms of abjection, from the neighborhoods they came from. Cartelized power has thus determined the spaces that these subaltern groups are permitted to inhabit and force them into the inevitability of violence.

I have chosen the encyclopedic novel as a lens through which I investigate these spaces of power and control – this is due to the synthesis of both narrative and geographic space within these novels. Pynchon's Zone can only exist as a space insofar as it is connected to the encyclopedic elements of the V2 rocket. Similarly, Bolaño's encyclopedic account of the killings in Santa Teresa establish not only the city's relevance on the geographic map but also the constellations of non-places that constitute the sites of the killing. The encyclopedic mode is thus inextricable from cartography, which is itself inextricable from relations of power. This project

has attempted to map these relations both through space and time; I have shown the transition from a Eurocentric hegemonic model to the polysystemic apparatuses produced by global neoliberalism. The findings of this project should yield fertile ground for future directions in mapping cartographies of power.

As it becomes clear that a tendency is emerging towards the control of global space, inquiries into the spatial dynamics of power in global literature would be fruitful. This project has focused on literature of America and the Americas, and I believe that an examination of Asian, African, and Pacific literature in light of these findings would be indispensable in linking colonialism with the rise of global cartelized power. Specifically, research into the cultural phenomenology of space would be invaluable to the work I have done here; different ways in which space is understood could provide insight into individual cultural populations and their relationship to power cartographies.

Additionally, an ecocritical approach to cartography would connect the artificial globe—one which is recorded on maps—with the growing sense of interconnectedness regarding a global environment. Here, the problem arises of promoting environmental responsibility in a global network that diffuses responsibility and decentralizes authority. What might arise could be a notion of ecocartography, where the total global environment is understood as a rhizomatic structure which must be extricated from neoliberal capitalism.

Finally, I would suggest further studies in the cartographies of bodies – that is, how the body is connected to place and cartography. I have gestured towards abject environments, and individuals who are designated as abject; I believe it is worth pursuing the connections between abjection, space, and sexual economy. This could be extended to an investigation into the relationship between cartelized power and sexual agency. In addition, an inquiry might be made

into the link between abject spaces and ecocriticism – in particular, how toxic environments are enmeshed in a necessarily cartographical project of domination.

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