

# Multiple Narratives and Postmodern Techniques: A Study of Jorge Luis Borges and Thomas Pynchon



A Master's Thesis

By

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*\*Photos for the cover page were collected from the internet*

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## Abstract

“*Multiple Narratives and Postmodernism Techniques: A study of Jorge Luis Borges and Thomas Pynchon*” is a study of certain themes prevalent in both South and North America prevalent in some selected texts of these two authors. The attributes of identity, spirituality, sexuality, personhood and fusion with dichotomies is the main crux of this thesis. The selected texts are Borges’ *The Aleph* and *The Book of Sand* with Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* and *The Crying of Lot 49*. Despite Pynchon being a postmodernist writer and Borges associated with magic realism the thesis explores similar avenues of contact between the two disciplines and shows a more elaborated expanse of how we perceive and retain self/selves.

## Introduction

I have had an encounter with something that can be akin to what Jorge Luis Borges would have described as an Aleph, or a Zahir, the inscrutable within the expressive. It was a round number an integer that can be considered a reasonable way of understanding the world. It was the number “30” and it was expressed in buying things related to stationery as in papers and a pen. It was also in a set of three, a trinity if one might call it. It all happened in one day and it left a lasting impression. That day now entropies into the past yet it is still a finite system of memory holding an almost innumerable cycle of the inexplicable threads of the universe.

This thesis aims to understand the unlikely partnership or kinship between postmodernism and magic realism through some selected texts of Jorge Luis Borges and Thomas Pynchon. Like two sides of the coin, the two Americas of North and South, and the dynamics between Alpha and Omega with prosthesis and synthesis, these two authors have a kinship too — their detailing of societies and their attention to detail, to truths and psyches is at a level both subjective and astute. This paper also uses synthesis with both the adjectives *synchronic* and *syntactical* because synthetic usually implies fraudulence. *Syntactical* evokes a syntax that is reliable or resonant with spiritual grammar (in this case) and *synchronic* implies fusion so both are interchangeably present yet having a cogent meaning. From what we learned in the grains of both of these disciplines is that by no means is anything dry, dull objective. Objective can only be made tantamount after a certain collective subjectivity has experimented and pulled out the faulty nuts and bolts and smoothed into a sense of understanding that a system can prevail. The function of postmodernism is reading in between Grand structures, to question structure and its trait is its accommodation of different genre types into one. Magic Realism invents space and relates the commonplace with what can be deemed supernatural or not ordinary as most Western logic precipitates towards (Wendy B. Faris). As Faris states in her book it is also the energy that palpitates behind ordinary objects.

However, this thesis decides to approach both magic realism and postmodernism as independent units as well. Postmodernism is faulty; it’s flaws in its, what many feminist theorists would say, its declassification of subjects yet bearing too much on a patriarchal

syntax to do so. Postmodernism mostly with its non-gendered boundaries still reintroduces sexuality and mass-sexuality as a running point which does spiral out of control into many thematic or symbolic character-driven orgies. We see the whole middle of the novel 98.6 by Ronald Sukenick, which can be related to human body temperature ascribed to the debilitating sexualities of a commune. Postmodernism is also mostly male driven and Caucasian male driven. One can say that is easy to be androgynous or even explicitly alternative if a person has already actualized other aspects of himself which is what happened *a priori* to many postmodern protagonists. Pynchonian detailing of postmodernism is also satirical of maleness, masculinity but also femaleness and femininity. Oedipa is a very virile character but her intellectuality is her most prized possession. Slothrop, however, becomes objectified and people only look at him as the living embodiment of a frenzied, satyriasis-induced penis. Slothrop is not an intellectual human creature, however Oedipa is.

Magic Realism is not a substitute or a Latin American version of Gothic Literature. For if we juxtapose *Wuthering Heights* of Emily Bronte with Borges' *The Book of Sand* we can see that one is a vast open exotic portrait within its own context of Britain yet the everyday pondering or even discussion of ideas with *The Book of Sand* may have a phantasmal aura but not necessarily alienated from reality of the common people. Sex and sexuality is not absent in magic realism nor is it treated simply as vice or vertiginous fumbling of an orgy. It is sometimes scenic or even pedestrian to some other truth or at times an access to a nature of a truth. Juxtaposing the lives of heroes to the lives of everyday people is also a trait of magic realist attributes that Borges weaves. Each story has several narratives and each subject has various techniques — both these authors coalesce when they write and conjure, like the many petals of a rose, different voices and approaches to a many tiered thing.

Basic attributes of math has also been used in this thesis. The thesis is an attempt of a convergence between many disciplines to elucidate that branches of many subjects intersect and complement each other. Authors like Leonard Shlain have already captured this essence in his book *Art & Physics* whose ideas are in this thesis alongside the work of William Bloch who mathematically understood the beauty of Borges's library of Babel in his book *The Unimaginable Mathematics of Borges' Library of Babel*. Those ideas of math are basic ideas that help understand concepts and illustrate the symbols of labyrinth and entropy, the latter by itself being the second law of thermodynamics, but as the other physics concept "inertia" has reached connotative and detonative meanings beyond physics.

Postmodernism relies more on images thus has more connections with semiology and magic realism is more connected to words. Both simulacrum and mythology as speech, introduced by Roland Barthes, use these patterns a bit interchangeably so in the end postmodernist and magic realist vocabulary inserts both into their taxonomies or anti-taxonomies. The concepts of synthesis and prosthesis are meant to show that in the end both synergy and extensions have their place. The rhizome needs some depth of dimensions to be shifted and looked at from different angles.

Some of these views may seem paradoxical, however, as William Rasch “In Search of the Lyotard Archipelago” tells that paradoxical nodes need not be contradictory unless expressed (in his case Lyotard did) contradictorily. Even Borges in an interview at eighty stated that he does not like one book against another but that his genealogies are based on everything equivalent if he makes a repository of precious things. Borges does introduce “afterwards” in his works and also breaks what can be called “the fourth wall” to describe things aside from the main framework of what is happening in his stories. This may be why he finds the short story capable of helping this craft of work rather than a novel thus prefers short stories (implied at his interviews at eighty). Metanarratives and subtle contemplations do the same thing for Pynchon; his way of writing includes in itself a self-critique or rather a documentation of what is happening aside plot.

It is due to these factors that *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow* of Thomas Pynchon, and *The Aleph* and *The Book of Sand* of Jorge Luis Borges are chosen as they are best suited to illustrate the ideas explained briefly above. All four books do delve into excesses or mitigations but also spirituality and loss of spirituality and the ability to understand space and environment. The books show the finding of identity, various identities and also relapse into non-entity or even false identities as in mainstreamed categorization.

These authors and their themes do scan and interact with the multiple narratives and postmodern techniques that are present textually as an art craft but also the human condition. As this work tries to understand those concepts the proceeding chapters details the various appropriations and methods used in the texts and elucidated by various other disciplines or thoughts pertaining to the themes involved.

**Chapter 1:**  
**Prosthesis and Synthesis — Technology and Magic Realism**

Despite my many wondrous wanderings,  
I am the one who never has unraveled  
the labyrinth of time, singular, plural.

*I Am*, Jorge Luis Borges

Technology is depicted as a root of evil. It is money and consumer oriented. It devours most of rationale and morality; it designs posterity of pseudo-innovations. Postmodernism is sceptical of innovations related to technology though a major aspect of it touches on technological stimulations and simulations. A substantial portion of Oedipa's journey is manifested by her quest for technology, old and new, in the landscape of wider California and parts of the United States. Technology, with its psychological and neurological niches, enables the plot of *Gravity's Rainbow*. Both books traverses technology in different ways though have in them a manifestation or rather various incarnations of similar themes.

In *Gravity's Rainbow* technocrat fetishism is starting with the metonymic foreplay of placing rocket and penile erections on the same plane. The V-2 rocket with its tactile force and auditory suspension is a crude and grotesque symbolism for male ejaculation and sexual potency that is adjacent to "quickies" or detached sex. The rocket is a surgical, clinical impregnator of violence. It knows no discrimination thus it aligns to a mutated depiction of Grim Reaper death. It is ironic, however, that science and technology had usurped the virility of man (or woman) and made it sterile from emotion. It is successful because it has a defined trajectory unlike humans; technology is symbolic of A to B interfacing. Slothrop's sexual-emotional cartography is not precise as a rocket that is why he is enigmatic and considered potentially dangerous. Everyone wants him in such a way that is almost a sanitized cannibalism. Some for his penis, others for his body, others for his brain (yet the penis imagery potently lingers and ultimately defines Slothrop); technology can only negotiate via discrete barriers and the technological frenzy of man has come to ape, in a superimposed and insane way, the Vitruvian man under the microscope.



Technological advances make wars which then in turn evolve into laboratories which make more technological apparatuses inevitable. It is prosthetic to nature and prosthetic to the human spirit. Postmodernism does not denounce prosthesis as something inherently evil but rather some are implanted so deeply that side-effects will be attached to it. Slothrop's penis becomes a prosthetic limb with phantom syndrome related to his prior conditioning. That is why he fears the rockets, unable to understand why he gets erections from them at the same time attempts to mechanically appease them by having sex with random women. Unlike Oedipa, Slothrop (as his name suggests) is a sloth to even in his own genesis of sexual triggers. Ironically, even as a soldier his proactivity is usually determined by the agency he works for not his own agency. Prosthetic analogies echo a makeshift paradigm of stimuli, a defect, or something that has somehow integrated with the body making it whole in some twisted definition. Pynchon's dexterity in *Gravity's Rainbow* is that he provides these three arcs into Slothrop though others show signs of these three variably.

Technology is continued as a mass effect or a lingering presence; it has taken the aspects of ghosts of phantasms. We see this phenomenon in Slothrop's chemical induced dream which is part memory but also part fabrication; the presence of the foreign is the dubious Kenosha Kid. This "lingering presence" is made capitalized in the strange capitol called "The White Visitation". The name itself evokes something ghostly, aberrant, something akin to poltergeists or a fractured zeitgeist. It also transcribes a crude understanding of "Holy Ghost". Thus the terminology "Ghost in the Machine" is enacted to Pynchon's careful study of the mechanics of the elusive (*The Crying of Lot 49*) and war (*Gravity's Rainbow*).

"The White Visitation" in itself is like the river Styx. It is a transient place where only "ferryman" or officials in charge can stay comfortably for longer periods of time. Yet unlike the purity of destinations of the Styx, in which one travels to an awaiting judgment or complete death, the "The White Visitation" is an assortment of very blotched destinations. It is actually a laboratory so people are not served with the peace of death rather they are made into zombies of testing; they are treated almost as affectionately as Pavlov's dogs.

And like animals they are only "creatures of interest" not really to be treated as autonomous individuals who can exert any rights. The way Slothrop also responds to his sexual urges even with the double agent, Katze, (who is partly his love interest, partly his rival) is almost bestial. It is bestial because they cannot trust one another so easily; nations are quite apart also the nature that were Slothrop is resigned to be a sloth who is just an animal waiting to be

caged (the trapping of the dog in the beginning of the novel by rescuers is allegorical to Slothrop's condition) whereas Katje always talks about stability of her skills and escape. Katze is a bit unbounded by nationalism because she is a double agent but also she unbounded by war because she doesn't soak from idealisms about war. Unlike Slothrop who accepts quite passively any situation he is in, Katje is more active than him.

Katje and the pace of technology do not mix because as she is not singularly minded as technological applications. We usually see her as figure of rather ambivalent states. Possibly her idealism is freedom and Pynchon shows that such an idealism cannot be achieved when humans dabble into affairs so mechanistically and alienates people from people.

This activity confuses Slothrop who is resigned to being just a soldier and working on that project of soldier.

In *The Crying of Lot 49* technology is shown to be ambivalent. So neutral it is cold and sickeningly as an underworld. Places like "The Scope" also reiterate the phases of technology: it can be a kaleidoscope, microscope or a telescope yet its extensions are not always helpful. Oedipa also goes through those phases herself. From a virgin of information she transcribes information promiscuously making it tenable and malleable but even her expertise fails after a while because of the delusions, ineptitudes, seductive-prone nature of the people around her or even the elusive machinations of the organisation that may or may not be the dreaded Tristero.

For Slothrop and company in *Gravity's Rainbow* technology is something to be survived from V-2 rockets, mind control, perverse ejaculations of daydreams to actual ejaculations, to scripted sex, pseudo-bohemian sex, fetishisms and such. In *The Crying of Lot 49* technology is something to be understood and even conquered to a certain extent. That is why the people in the Scope tacitly disobey the U.S. mail and have ventured into streamlining their own mail that is more nomadic than the postman. If you think about the mailman in context of the modern he is a category that has less static cues: from movies such as *The Postman* always rings Twice to the post-apocalyptic *The Postman* who is not originally a postman but decides to take the uniform and assortments of a dead man we see how postman becomes lover and traveller, an unsettled person in a settled world. Tristero furthers this concept by enabling anyone as a postman identity; any person opposed is an enlisted body.

Umberto Eco:.. Memory — whether it's our individual memory or the collective memory that is culture — has a double function. On the one hand to preserve certain data, and on the other to allow information that does not serve us and could pointlessly encumber our brains to sink into oblivion. A culture unable to filter the heritage it receives from previous centuries brings to mind Borges' *Funes the Memorious*, in which the title character is endowed with the ability to remember everything. That is the exact opposite of culture. Culture is essentially a graveyard for books and other lost objects. Scholars are currently researching how culture is a process of tacitly abandoning certain relics of the past (thus filtering), while placing others in a kind of refrigerator, for the future. Archives and libraries are cold rooms in which we store what has come before, so that the cultural space is not cluttered, without having to relinquish those memories entirely. We can always go back to them some day in the future, should the mood take us...But the contemporary culture is quite the opposite. The Internet drowns us in detail about every Calpurnia the world over, on a day-by-day and minute-by-minute basis, to the extent that a kid researching his homework could be forgiven for thinking Calpurnia was just as important as Caesar.

...

Jean-Claude Carriere: But what does memory mean, now that we can access anything about anything, totally unfiltered — an infinite amount of information at the click of a mouse? What is the sense of the word 'memory'? One day, we'll be constantly accompanied by an electronic servant able to answer all our questions, including the ones we haven't even formed. What will be left for us to know? Once our prosthesis knows everything — absolutely everything — what will we need to learn?

Umberto Eco: The art of synthesis.

Jean-Claude Carriere: Yes. And the act of learning itself. Because you can learn how to learn.

Umberto Eco: Yes, learning to handle information whose authenticity we can no longer trust.

(Harkaway 63-66)

The gestation of the introspection of prosthesis and synthesis in this thesis came from this conversation by Umberto Eco and Jean-Claude Carriere in the book *This is **not** the end of the book*; which details how both an author and screenwriter do not think that old technology like paper and scribing will not be entirely extinguished. They also mentioned how human brain

and intellect will not go “outdated” concerning that there is a “soul” or a sense of authenticity to learning and those are the foundations to ontology and epistemology. This is exactly what happens when the questions had not been asked by the Paranoids and their girlfriends talk about “The Courier’s Tragedy” — they do not know about the various editions but it was up top Oedipa to figure the trail out about Trystero about herself.

The branches of knowledge and culture will always have prosthesis and synthesis. If culture is a committee of acceptance and exclusion, as Eco somewhat hinted, we do know that humans crudely reject people as well which inevitable bring out counter-cultures and subcultures. The muted post horn becomes a beacon, a symbol for that with its horn muted it shows that though they had been silenced the rejected populace will use this prosthetic silence and syntactically mesh it to their being and move about as they so desire and please.

This is also present in “The Weary Man’s Utopia” the story by Borges. The protagonist meets a future man who is pure prosthesis. Nothing seems to perturb him or excite him whereas the protagonist in the past is still learning, and learning to learn thus he prefers synthesis. It is the epitome of prosthesis, and also prosthesis and synthesis meeting one another but not being kind to one another as much. When the protagonist cannot see the colours in future man paintings the man quite curtly tells that his “ancient eyes” will not be able to decipher it yet. This can be scientifically possible as the butterfly sees in five colours and the mantis shrimp sees in twelve as opposed to our three colour spectrum (Red, Blue and Green). However, future man does not relate to the protagonist as in he doesn’t translate much to the protagonist and doesn’t want to even. Perhaps this is analogous to the stubbornness of the discreteness some systems carry within themselves (like how some life sciences detest the familiar in art).

It is “The Other” another story by Borges that prosthesis and synthesis interact more fluidly and freely. When Borges meets his younger self there is conversation and there is empathy. Though the younger self wants what can be called more prosthetic type vocabulary to define his works and the older Borges prefers in already established or rather shared nomenclature yet of course like rewriting fairy tales he revisits them in a different way. Here the prosthesis and synthesis are interacting more with understanding and respect. Though one may argue they are the same people they are actually also not the same people because an aged Borges does not find much of similarity with the younger one. They are afraid to meet again probably because they interacted so well it feels perverse but the experience is nevertheless a precious one.

The fact that Slothrop cannot escape from being colonial and colonized subject also incapable of escaping his category as soldier and penile body is introduced and widely reiterated in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Pynchon*. Of course Slothrop is all prosthesis and no synthesis; that goes to Katje and Prentice mostly but more perfectly top Bianca and Gottfried. Tchitcherine and Enzian are pretty much prosthetic too yet their prosthesis is more a series of events that became unfathomably inescapable for Slothrop it is clear Pynchon makes it more sadomasochistic choice. This is made apparent when Slothrop decides to mimic some of the gesticulations of his ancestor who prefers preterite (preterit) as a divine gesture. Thinking his penile erectile genesis is the only thing about him that is important he acknowledges the preterite though it doesn't really help his death at the implosion and explosion of the cinema. The cinema was a good theatre for this violence as it deals with truths, ambiguities and fictions it became a good climactic theme/projection for both Slothrop and the rocket.

Thomas Will Schaub described that for the Pynchonian character Jesus Arrabel, in his paper "The Crying of Lot 49 and other California novels" in the Cambridge companion, a miracle is the juxtaposition of two conceived of contradictory states. Arrabel states this in relation to Inverararity who plays the part of the degenerate plutocrat so well it is either callous sarcasm or monstrosity. Schaub puts this adjacent to the dance Oedipa has in the hotel with the deaf-mutes because it is something that is both prosthetic (the dancing) and the feeling of connection (synthesis). Arrabel is one of the only people who can balance both states pretty well. The Nefastis machine which looks for sensitives is a prosthetic limb to attempt to stop entropy of communication. Though it fails because the device is more mechanical than spiritual; it's translation of Maxwell's demon lacks the energy that complements empathy. This is why Dr. Nefastis is actually wrong about Oedipa: she is a sensitive but over here the extremity of prosthesis does not allow her synchronicity/syntactical drives to connect. If she was so non-empathetic she wouldn't have gone to a nightly odyssey to discover the muted horn and Trystero (both Tristero and Trystero are appropriate for the change in spelling implies variable usage). Also she would not deny Nefastis attempting to have sex with her: she is not a maudlin woman prone to sexual comforts only for the sake of it — she is a detective and much more.

One other person who is appropriate balanced with synthesis and prosthesis is actually Mike Fallopian. We see him coherently in three acts: he is a good system with those spaces. The Scope is his anarchic haunt but he is seen in the middle with Yoyodyne so he may have corporate affiliations. Yet he ends at The Scope no longer a theorist about Peter Penguin

Society but rather a more defined soldier of his cause. Of all the characters he is the least suspicious but he does introduce a segment of Tristero when he talks about the Peter Penguid Society which may very well be faction of Trysterero. Mike Fallopian (Fallopian tubes being a biological component in the reproductive system of a woman guiding ovaries to womb as a bridge) may be an agent of Tristero or even one of the leaders of Tristero itself. Obviously, he does help Oedipa and at the penultimate scenes tell her to gather “hard facts” that can be used to understand Trysterero. However, Oedipa denies him connection saying unpredictably that he hates her a bit to which Fallopian laughs and tries to avoid. It could be true: here an ordinary housewife has managed more knowledge on a secret society than a tycoon like Inverarity or a playwright like Driblette or even professor like Emory Bortz. Fallopian is a prosthetic name, female reproductive organs in a male, yet Mike pretty much is syntactical to cultural male anatomy. Yet his androgyny clashes with Oedipa’s androgyny — purpose is usually key.

Jacques Derrida in his paper “Structure, sign and play in the discourse of human sciences” talks about oppositional forces, beginning and endings which are quite congenial to the entire process of construction and deconstruction. The middles are vague, however, because the tendency of the middle is to change the factors of congeniality. Prosthesis and synthesis together when fused creates new variations that are either congenial or rather anti-static.

**Chapter 2:**  
**Locating the Detective in The Crying of Lot 49 and The Book of Sand**

But the ancient night is bottomless like a jar  
of brimming water. The water reveals limitless wakes,  
and in the drifting canoes, face inclined to the stars  
a man marks the limp time with a cigar.

*Manuscript Found in a Book by Joseph Conrad, Jorge Luis Borges*

The Oedipal is subject to be examined and if it is endemic to the masses more research and time must be dedicated to it. Oedipa Maas is an interesting name. Only there is an absence of father, a plurality of lovers and odd schemas in her case. Identifying her (close to categorisation) is as if identifying the very sinewy shroud of sands. Borges details sand as the unprecedented, atypical elixir of life that may be detectable, but not easily definable *The Book of Sand* explores subjects from wayfarer traveling to lovemaking to secret encounter and societies. One line may sum the book in its dealing with its topics:

The end of the manuscript has not been discovered.

(Jorge Luis Borges, "The Sect of  
Thirty")

Oedipa's name is not an appropriation to a patriarchal need or a matriarchal one. She embodies criticism of a culture, amorously attracted to almost an incestuous need to either conform or rebel. The detective in Pynchon is analogous to a double entendre. Self-examination is not the aim of the protagonist; however, readers examine both plot and protagonist. Oedipa crosses over to many modalities of personhood without even knowing. She is wife, ex-lover, detective, executrix, lover, femme fatale, inspiration for a band, present

in a shootout, budding psychologist patient, the odd dealer of random information, book-checker and traveller.

What does Borges do in *The Book of Sand* that possesses the detective? According to Michael Wood in his essay “Borges and Theory” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jorge Luis Borges* Borges helped construct the theory of the unclassifiable and its threat to secular institutions that profit from the classifiable. Thus *The Book of Sand* and *The Crying Lot of 49* shares in the voracious dismantling of specifications attributed to stereotypes or of models that are static and unhinged despite criticisms against them. *The Book of Sand* involves both magic realism to tell its story and postmodernist tactics laden in its views are fragments of history, dream and reality with added nodes of perception. *The Crying Lot of 49* is more known for its psychological and postmodernist critiques of the absolutist self and the trickeries of mass technologies and reprinted media.

It must be noted that there are many denotations and connotations of the word “absolute” thus its applications are precedent to contexts rather than one meaning. The absolute as a postmodern phenomenon can be counted as a flexible word with a wide range of semantics and semiotics. Absolutist is opposite of absolute because it either allows only a limited number of determinants in a situation which disallow investigation. Or it traps states within an outmoded structuralism process of understanding. Oedipa’s quest is against an absolutist view of herself and also an attempt at understanding Trystero. In *The Book of Sand* the fragments in the stories are pretty anti-absolutist in that there is more than one way to meet the non-categorised knowledge or feeling. Yet humans have been so sanitized by concepts of classifications that they become overwhelmed by it or fearful of it that they wish to get rid of it (*The Aleph* also has some stories as such like “The Zahir” )

Technological invention in Borges becomes an object to be investigated as per *The Book of Sand*. Technological invention in *The Crying of Lot 49* becomes an instrument in assisting an investigation with results that lie in many spectrums of neutrality or positivism or negating effects to the search. Pynchon facilitates the North American way of understanding technology or even people concerned with it. The detective’s terrain is geographically limited to a North American terrain. Even when the play “The Courier’s Tragedy” is investigated despite its fictional roots it has a European background and it is not poly-lingual in that sense. Borges in his work rivets between East and West, merging fragments. Though the



commonality both authors possess is their study of various signs and human conditions. Technology is crucial to the detective.

Oedipa is always in a sort of transmission and transition. She is a very non-gendered portrait of a woman and also one who resists stratifying notions of Madonna and Whore. Compared to her husband Wendell "Mucho" Maas she ascribes a more traditionally defined masculine role as being more reasonable, not to mention she is more active than him. She is also more stable and proficient in tackling reality than Pierce Inverarity. It is never mentioned as to why she had left Pierce yet Inverarity's attitude is ostentatiously abnormal at best:

It took her till the middle of Huntley and Brinkley to remember that last year at three or so one morning there had come this long-distance call, from where she would never know (unless now he'd left a diary) by a voice beginning in heavy Slavic tones as second secretary at the Transylvanian Consulate, looking for an escaped bat; modulated to comic-Negro, then on into hostile Pachuco dialect, full of chingas and maricones; then a Gestapo officer asking her in shrieks did she have relatives in Germany and finally his Lamont Cranston voice, the one he'd talked in all the way down to Mazatlan. "Pierce, please," she'd managed to get in, "I thought we had——"

"But Margo," earnestly, "I've just come from Commissioner Weston, and that old man in the fun house was murdered by the same blowgun that killed Professor Quackenbush," or something.

"For God's sake," she said. Mucho had rolled over and was looking at her.

"Why don't you hang up on him," Mucho suggested, sensibly.

"I heard that," Pierce said. "I think it's time Wendell Maas had a little visit from The Shadow." Silence, positive and thorough, fell. So it was the last of his voices she ever heard. Lamont Cranston. That phone line could have pointed any direction, been any length. Its quiet ambiguity shifted over, in the months after the call, to what had been revived: memories of his face, body, things he'd given her, things she had now and then pretended not to've heard him say. It took him over, and to the verge of being forgotten.

(Pynchon 6)

She does not chastise his nuances of violent hysteria (which is traditionally a gendered feminine position) nor does she share in it. Oedipa may have left him for his flamboyant and eccentric nature, which is typical of some Victorian courtesan, and making her feel insecure

or rather dissatisfied. Inverarity lives in sequences of personalities rather than prefiguring something of his own. In some way he possesses the aspect of simulacra of stereotypes thus his eccentricity is born from the roles he supposedly feels he needs to play. Inverarity's death could have been natural or he could have been murdered. Either way his death is not a goal it is an impetus. Oedipa leaving Inverarity, whose name can be broken down to "inverse rarity" as he exhibits stock characters, is curious though not objectionable. She feels that Inverarity is too involved with himself.

However, Mucho and Oedipa also possess their own alienation. Mucho nags too much and easily thinks that he is particularly being abused. Oedipa considers him "thin-skinned" and a position in the novel agrees with it:

"You're too sensitive." Yeah, there was so much else she ought to be saying also, but this was what came out. It was true, anyway. For a couple years he'd been a used car salesman and so hyperaware of what that profession had come to mean that working hours were exquisite torture to him...The sight of sawdust, even pencil shavings, made him wince, his own kind being known to use it for hushing sick transmissions, and though he dieted he could still not as Oedipa did use honey to sweeten his coffee for like all things viscous it distressed him, recalling too poignantly what is often mixed with motor oil to ooze dishonest into gaps between piston and cylinder wall. He walked out of a party one night because somebody used the word "creampuff," it seemed maliciously, in his hearing. The man was a refugee Hungarian pastry cook talking shop, but there was your Mucho: thin-skinned.

(Pynchon 7)

Mucho has an insatiable urge to be a social crusader but he has hardly any degree of understanding the ethical or even thematic views of being a disc jockey. It isn't a station for much exposure but rather static transmissions of what can be culturally acceptable. The station name itself, KCUF, seems like an anagram of the slang "fuck" and that coarse term is used for flimsy, overrated, exaggerated simulacra. That is why when Mucho enters he complains of his boss Funch telling him to be less-sexually provocative to teenage girls. It isn't really something to matter and Oedipa finds that his news is more trivia than substantial.

Where Inverarity was too eccentric and almost impregnable rhizome of tacit information cues, Mucho is a quivering simpleton and a bit pathetic. Both men are really crude dichotomies. Ironically, Mucho unconsciously gives the position of Whore to Oedipa because she is only there to inveterate his agonies or events related to his profession. Their marriage

life is pretty transactional and always hanging somewhere where excess static from the radio disperses. The Madonna Complex is given to her by Inverarity for he treats her as a muse for his incorruptible but rather detached way of expressing sexuality, traveling and or frolicking around in a non-committing way of exposing others to his “personality”.

When Oedipa goes on her road-trip she obviously has dissolved past these crude conjectures. She has always been too independent to actually become too comfortable in a role. Her accessibility to the position of detective comes with many androgynous qualities and she easily embraces them. It is funny that she lingers in exhaustion after working so hard to find editions on “The Courier’s Tragedy” but never really felt fatigue at the sex with Metzger her so-called assistant in executing Pierce’s Will (Metzger’s name itself evokes “metastasis” a mass-spreading of cancer). Metzger himself is a character that fails to confine Oedipa and becomes, as the Paranoids sing, a Lolita chasing comedy of a person. Oedipa’s ascension to detective is a resignation to a culturally coded femininity as also understood by E. V Miller’s essay “The Naming of Oedipa Maas: Feminizing the Divine Pursuit of Knowledge in Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*.” An extended understanding of that essay is also that Oedipa purges herself of only an imperialist way of discerning knowledge. Though she begins on an imperialist road she disembarks from it making her journey very personal: not only for self-reflection but a reorientation of culture as a not stable but rather indifferent.

Imperialist systems of knowledge are codified in the novel with the incorporation of corporate licensing and non-flexibility of inventions. Stanley Kotecks explained this more clearly showing how Trystero became an anti-corporate ideology based on more eclectic ways of catering to an inventor. Imperialism and capitalism go hand in hand; what begins as a way to resolve Pierce Inverarity’s will who is part of the Yoyodyne corporation and also a capitalist tycoon is nothing short of a metamorphosis for Oedipa to not only discover Trystero but the mettle of her own personhood.

Such an unconscious and conscious rejection of inner imperialist trends (as Oedipa herself is a Caucasian subject with some choosing power) is quite remarkable. Imperialist knowledge sequesters and categorises many different things such as sexuality or even manages to establish bureaucracy where it is not needed such as Kotecks detects it in patents that do not protect inventors but regulates their money and ideas and relegates them as only empty spines working for profit.

It is also observed by Miller that Oedipa's name rejects the Electra Complex because Electra wants to restore her father to glory thus a patriarchal or capitalist dogma to be re-established along alternative lines. Oedipus Complex rejects the old king and makes a new kingdom of thought and Oedipa does entirely that. Though like Oedipus Rex, Oedipa must also battle sphinxes and other mythical creatures to gain stability. The difference is that her own realizations do not make her blind herself rather she bravely, though nervously, saunters into the auction with a mission to persist and resist a demise of madness or suicide.

Yet how can one escape if one's imagination becomes nothing more than profiteering agent? Borges attempts to show the fear and awe in what he calls the "inscrutable" in stories such as "There are more Things", "Undr" and the eponymous "The Book of Sand." Where a creature like the minotaur, a word "undr" and a book are bravely accepted if not thoroughly engaged or understood. As Oedipa who attempts to grasp the impenetrable yet assimilating and scintillating facts of Trystero we see a conceptual similarity in how Borges contrasted "The Congress." The titular Congress akin to Trystero is a private meeting or organization who wants world change yet see the machinations they set forth take such unprecedented turns that they witness a composition on the cosmos too distinct yet too rare so they decide not to talk on it.

If one applies some postmodern intertextual schema then a form of "conceptual chronicle" can be meshed between the Borgesian short story and the Pynchon novel. Oedipa awaits the crying of lot 49 at the end of the novel that may or may not have connections with Trystero. The Congress is similar to a Trystero that has been abandoned and the sole conspirator has decided to retire into anonymity. These two images juxtaposed can be a tiny reel that plays on repeat. If Oedipa becomes member of Trystero then she might experience a similar end as the one Alexander Ferri, the protagonist of "The Congress" had in the inner workings of the secret society and are subject to some of the perennial elements of such a society. However, it is also a bit of a critique on Borges' part because he knows that secret societies are not always sure of how to operate in their secrecy. Ferri acknowledges this when he describes the initial impressions he had on the society's map of execution:

Don Alejandro Glencoe was always at the center of the web of plans, but we gradually began to feel, not without some astonishment and alarm, that the real chairman was Twirl... Glencoe prided himself upon his vast fortune, and Twirl figured out that all it took to saddle Glencoe with some new project was to suggest that the undertaking might be too costly. At first, I suspect, the

Congress had been little more than a vague name; *Twirl* was constantly proposing ways to expand it, and don Alejandro always went along. It was like being at the center of an ever-widening, endlessly expanding circle that seemed to be moving farther and farther beyond one's reach. Twirl declared, for example, that the Congress could not do without a library of reference books; Nierenstein, who worked in a bookstore, began bringing us the atlases...and sundry encyclopedias... (*I reread these pages with the voice of Fernández Irala*)... I will not reveal at this point the fate those silken pages met, a fate I do not lament.

(Borges 428)

It's an impression of confusion mixed with what can be considered a bit wistful thinking. It also calls into question why secret societies are formulated. Are they merely flotsam of things that are rejected/unwelcomed in regular society? Ferri's tale is a reverse because he has already figured out the mystery but it did not really do much for him. Rather he speaks in a defeated tone not being able to comprehend what exactly could he do now:

Any day now will mark the anniversary of my birth more than seventy years ago; I am still giving English lessons to very small classes of students. Indecisiveness or oversight, or perhaps other reasons, led to my never marrying, and now I am alone. I do not mind solitude; after all, it is hard enough to live with oneself and one's own peculiarities. I can tell that I am growing old; one unequivocal sign is the fact that I find novelty neither interesting nor surprising, perhaps because I see nothing essentially new in it—it's little more than timid variations on what's already been. When I was young, I was drawn to sunsets, slums, and misfortune; now it is to mornings in the heart of the city and tranquility. I no longer play at being Hamlet. I have joined the Conservative Party and a chess club, which I attend as a spectator—sometimes an absentminded one.

(Borges 422)

Though Ferri's tale is one that emits paradoxical tones of both victory and defeat we do not know how Oedipa may behave at that age of a resigned sort of life. Ferri has come to a peace that is a state that needs no excursion. His younger self and older selves have already riveted off each other and become two different people. Though it is also hard to understand what really mattered to Ferri. Like Oedipa Ferri does go through metamorphoses only unlike her he cannot retain them nor can he persistently go forward.

Oedipa was in a stupor and she arose out of it almost as a phoenix yet now what, where and who she is destined to become or what fragments of personality will come by and become

subsumed in her is her journey. Oedipa's revitalisation occurs ironically due to the Trystero however the opposite happens to Ferri. Though he synchronizes that the history of this Congress of The World is without a doubt his history he cannot make any history without it. Characteristic inertia almost makes him immobile until he narrates to us about the past which enlivens him.

What could be the detective here? Despite Borges's reluctance to map out personality and his trust that psychology is a wasted science he has mapped out a somewhat failed personality and a failed secret society and conjoined the two in such an intimate way that it is both magic realism and postmodernism at a fine sharp glance. What Borges has done has shown the themes of enigma, anticipation and resolve present in crime or detective fiction yet put his own metaphysical twists in it. As Borges has said that his tools of trade are not ethics yet rather fables and myths which he details in fragmentary slices of an individual's life intersected with the singularly minded obsession of a faux pas of a secret society (*Borges at 80: Conversations*).

The metaphysical exercise Borges has undertaken is to not map out a victory but a type of failure but it is transmogrified so much in the vision of the narrator that it instead it has become very polished and refined. Thus the narrator sifts through the sand and finds nuggets and gems that are valuable. However, it is hard for him to translate what happened or to transmute the valuable. His friend Irala is his antithesis to the extent that because he is a poet and a writer he somehow survives the failed personal missions related to The Congress and decides to focus and nourish other things. This does not happen to Ferri as to him only The Congress is his bread and butter for any excitement and the words he chooses and extracts and fleshes are all part of that elaborate labyrinth he made.

One may wonder if Oedipa would also chose such a castration of personality. For it is the virility found in certain variations that is being persecuted when one easily succumbs to an obsession of a kind. Oedipa's one is translatable as a conspiracy theorist of sorts but the Trystero has already branched out into many factors. By the end Oedipa is exhausted but has acquired new positions of personality. Though the potency has always been there inside her: shifting as sifting in the sands to get out.

At the end of the novel no one would juxtapose the Oedipa Mass (Mrs. Maas) who came from a Tupperware party, who read *Scientific American* and made garlic bread for a dinner to only be consumed mostly by her nagging husband. Who said the days were like tarot card

deck flushed out only into a web of limitation. Then she is now Oedipa (no Maas thus not Mass) who is more than anything others had given her credit for. She is one scholar, detective, stamp investigator, also a Trystero mailman and beyond those categories as well because she is always investigating what are the probabilities of the things she encountered.

Yet to get to this point Oedipa had to shed her imperialist understandings of knowledge and power including stability and desire. To this point, she has treated in a very masculinised way of reading Pierce Inverarity and Mucho Maas — Mucho can only be husband not lover almost like a Whore and Inverarity can only be lover never husband, an eccentric Madonna. And they have treated her as she has treated them as Galatea who must only be chiselled into meaning but cannot construct their own. This is why the painting of Remedios Varo *Bordando el Manto Terrestre* made her cry in it is also a Pynchonian reading of what is imperialist knowledge but also antithetical to it. As Miller noted in her essay she first sees beautiful, helpless maiden's trapped in a tower doing dutifully what has made of them not juxtaposing it with the power the maiden's had.

Curiously, Pynchon also rehashed the tale of Rapunzel as Oedipa motioned how her hair snapped as a wig and her ivory tower somewhat retaliated Pierce only for him to fashion keys against the door-lock (a crude reminder of chastity belts) to come to her but like another misunderstood woman as in the Lady without mercy their little romance can happen in an illusion of an ivory tower. The aesthetics of an ivory tower and Foucault's introduction to a Panopticon is jarring as they share many identical features. Pynchon scales the walls of imperialist views on romance and identity and Oedipa skilfully detects it:

She had looked down at her feet and known, then, because of a painting, that what she stood on had only been woven together a couple thousand miles away in her own tower, was only by accident known as Mexico, and so Pierce had taken her away from nothing, there'd been no escape. What did she so desire escape from? Such a captive maiden, having plenty of time to think, soon realizes that her tower, its height and architecture, are like her ego only incidental: that what really keeps her where she is is magic, anonymous and malignant, visited on her from outside and for no reason at all. Having no apparatus except gut fear and female cunning to examine this formless magic, to understand how it works, how to measure its field strength, count its lines of force, she may fall back on superstition, or take up a useful hobby like embroidery, or go mad, or marry a disk jockey. If the tower is everywhere and the knight of deliverance no proof against its magic, what else?

(Pynchon 13)

The passage above is very detailing of the points and groves about imperialism. It is a very good postmodernist critique of the grand narrative imperialism. That is makes ghosts out of people and prefers the ghosts to actual people. This ghost always tries to get a vassal or vessel to extrapolate itself and that was first the aim of Oedipa Maas who even if she chose to be Oedipa Inverarity could not, would not, be that. She also could not be Oedipa Maas as a character as it was also “only incidental” as a marker. It is that societal dichotomy and its inability to acknowledge or even incorporate the inscrutable (as Borges involves and invokes the theme in “The Congress” which is also in a state similar) that it cannot give Oedipa what she wants: an identity for herself.

Trystero is but a game of another kind of extrapolation though Oedipa has unhinged much of her own codifications of insubstantial markers and became many things. The only reason that Oedipa may chase Trystero is because it cannot be easily consumed, one must decide a palate for it then eat it in bits; it’s the total antithesis for fast food yet also to a lavish dinner she cooked to suppress the rightfully subversive desire to want more.

It is because of Second Wave Feminism that probably persuaded Pynchon to make his detective a woman because all eyes now were on the female psyche its mystique or rather its Medusa’s laugh (Shaub). The detective genre had already exhausted itself with tropes and phantasms, and diamonds and things that were pretty much the diet of the genre. Pynchon decided to scale on book editions the same ingenuity given to a diamond screening such as the Pink Panther in detective fiction. Also he brings forth the marginalised, an attractive woman but seemingly boorish housewife as an arbitrator and wayfarer of knowledge. Thus he pretty much interweaves into a mainstream outfit some literary buttons.

Oedipa, like any gumshoe, begins her journey with a feeling of understanding a plan as in clue or reflection only to be thwarted in the bud (temporarily) by a “femme fatale” or beau of her own: Metzger. Metzger is a quite a wily and cunning individual but as many he is also ignorant and boastful. Their little seduction game is preliminary to show Metzger as a “femme fatale” who is in many ways as beautiful and vacant as a pornography actor waiting for one job: sex. Metzger idea is to dominate what he heard of Oedipa from Inverarity that she isn’t easy but she is able to just initiate sexuality on a whim. However, the act is a very disoriented and repugnant feeling we get of their sex that it is cacophony loaded with images of TV shows and an odd serenade outside by the Paranoids.



Their climax, in relation to the Paranoids' song, causes a power surge that knocks off all the lights. In that moment of bright light and darkness there is an intangibility but Oedipa does not easily detect it. When Oedipa wins the bet Metzger cockily states that it is him she has won, more like a consolation prize, and then reinstates that Pierce had said she was not easy. Realising it was a form of deception Oedipa begins to cry but Metzger, like any femme fatale, reassures in a cloyed seductive voice that this can be more.

Obviously the promise is false one as we see that Metzger and Oedipa just have sex and aimlessly wander around. For a long time they do not even act on the vital purpose of executing Inverarity's will. Metzger is exploiting Oedipa's time and sexuality. Like any femme fatale, which corresponds to an ancient succubus or over here incubus, Metzger is draining Oedipa of vitality or attempting too. This sexual politics being reversed is actually a very keen phenomenon on Pynchon's part. It is usually the woman who is supposed to steal from the man but a detective can be stolen from and this is regardless of sex or gender.

Reversing epics are not easy: Metzger is John Keats's Lamia in flesh only he is not a woman but a man. Lamia has all the powers of illusion and really voracious sexuality as Metzger once used to be an actor who now has metamorphosed into a lawyer. From scintillating sexual appeal as an actor now a lawyer to ascribing mortal legal action is a transformation similar to Lamia's who fulfils to bewitch her youth and pin him sexually. Yet unlike Lamia who is destroyed in servility and humiliation Metzger when defeated cannot sustain his charm and decides to prey on a younger person as Serge's girlfriend and becomes noncommittal to Oedipa. Metzger lost to Oedipa and that failure does crush his confidence.

Metzger is another kind of sexuality that a detective in that genre comes across. Pynchon does not shy away from showing Oedipa's sexuality and one of the very first images of her is her sexual association with Inverarity under a Damocles type bust that can fall on any moment. Pynchon also works in analogies as the genre prefers: the insecure sex between Oedipa and Pierce shows that their relationship is not destined to be due to its unsteadiness. Mucho's ephrophile nature that leads him to secretly pick up teenage girls is also noted as an analogy to how sexual perversion will lead to ruin (for both their relationship and Mucho himself). If the genre plays on cues and putting up clues then these non-verbal and semiotic gestures are actually clues to what an ill-fitting life Oedipa was wearing.

And like the detective genre Oedipa travels to The Scope, the bar, without intent of adventure just a sort of date with Metzger. That is where she sees the alternative mailing system, the first cognition of Trystero as the symbolic muted horn and the words “WASTE.”

After the introduction of W.A.S.T.E Oedipa travels to a false island of consumption and realizes that Pierce was involved as a grave robber of sorts and gets to see her first exposure to Trystero in “The Courier’s Tragedy” the Jacobean revenge drama by Richard Wharfinger. Oedipa did not initially need to search for Trystero: for the detective genre doesn’t necessarily focus on life-long quests at first anyway. It focuses on “cases” as in yarns with fragmentary structures which eventually lead to it being solved or subsequent chain of events being foreseeable or partly predictable.

Yet Oedipa does not know where she is going — this not reflect her personhood or femaleness it reflects that the detective genre’s ease of slipping in, into back alleys and joints with cigars and mob-bosses all rallied up to get even with the heroic protagonist is pretty much a fabrication. The casual ease in which the detective at times operates is equivalent to the Mafioso he so deliberately thinks is raw and unfeeling. These speculations by Kristen Ross in her paper “Watching the Detectives” also adds observantly that the detective is an abstraction for individuality not an individual per say. Oedipa goes beyond the definition of that abstraction by being quite a resilient yet salient person: her connectivity to herself, her moods, and her emotions, her feelings of triumph, rejection, indifference and even disorientation makes her an individual.

Tony Thwaites talks a lot *The Crying of Lot 49* as a problem in choosing because the “Demonic” of labyrinthine choices are juxtaposed so much with each other that it is almost impossible to choose from something because there are so many choices; naming Trystero as a simulacrum he announces the four choices from how Oedipa can be dreaming to how part of it is dreaming to how all it is fabricated to all of it is real.

Trystero may be part simulacrum but not necessarily the whole of it. If simulacrum is an empty image with hollow meanings then Trystero fails as being a complete simulacrum because Trystero is still used as a sign or game of resistance. Its simulacra identity is actually only posited by the “muted horn” nothing else. When Oedipa meets a man to whom she is Arnold Schnaub and who relates how IA meetings take place you see it as analogous as the W.A.S.T.E system and even Schnaub says that one could possibly use the system to contact the leader of IA. It could be very well be that IA also is a substation for W.A.S.T.E as some

segments of the Yoyodyne mailing system: like computers who work on subdomains for some master programs.

Even behind the hyperreal as fun-house mirrors there is a real and not necessary an absolutist real it can be that all of Thwaites' deductions prefigured on Oedipa's reflections are all small pieces in the mosaic or pie chart of truth. It is somewhat apparent that Inverarity was playing a game, maybe not at the start with Oedipa, but with Trystero itself and got more or less killed (The details of his death are left obscure which actually contests with forensic practice that is related to detectives). This death that could have been natural or exacerbated murder but Oedipa does not ask about it neither does anyone.

Ross is able to detect the so-called problem that we can assign to Oedipa and her associates. In her essay she details the detective in Chandler novels such as Marlowe who lives in a postmodernist landscape of California but has modernist ideals which make him more or less at times unbelievable. Ross informs that Marlow doesn't get affected or infected by the neuropathic archways of his scandals in the plot whereas she compares to the French writer Didier Daeninckxx detective Cardin who is more eloquent and palpable within that postmodernist framework but who in the end becomes from main character to anonymous entity. Postmodernist acceptance of the detective rests on this that he becomes a non-entity by making Oedipa a woman we can say that as she is already classified as a non-entity of sorts, a wife with nothing much to do, Pynchon is reversing the process. Pynchon prefers looking at different angles and also like chemical reactions

It is probably a mixture of anonymity and recognition. Oedipa resists only being a connection between Trystero and the people as a detection usually is a postmodern connection for people to the landscape as Ross very expertly put. Oedipa is so involved with everything; her propinquity makes her difficult to be discarded. She may have always been a rival to Inverarity because Inverarity in many ways acknowledged her as an equal and that is why his estate was given to her to do what she thought was reasonable enough.

This could be a reason why Pynchon chose a woman to be his detective for it is Alive who goes to Wonderland and Dorothy who braves Oz (note how Oedipa dismantles Driblette's sexual proposition and how his head comes out like a spectacle as the Wizard of Oz did to Dorothy and her friends). The normal male detective is not engaged he is disengaged (think Sherlock Holmes) and a world that needs an inoculation from Entropy by empathy for Pynchon a regular hardened and disinterested private eye would not make the cut.

This is also the Borgesian approach in locating a detective flair in *The Book of Sand*. In mostly all his stories there is not a dichotomy of ideals but rather different responses to what people experience even in the same stimulus. We see in "The Congress" that Ferri is not himself anymore that he believes the Congress was the only important think in his life and he is not unfeeling just he is morbidly at an impasse that the Congress will be the only thing that ever matters in the Universe from right now. So, in an event that he might die he thinks his only purpose was to write about the final report on the Congress. Irala obviously became a poet; he was not cremated into an non-entity as the books burning that signalled the end of the Congress.

The detective and the poet have much in common as illustrated by Pynchon and Borges. Both of them can encapsulate transient moments, however, the poet prevails more because he or she is not only manifested in solving problems; her or his existence is determined in a buffet of remembrance and forgetting (as Borges would put it) so she/he can escape the terror of being only fixed as one role. So Oedipa also transmigrates between positions of detective and poet and that is why her end at the book is not final. She has escaped character assassination because she has escaped the fixity of roles and she has escaped the assassination of her person as body because of her determination to see things through. It may be an odyssey without rest but Oedipa unlike Oedipus who does most things for glory does things for the most genuine of human emotions: adventure.

**Chapter 3:**  
**Deconstructing Paradigm — Self and Society in *The Aleph* and *Gravity's Rainbow***

From the depths your narrow spaces  
became a whole geography;  
a mound was “the mountain of earth”  
and to climb down it was a dare.

*The Flow of Memories*, Jorge Luis Borges

The War between Good and Evil is not necessarily replaced by the war between prosthesis and synthesis, those attributes became addendums into a rather chaotic order of severe structuralism bounded to politics and war. Yet, at the same time an anti-structuralist tone of finding some privacy or rather a self-contained dynamics is pretty much resilient in the work of Borges. Where imperialism and capitalism warfare run rampant in Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* we see echoes of societal idealism (which can be either religious and/or secular) going against or rather being negotiated with personal reflection and cogitation in *The Aleph*.

The concept of a self-contained dynamics is not a proposition of anti-synchronicity nor exclusion/seclusion, nor is it a fully automated prosthetic society rather it is an inclusion of both archipelago and island, vast distances or minor pathways. One may question how this “self-contained dynamics” integrates or appropriates into a world prefigured by communist/capitalist hierarchies for both prefer to make categories so resplendent that an alternative is considered ridiculous or unjustifiable. It is not sacred light neither is it communicable darkness it is a static like silence that bridges other automated static. This chapter focuses on these topics also on the concept and conceptualizing of false binaries that alleviate societal functioning. Those can be excluded with the understandings of labyrinths and partial appropriation of entropies.

We see this pseudo-quest of sorts of Slothrop in *Gravity's Rainbow* to somewhat understand his condition but in the end he is captured like a dog not by opposition but rather by his own side for experimentation. Slothrop just becomes nothing but a figment by the end of the

novel. Like *1984* he becomes nothing more than Big Brother's tool with nothing to tell him much of what he was doing or who he is except a veteran of sorts becoming a fetish for imperialism. Slothrop's taxonomy is always that he is a soldier first and also an experimentation. Unlike Oedipa whose anti-structuralist mode and certain freedom makes her compose more for of herself Slothrop is relegated into fragments and does nothing but verbiage reportage. The faculty of discernibility is lost in him. With his "consciousness demise" Pynchon shows how war and structuralism based of war fortifies personal failure even a failure to compose identity.

Consumer warfare and war as consumption immediately alienates those participating in it. There is no novelty nor heroism nor even pride in species, nationalism or existentialist theory. Pynchonian narrative extends the Wasteland of T.S. Eliot, however, there is no peace here because the narrator or protagonist is not even conscious it is a wasteland to escape from. Like the Minotaur of Borges' "House of Asterion" the Minotaur is mostly aware of death because though he is in a compartment where he can be assured of many things his only remuneration of life is by death. It is a sad truth to live by and so he anticipates death more earnestly than most because he knows that this life in a labyrinth of minimalism, modernist notions of heroism and decadence there is no life to play at or be played at so he decidedly resigns himself. Slothrop may not know of his ability much nor of his life-plan and thus lacks the intelligence of the Minotaur but he too is a caged beast in the labyrinth of War.

Technology is a surplus in *The Aleph* whereas it is all that Slothrop can actively understand in *Gravity's Rainbow*. In the very story "The Aleph" we see the protagonist seeing the disk like object as a sort of three dimensional planetarium where all synchronicity can take place but because the owner has pained him he decides not to speak much about it to him though he remembers the spiritual experience related to it and attempts to understand it. The Imipolex G. does not invoke such a feeling; it is limited and can only be used as fetishizing male sexuality and the analogous rocket also engenders death and destruction. Though, both Slothrop and the Borges of "The Aleph" know that some sort of societal framework is embedded into these objects. For the Borges of the story it is a the unfathomable in something that is only partly fathomable thus it is both a mystical device and spiritual connection to God not necessarily organized religion but rather the word itself is hermeneutic of a series of things inexplicable by modern life. Imipolex G has a different aura and an opposite it is not mystic but like any plasticity stretches the critical mass of fetishism.

The question arises: aren't then both objects in reflection a dichotomy? Partly yes, but also as the beginning of this chapter aforementioned, prosthesis and synthesis has become extensions of a larger battle that may or may not extend the Good and Evil framework. Of all things stated Imipolex G is inert if all it does is stretch as it is the first erectile plastic. No one wishes it to consummate anything that has anything to do with war relief rather they wished to propel more advanced V-2 rockets with. The entire structure of the plastic is mounted on male erection and how rampant male sexuality, its proliferation and profiting from promiscuity, may not be so wise a choice. The entire name Imipolex G sounds like a crude anagram that might mean "impotent God Complex" which many of the male characters have in this novel due to imperialism and capitalism-consumerist wealth or a misguided Communist fetish. Antithetically, the disk in "The Aleph" is a library of certain subjectivities yet Borges decides to keep private about them knowing that an Aleph found is good to keep sacred and airtight within oneself. It becomes too fetishized if left to be propagated by people not able to grasp it.

Of course, we also see such a fine tuning in "The Two Labyrinths" where one constructed technology affronts so much that the desert becomes the semiotic original for the Labyrinth and a fallen king is left to die there:

Then he returned to Arabia with his captains and his wardens and he wreaked such havoc upon the kingdoms of Babylonia, and with such great blessing by fortune, that he brought low its castles, crushed its people, and took the king of Babylonia himself captive. He tied him atop a swift-footed camel and led him into the desert. Three days they rode, and then he said to him, "O king of time and substance and cipher of the century! In Babylonia didst thou attempt to make me lose my way in a labyrinth of brass with many stairways, doors, and walls; now the Powerful One has seen fit to allow me to show thee mine, which has no stairways to climb, nor doors to force, nor wearying galleries to wander through, nor walls to impede thy passage." Then he untied the bonds of the king of Babylonia and abandoned him in the middle of the desert, where he died of hunger and thirst.  
Glory to Him who does not die

(Borges 263-264)

Yet magical realism shows the intricacies of technology as a support, a bouncy for spiritualism. This is not the same in the decrepit wasteland of *Gravity's Rainbow*. Slothrop's time in the Casino is elementary for he indulges in sex and booze as part of a conscious effort to drop away from the mysterious "Kenoshe Kid" who is apparently Dr. Jampf the same man

who also made crptosine a chemical compound that combines with melanin properties of semen then encodes a fluorescent message incorporated in secret intel. Dr. Jampf is almost a comedic figure related to Freud and his sexual escapades in theory. For him the secret of the world is all within a penile erection. Pynchonian satire however is cutthroat dangerous as Jonathan Swift's satires showing how such a universe compounded on sexual fetishism also considers the rocket as an analogy to fecundity. We see that with the "Schwarzkommando" who do so to construct meaning in a world where imperialism and simulacrum has merged into a structuralism that perverts the cycle of death and life. Not to mention the "Schwarzkommando" are all coloured, Black people with their leader Enzian being a hybrid, half-brother to the European Tchitcherine. These people are the Hereros, the outcast coloured community who live underground thus enabling the semiotics of surface and ground positions. Like the subterranean cult of Trystero whose W.A.S.T.E ("We await silently Tristero's Empire") is the wasting away of imperialistic skins and become liberated we see the Hereros try the same thing with the rocket. Yet the oppressed cannot easily escape oppression if their own leader, a hybrid, is still potent of the old hegemony of torture. Tchitcherine wants to best Enzian and Enzian wants to best Tchitcherine. Like lost souls the Hereros start worshipping or holding the rocket as the only virtue left to them for salvation. Enzian does not stop this because his own perversion is inflated as the fetishized penile euphemisms strutting about. Stability is a need and it gets corrupted.

This need for stability, of any kind, is actually first approached by Jessica who is Roger Mexico's girlfriend. While Mexico thrives in the variable madness of the Poisson Equation (which many just another way of saying poison or a name of a fish) which can calculate the trajectory of rockets. Jessica looks at the debilitating destruction around an off-area where she and Roger lives and hopes that even the dirigibles and sirens stay but something stays. She had had a dream earlier which was perverse dream of people collecting dolls for some malicious intent; this serves almost like a fairy tale analogy to the time Pointsman tries to literally abduct stray children and people in The White Visitation building. That building is both capitol and capital of many actions in the novel such as the orgiastic love boat Anubis, both of these institutions symbolize death.

Pynchon continues with the concept of entropy that he had begun in his earlier novel *The Crying of lot 49* and here in Gravity's Rainbow the concept is augmented and its echoing characteristics are further elucidated and elaborated. This concept of entropy and Borges's concept of labyrinth do actually go hand in hand even if their functions do seem dissimilar.



### **en•tro•py** ☒

1. *Symbol S* For a closed thermodynamic system, a quantitative measure of the amount of thermal energy not available to do work.
2. A measure of the disorder or randomness in a closed system.
3. A measure of the loss of information in a transmitted message.
4. The tendency for all matter and energy in the universe to evolve toward a state of inert uniformity.
5. Inevitable and steady deterioration of a system or society.

### **lab•y•rinth** ('læb ə rɪnθ)

*n.*

1. an intricate combination of paths or passages in which it is difficult to find one's way or to reach the exit.
2. a maze of paths bordered by high hedges, as in a park or garden.
3. a complicated or tortuous arrangement or state of things or events; a bewildering complex.
4.
  - a. the bony cavity or membranous part of the inner ear.
  - b. the aggregate of air chambers in the ethmoid bone, between the eye and the upper part of the nose.

(The Free dictionary online)

Both *The Aleph* and *The Book of Sand* capture the essence of the labyrinth in its core. The labyrinth is both a space and a non-space to Borges due to its both intractable and tractable functions. The ideology of this is carried by the stories “Ibn –Hakam al-Bokhari, Murdered in his labyrinth” and “The Two Kings and the Two Labyrinths”, “The Zahir” and “Averroes’s Search” which talk about enlightenment, knowledge, structuralism and the matters of knowledge. If society is about reason, logic and an understanding based on analytical and empirical facets of life then magic realism does censure it with alternatives if not completely erase it or rather show that the effects can have different trajectories (this was reiterated a lot by Wendy B. Faris). Postmodernistic views also discuss on it when talking about various characters in *Gravity’s Rainbow* for it is also through their entropy that we get to see the entropy of Tyrone Slothrop. Entropy is both alternate and systemic destruction/distraction in the Pynchonian novel.

All the definitions of entropy actually are touched on in *Gravity's Rainbow*. Sex, confusion and the deterioration of personality come ironically almost at the end of the World War II. If it fetishized as a destabilising factor or stabilising factor it can still carry merit to die when people are driven by consumer passions rather than a conclave or mass or summit of actual collective or individualist actions. The paradigmatic throes of the dying system of a part of war or its recycled attributes are pretty disastrous. Katje from sex slave to informant to escapee, Pirate Prentice from chances of becoming a hero becomes traitor and also fugitive to his own life and conscience, Mexico fails to stay together with Jessica who he had not realized till the end was the best inspiration for stability he have had and also a person who kept his sanity so he becomes from "prophet" to pauper and cannot somehow recover from this devastation of lost love. Pynchon makes fun of the concepts of "heroes" and "slaves" which is ironical as it is Katje a former sex slave who can escape mostly undiluted and without much blame and all the heroic soldiers from Mexico, Slothrop to Prentice, Pointsman, Enzian, Tchitcherine who are in the end destroyed by more or less their consumer needs first and foremost more than the embers of war.

If in *The Crying of lot 49* Pynchon talks about variations of entropy in *Gravity's Rainbow* he explores pseudo-binaries and its tessellated object/subjects. Each character has an antithetical equation almost like how the Poisson equation goes through various translations and the V-2 rocket as well. We see Pynchon discuss this idea with the muted post horn and its revivalism in society by various motifs from staying out of consumerist understandings of love to a sign for a secret organisation which is involved in mailing to a recalcitrant psyche related to patents and individual rights on inventions. The Poisson equation is understood by Mexico as variables and to Pointsman as a graph to jot down simulated, linear-like behaviour as the salivating of dogs. Gravity itself and its attachment to rainbow is pretty paradoxical for rainbows are symbolist to defy gravity, the commonplace, the quotidian but gravity is subjected to the pedestrian as in worldly, corporeal and the things we want to at times escape.

For gravity to have a rainbow is the paradigm of entropy reaching not only identity but also systems and structuralism. We are made to look at Roland Barthes and his "Myth Today" when we analyse the novel. Myth, for Barthes, is speech or any discourse that gravitates towards finality as in entropy does. It does not necessitate extraction as in meaning or anything sublime or substantial it just hoists newer or rather deliberate meanings onto something that may or may not mean that. Of course, entropy works both as myth in the

Pynchon novel but also as a Turing Machine as described by William Bloch who wrote a book detailing the mathematics portrayed in Borges's Library of Babel where one of its residents is "The Book of Sand" (at least to him). The second-ordered semiological system that Barthes writes about is applicable to many characters and situations in *Gravity's Rainbow* who are diminishing or have diminished almost entirely beyond a zero (though that is a perversion of nature as going beyond the zero need not mean diminishing but dimensions).

Self and society's paradigms can easily be associated with the mathematical "zero" or "cipher" as called in Arabic. Cipher in English has become translated to codes and enigmas. To Bloch the library of Babel or even "The Disk" talked about in the "The Book of Sand"/*The Book of Sand* is a Euclidean circle but without a tractable or a solvable circumference. If circumference is also translated to gravity or rainbows then we can see how incalculable the epilogue of *Gravity's Rainbow* becomes. The circumference of Slothrop from a man who makes maps out of his sleeping habits, to lab experiment, to a wreck with some odd fantasies on the nymphet Bianca, to a superhero pig and in the end a man attempting to sing the coloniser's language spread his propaganda but becomes lost when the V-2 (one of two both being a gig-lamp of zeroes) finally is detonated. We do not also understand the circumferences of Katje or Prentice or Pointsman or Mexico. Neither do we completely understand Tchitcherine and Enzian. Their lives are a Babel that they themselves can't easily deconstruct.

The Turing machine encodes variables but not necessarily variations. Its box and tape arrangement, a close cousin to the zero and one binary of computer language, have been applied many places and this inevitably makes of think of the séances in the White Visitation building where a certain secular and Pavlovian air surrounds the séance speakers as if they are being trained to only be surrogates for the dead and no longer people as dogs salivating towards food at the sound of bells. The chaos is the closed system which is the war which allows almost no scope of transmigration. In Borges the closed system which is not always a chaotic entropic place but an origin like a zero and a mechanical wheel like a Turing machine can easily be managed if one does read not only chaos but also a form of guide and not a finality:

Again, a manifold is *locally* Euclidean. If we start at any point in space, look around and take a few steps in any direction, do we think we are in Euclidean space? If the answer is yes, then we are in a manifold. If we continue walking, and some unusual phenomenon occurs, such as returning to our starting point, then we realize we are in a nontrivial manifold; that is, one with global non-Euclidean properties. Our universe, for example, seems to be a manifold, although interesting questions arise at black holes. Certainly one cannot imagine standing at a black hole and taking a step in any direction! Researchers are trying to devise methods of determining the global structure; a readable introduction to this area of research can be found in Luminet et al.

(Bloch 60)

In biology, a homomorphism is a correspondence in appearance or form, but not in structure or origin. In mathematics, a homomorphism has almost the exact opposite meaning: it is a formal *map* between two seemingly dissimilar algebraic objects that illuminates a deep correspondence between their underlying structures. Unfortunately, interesting examples require background information beyond the scope of this book, and I stress that I am using the term “homomorphism” metaphorically. (In fact, I’m using “homomorphism” as a synonym for “metaphor.”)

(Bloch 121)

This of course makes us question is all entropy or labyrinths are negative as in are their homomorphism only piloted into one finality of a discourse? Not precisely. Entropy can be positive if it does not spill into other systems and make them chaotic. We see that also in Borges’s understandings of labyrinths. When a labyrinth becomes a desert of destruction or a play on power status, as with the kings, obviously the repercussions are volatile and alienated from the cosmic labyrinths that allow supernovae and black holes and a One Thousand and One Nights to appear with starlight. This concept of unattainable circumference is also understood as both manageable and disruptive forces in the Alpha and Omega of “The Aleph” and “The Zahir” — both stories have objects one is a orb that makes the protagonist feel an indescribable oneness with himself and the world and the other, the coin drives a man to feel inebriated and lost in the vastness of a universe that feels collapsed and not going forward. This inebriation is described in many forms as maps made out of tigers, a scientific astrolabe or even a wise man chased like a Moby Dick because of the enigma he encapsulates. In “The Writing of the God” the cartography is done with jaguars instead but like William Blake, the majestic feline of the wild feels truly to hold both “The fearful symmetry” of the Creator but that same Forge also was Architect to the soft fleece of the human mind.

The alleged binaries in *Gravity's Rainbow* are falsified myths that Barthes would say symptomatic and semiological of classic systems collapsing (a point made by Pynchon when Pudding's old training similar to Clerical systems is made apparent). The very first sets of probable heroes were Prentice and Slothrop who obviously are not heroes: Prentice is an escapist and Slothrop engages recklessly. Pointsman is a man of privations and Mexico a man of ideals; they both are corrupted scientists as Blicero who is the father of the Schwerzgat. Blicero himself is Weismann and his former self's stupidity becomes maliciousness in this latter incarnation ironically he is also juxtaposed with Dr. Jampf who is considered an ignorant idealist. A simpleton-scientist, who instead of making useful anti-rocket devices decides to Pavlov procedure Slothrop's penis into detecting Impolex G which may or may help at all. Katje is juxtaposed with both Gottfried and Margherita. Katje can evolve a bit Gottfried has become more or less like Slothrop, a sexual slave and experiment. Margherita basks in the insanity of her torture and becomes sadomasochistic and it is implied that she may have murdered her own daughter Bianca. This infanticide is both a reversal of the Oedipus trigger and also an appropriation of Western Freudian psychosis that narcissism kills, however, it may also the least Margherita could do as mother for in an world of entropic vibrations no neophyte need be inaugurated.

Sexual and identity conditioning was touched partly in *The Crying of Lot 49* it is fully shown in this latter novel. From the Anubis descending into orgy all the time to Margherita's supposed parthenogenesis of Bianca to Slothrop sex-map to cryptosine everything in war has to somehow tie itself in ejaculation. It is as Pynchon truly thinks that World War II was a giant orgiastic machine incapable of being translated into nothing more than onanism and intercourse. Environmental conditioning is also a source of inspiration in "The House of Asterion" and "Averroes's Search", however, their detailing is more on both the beauty and danger of labyrinths. If Pynchon does look more towards prosthesis than as Michel Foucault stated that sexuality and sexual triggers are constructed he is showing how biological drives as sexuality and aggression are stimulated and can be mechanically manufactured. Synthesis in Borges, in relation to this, is gestated with a comfortable stance with the labyrinth. Asterion does not break his labyrinth though he is a creature of formidable size and intelligence. Averroes does not insult anyone in his gathering to obtain the meanings of tragedy and comedy (analogous to tragic 5 zeroes rocket of Blicero to Enzian's 4 zero and a one rocket) rather he utilizes it to gain meaning because he does not journey far and wide to

obtain it. Identity is formed here by a mystical and mathematical appropriation of space whereas in Pynchon it is the sexual and chaotic that defines space.

We can see that mathematics does shape art and art mathematics as in physics and physical realities in the book *Art and Physics* by Leonard Shlain. In the entire book Shlain seemingly used the slash symbol as in an either/or title to only tie ideas that were initially thought to be dichotomous in nature. One of the many impressions we get of this is the transmigrations of space and time into space-time variations and also energy and matter into one force or a hybrid. This is what can be termed the zeitgeist of art and science meeting and also becoming an entity that can be translated into postmodernist thesaurus.

To understand this to understand also the basics of Euclidean geometry and non-Euclidean geometry that by Westernised logic should be two different fields but are actually not so much. The fifth law of Euclidean geometry which says that a line can be formed within any point of origin but can only have one parallel other line to intersect it can actually only be understood with the aid of non-Euclidean geometry. Non-Euclidean geometry says that there are angles less than  $180^\circ$  that summed together can be that degree (Shlain). Yet this idea introduces the arc and puts aside of the linearity of the Euclidean based geometry. Arcs are hard to translate in the three dimensional understanding of space because we can join lines but do not see arcs so easily as we are supposed to. Thus this is considered also an analogous field with quantum physics which deals with atomic masses and light speeds. However, basic art shows that the principle of a line and an arc can be devised or evaluated with two dimensional diagrams: a line may bend to an arc and an arc can straighten into a line. This is the very principal that also governs the relative nature of light as particle and wave.

Labyrinths function pretty much this way; they are a juxtaposition of non-Euclidean elements and Euclidean ones intermixing. The origin zero itself migrates between states in the same way. Variables are the postulation of binaries in closed orbits that do not get matrix shifts and variations are matrices of many such mathematical leaps. Postmodernism and Magical Realism easily detonate the rigidity of discreteness of disciplines and show that at times there are false binaries and dichotomies at work and structuralisms of the modern world usually, in Barthes's formulation, uses this as the Sign which becomes the loaded and gradually mutilated Signifier who is Signified in the appropriation of hollowness of something not necessarily entropy but part-entropy and part apocalypse.

Shlain talks about White Dwarfs, Neutron Stars and Black Holes and shows that the fate of the stars is pretty variegated. It is the size of the diameter (circumference) and the weight of an origin, which here is translated to gravitational force of a star, shrinking and gaining weight that illustrates its conditions for an after-state. At times supernova occurs and that's that; other times other fates are reserved for stars. A lineage of entropy can be mapped to stars as thermodynamics talks about closed systems operating within themselves. Closed systems are not independent as in isolated they are like the skeletal and muscular structure of humans. Thus decay to a certain extent is a good. Rotting happens when decadence becomes the absolutist or finality of a closed system or any system to Pynchonian dialectics this is war and humanity's response to war.

I felt, almost immediately, the infinite presence of a spell cast to hide Glencairn's whereabouts. There is not a soul in this city (I came to suspect) that doesn't know the secret, and that hasn't sworn to keep it. Most people, when I interrogated them, pleaded unbounded ignorance; they didn't know who Glencairn was, had never seen the man, never heard of him...More than once I balled my fist and hit one of those tellers of precisely detailed lies smack in the face. Bystanders would applaud the way I got my frustrations off my chest, and then make up more lies. I didn't believe them, but I didn't dare ignore them. One evening somebody left me an envelope containing a slip of paper on which were written some directions.... Having said this, he got up. I felt that his words dismissed me, that from that moment onward I had ceased to exist for him. A mob of men and women of all the nations of Punjab spilled out over us, praying and singing, and almost swept us away; I was astonished that such narrow courtyards, little more than long entryways, could have contained such numbers of people. Others came out of neighboring houses; no doubt they had jumped over the walls.... Pushing and shouting imprecations, I opened a way for myself. In the farthest courtyard I met a naked man crowned with yellow flowers, whom everyone was kissing and making obeisances to; there was a sword in his hand. The sword was bloody, for it had murdered Glencairn, whose mutilated body I found in the stables at the rear.

(Borges 270,273)

In "The Man on the Threshold" story by Borges we see how a closed system (here a city) can have variations and use entropy to advantage. The city destroys the identity of the corrupt judge and to make his death also completely "lawful" to the eyes of all involved, inhabitants and foreigners included, they had him murdered and judged by a madman to show his very principles using logic were more mad than the purity of pains faced by the madman. The story entropies but justice has been served but the town is independent and aware and does not rot.

## **Chapter 4:**

### **Me, Myself and I — Identity Search in Jorge Luis Borges and Thomas Pynchon**

As you yourself are the mirror and image  
of those who did not live as long as you  
and others will be (and are) your immortality on earth.

*Inscription on Any Tomb, Jorge Luis Borges*

Art, mathematics science all revolve around a crescendo or let's say integrated matrices of how both fixedness and flexibility can help evolve a self or a collective group of people. Art does this with a superimposition of many themes, mathematics does this with the superimposition of many coordinates and science performs this with the superimposition of many systems. When systems become conducive to waste as *a priori* or proper or initiation as speech collapses its semiotic trajectory to only align itself with hollow myth, we can say that this a perversion of a system that follows usually a structuralist route. Themes becoming violated from their introspective maps are also a mythological device. Coordinates becoming convoluted is a critical mass of entropy gone into frenzy rather than an understanding that makes sense. With Jorge Luis Borges self can have origins in the form of historiography but its genealogy like a labyrinth is found in both peripheries and centres. With Thomas Pynchon the act of self-construction is both fluctuation but also some fixed coordinates. The ideas of these two authors may seem simple but in their discursive anatomies we can note that the entire idea has facets of physics and math, and postmodernism and magic realism. If magic realism has a convex ripple effect then postmodernism may have a concave one. Both chart vibrations but both intersect like the Euclidean line intersects via an arc. Yet how is identity then shaped? People do actively search for identity even when ideologies and Beliefs are present. Identity, like the mathematical Fibonacci sequence, appropriates personal understandings and congruency of ideologies and belief systems.

As aforementioned in the previous chapter Euclidean geometry with its symmetry also needs the asymmetrical or rather unconventional spaces of non-Euclidean geometry. This elucidates the functions of space-time continuum and also matter and energy syntactically working with



one another. Shlain talks about the East/West dichotomy as in the functionality and a different perspective into looking at art and spaces that helped strengthen the framework of relativity. Two Japanese art forms are discussed that warps a dimensional rift on space. This is origami and ikebana. In origami paper is folded into manifolds of dimensions but also an enclosed orbit (the piece of physical paper) and then matter is presented. The paper in itself is a medium; it is a force that can be synchronic to forms, prosthetic in presentation but also self-sufficient, independent. Ikebana, the art of flower arrangement, finds complementary angles, and then unifies them into a picture that can be seen in summation of parts or even fragments. To the Eastern mind independence of a system is not isolation; the conception of Ying-Yang interphases is inclusive to this ideology. Dichotomy is merely a point of reference not always structuralist hegemony.

Shlain had explained these ideas also related to time and space for as he explained the art of Bonzai tree trimming and growing is also an art that is not circumscribed in posterity. It is an art that may live more than the artist and may be continued by another but thoughts of this are not necessarily the goal of the piece. Spatial dimensions play a large role in Eastern art. We see this also in the Middle Eastern classic *Arabian Nights* where Scheherazade weaves a tale but her tale is also a tale within the pages that has importance. In many ways it is this Middle Eastern book of tales that houses the origins of magic realism with its juxtaposition with the fabulous and the ordinary. Attributes of space and time and also understanding dimensions is deeply linked to identity in both postmodernist and magic realist aspects. When Borges uses the Zahir or the Aleph as a reference point he resists finality and talks about dimensions but also surmises labyrinths. The Aleph/Zahir is also a Euclidean space joined with a non-Euclidean symmetry. Posterity does exist in those spaces but at the same time the medium on which this posterity is enacted on is expanded.

The Aleph was an orb at some derelict corner of a house but it encompasses a lot of spaces and the Borges in the tale suggests that seeing the Aleph meant now everything will have the sensation of a Déjà vu. Borges then succumbs to commonplace envy and jealousy and decides to *destroy* it in the sense of *censoring* it. As he has possessed the marvels of it and been possessed by it but the thought of it lingering in the house of Daneri who is composing belligerent poems out of it is horrendous: so, his censorship or act of it is more out of appreciation and love. Borges does not want the sanctity of this labyrinth to meet the end of its integrity by the entropy caused by twisted communication. Yet he does appreciate the forgetting of it for too much knowledge is too overwhelming for men and sleep, relaxation is

vital to help the weary to forget. At the same time the Borges of the tale has an unrequited love affair with the Aleph; its acceptance of him and its accepting him is too much because one cannot consummate a relationship with an Aleph in three dimensional space:

How can one transmit to others the infinite Aleph, which my timorous memory can scarcely contain? In a similar situation, mystics have employed a wealth of emblems: to signify the deity, a Persian mystic speaks of a bird that some-how is all birds; Alain de Lille speaks of a sphere whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere; Ezekiel, of an angel with four faces, facing east and west, north and south at once. (It is not for nothing that I call to mind these inconceivable analogies; they bear a relation to the Aleph.) Perhaps the gods would not deny me the discovery of an equivalent image, but then this report would be polluted with literature, with falseness...

Under the step, toward the right, I saw a small iridescent sphere of almost unbearable brightness. At first I thought it was spinning; then I realized that the movement was an illusion produced by the dizzying spectacles inside it. The Aleph was probably two or three centimeters in diameter, but universal space was contained inside it, with no diminution in size. Each thing (the glass surface of a mirror, let us say) was infinite things, because I could clearly see it from every point in the cosmos. I saw the populous sea, saw dawn and dusk, saw the multitudes of the Americas, saw a silvery spider-web at the center of a black pyramid, saw a broken labyrinth (it was London)... and armies, saw all the ants on earth.. saw in a desk drawer (and the handwriting made me tremble) obscene, incredible, detailed letters that Beatriz had sent Carlos Argentino, saw the Aleph from everywhere at once, saw the earth in the Aleph, and the Aleph once more in the earth and the earth in the Aleph, saw my face and my viscera, saw your face, and I felt dizzy, and I wept, because my eyes had seen that secret, hypothetical object whose name has been usurped by men but which no man has ever truly looked upon: the inconceivable universe. I had a sense of infinite veneration, infinite pity.

(Borges 282-283)

Then from that awe-inspired revelation that is truly spiritual and cryptic yet concomitant with understanding the effects and relationships with the absolute and relative he decides to dismiss this Aleph. Yet his reasons are obvious. It is the feelings of a weary man so his dismissal is not one of actuality rather of mood. It is because he feels cheated out of both consummation of love from Beatriz and also the Aleph yet at the same time wishes that these images and knowledge stay sacrosanct. Borges in the tale is talking about the inscrutable yet also how that inscrutability needs a person who can enjoy and appreciate the inscrutable. For him the beauty of Beatriz had dimensions and that beauty became “obscene” and pedestrian

when Beatriz wrote letters of graphic things to Daneri. To the Borges in the tale the Aleph too became pretty cheap and transient when Daneri wrote them as boring poems.

The tragedy of this is that the Borges in the tale talking of other Alephs which takes shape form as mirrors, disks, pillars, etcetera. Yet those Alephs are so vibrant and bring such leaps of awe in the people who see them and also a sense of feeling renewed that he cannot understand how greatness and coordination does not come to him. That is because the Borges in the tale is making a mistake in understanding the Aleph as only as a connection to his lost love, Beatriz. Of course, the emissions from Dante's work are apparent. Borges, the author, acknowledges Beatrice as the true guide of Dante in *The Divine Comedy* and not Virgil for it is through Beatrice that Dante sees the rose formation of souls and stars that heaven encompasses (Borges, "Beatrice's Last Smile"). So, if Beatriz cannot be a guide Borges in the tale also feels that his ideal heaven has not been found. So, part of him wants to dismiss the Aleph yet it is surely one non-committed feeling. Truth is that he sees the Aleph and is attempting to remember it fondly though its overwhelming images are pretty much making his perception onto a plane not accommodating reality.

Labyrinths and things in them are partial alephs as far as Borges is concerned. Borges with the Aleph and the Zahir focusing on the understandable and the inscrutable forming an x and y, or an alpha and omega framework but it is meshed as in synchronic with things that are not being able to be represented. We see this as an origami making or an ikebana arrangement; people tailoring identity but with also hidden facets of reality. Shlain talked about this when he discussed Rembrandt's completely black paintings where one feels they are looking at nothing yet when one looks at cosmic dark spaces and also the gravitational orbit of a Black Hole there is an identity there if not a translatable one. Borges explained that language may not always be complete because it is shared experience and that experiences have a tendency to tilt towards the phenomenal and also the individualistic (Willis Barnstone, *Borges at 80: Conversations*). There will remain episodes that will require a vocabulary unique to what can be measured in certain space and time or even ever so it is apt for an individual to be reductive while explaining or rather unable to do so. We see this apparent in writers also using neologisms and stream of consciousness writings which though had a modernist beginning were surely incorporated with more metanarrative substratum when transmigrating to the postmodernist plane.

In Borges's story "The Immortals" the only thing that the mortal protagonist realizes that immortality is abject finality. One can argue with this but to Borges immortality is a curse for even when Barnstone interviews him he decides that being Borges for too long would be a curse and that he preferred that death for him is absolute and nothing pertaining to the Borges he is now. This was Borges's feelings when he was eighty. When the protagonist of the story "The Immortals" meets the Troglodyte he names him Argos out of spite; out of thinking that he is unkempt and uninitiated into logic, reasoning and knowledge. Yet, like in "The Weary Man's Utopia" in Borges's *The Book of Sand* this man has seen probably too much. When he finally opens his mouth it is a mouth that has known much and it intoxicates the protagonist making him realize that the city of ruins is the city of the immortals. The same fear is piqued in "The Book of Sand" with its endless pages with too much knowledge that the protagonist hides it. That static eternity on a mortal plane reduces depth perception and that one is immortal when one cannot escape themselves as in what they are now. The protagonist lives countless lives and is reincarnated into many different roles and persons but he can only become liberated when he acknowledges that immortality must be for him fleeting:

Outside the city I saw a spring; impelled by habit, I tasted its clear water. As I scaled the steep bank beside it, a thorny tree scratched the back of my hand. The unaccustomed pain seemed exceedingly sharp. Incredulous, speechless, and in joy, I contemplated the precious formation of a slow drop of blood. I am once more mortal, I told myself over and over, again I am like all other men. That night, I slept until daybreak...*As the end approaches*, wrote Cartaphilus, *there are no longer any images from memory — there are only words*. Words, words, words taken out of place and mutilated, words from other men—those were the alms left him by the hours and the centuries.

(Borges 193-196)

The story is a story within a story like the many passages within a labyrinth. It also has a sense of entropy; the way Borges imagines immortality is subject to entropy because it has variations. Borges in most of his work, where identity searching is concerned, talks in both historiography but also in a genealogy of understanding that things will have variations. It is when things are denied growth and variations that things will eventually be in a rut. This concept is introduced in the opening chapters of *Anti-Fragile* by Nassim Nicholas Taleb who proposes that "robust" is not a good opposite for the word "fragile" because "robust" means

retaining shape only and it cannot be anything else. It lacks the alchemic ability to be transformed or have variations.

This same concept is tied to the concept of the Fibonacci sequences which as the University of Surrey's website math department easily illustrated as the sequences "1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, ..." (it should be noted that a modern version of this sequence also includes "0" as the starting point). There is addition but of sequences and each number is both independent but correlated with one another. Yet this addition has its limits. The Fibonacci sequence is said to be nature's framework and also anatomical framework of many creatures including both flora and fauna. Petal formation and arrangement is said to be dependent on it and so does the spiral in seashells. However, it is explained that the sphere of the shells are not perfect mathematical spirals because it does not diminish and it is made out of parts of circles and squares. This is actually one of most telling things about identity how it varies but also reiterates things in different variations. Shlain explained this as the way Bohr described how light can be both wave and particle and how synchronicity/synthesis is a part of everyday life. Yet it may seem prosthetic to someone who only knows an alienation of components.

In *Gravity's Rainbow* "The White Visitation", "The Anubis" and even "The Schwarzkommando" are all part of the concept of a Trinity and they are both prosthetic and syntactical to each other. Each can be an independent body but each also requires something from each other. It is a perversion of the holy trinity with the ghost being the visitation with its elaborate secularized séances, the Anubis being a father who only knows sex and like a demonic, misogynistic version of Lilith and her demons have orgies and kill children (as Margherita does so to Bianca) and the son of all these calamities is the Schwarzkommando who as a prodigal son gets initiated into the rocket cult. Concepts get reiterated and seek independent houses but also contact and coexist with one another. Mathematically it should be indifferent, as the Fibonacci sequence or even the Poisson equation seems to possess but nothing is purely indifferent or behavioural. Indifference and behaviourism is a prosthesis that enables synthesis; séances or dreams are syntheses that allow prosthesis — waves and particles working together in a harmony that without balance will make only inequity as a balance. It is ironic that without proper discipline into one's own nature and identity one introduces entropy as rot so waves and particles become layers of radiation which becomes reified into V-2 rockets like mutated creatures of human pride and destruction.

Going beyond the commonplace understanding of zero is one of the things that resist rotting forms of entropy. Pynchonian themes intersect with both the linear line/plane of a three dimensional space but also the rainbow/arc of the wider dimensions of existence. Slothrop, in a Lolita-esque sort of half-hearted epiphany, finds the zero quotient in Bianca who is as troubled as him but lacks the tendency to ruin things like other characters in the book. She feels betrayed despite the consensual manner of their sex for it betrays how Slothrop could have loved her, not as Lolita but a new diverse system that went beyond the finality of the pedestrian or superfluously ornate understanding of “zero” — Bianca lived as cipher and dies as a cipher: intact as a form of a transmuted vessel who could have interacted with the Aleph type zero or be an Aleph or Zahir of some sort (this why at one point parthenogenesis was evoked to describe her for it has a semblance of purity and alternative knowledge). Like a look for Dante from Beatrice and Borges of a tale from Beatriz in an image the paralyzing look of Bianca hurts but enlightens Slothrop. Due to his unconstrained and perverted sexuality he will not find an identity; after those encounter he entropies as decomposition as the pure mathematical spiral that diminishes so that is why the last chapter of the book are reflective of fragments of reducible and random elements:

This ascent will be betrayed to Gravity. But the Rocket engine, the deepcry of combustion that jars the soul, promises escape. The victim, in bondage tofalling, rises on a promise, a prophecy, of Escape. . . .Moving now toward the kind of light where at last the apple is apple-colored. The knife cuts through the apple like a knife cutting an apple. Everything is where it is, no clearer than usual, but certainly more present. So much has to be left behind now, so quickly. Pressed down-and-aft in his elastic bonds, pressed painfully (his pectorals ache, an inner thigh has frozen numb) till his forehead is bent to touch one knee, where his hair rubs in a touch crying or submissive as a balcony empty in the rain, Gottfried does not wish to cry out. . . he knows they can't hear him, but still he prefers not to . . . no radio back to them . . . it was done as a favor, Blicero wanted to make it easier for me, he knew I'd try to hold on—hold each...“The edge of evening . . . the long curve of people all wishing on the first star. . . . Always remember those men and women along the thousands of miles of land and sea. The true moment of shadow is the moment in which you see the point of light in the sky. The single point, and the Shadow that has just gathered you in its sweep . . .” Always remember. The first star hangs between his feet.

Now—

There is time, if you need the comfort, to touch the person next to you, or to reach between your own cold legs . . . or, if song must find you, here's one

They never taught anyone to sing, a hymn by William Slothrop, centuries forgotten and out of print, sung to a simple and pleasant air of the period. Follow the bouncing ball:

There is a Hand to turn the rime,  
Though thy Glass today be run,  
Till the Light that hath brought the Towers low  
Find the last poor Pret'rite one . . .  
Till the Riders sleep by ev'ry road,  
All through our cripl'd Zone,  
With a face on ev'ry mountainside,  
And a Soul in ev'ry stone. . . .  
Now everybody—

(Pynchon 774-776)

Luce Lopez-Baralt shows in her paper “Islamic Themes” that that Borges really appreciates Islamic symbols; she showed two very important themes present in the poems “the unending rose” and “To the nightingale” (present in *The Cambridge Companion to Jorge Luis Borges*). Roses are not only a sign of romance but also a sign of the “inconceivable universe” (Baralt, 74). Yet we can see that Slothrop’s rose becomes dishevelled for an inconceivable universe cannot be understood in the fetishizing components of sexuality. The rainbow he encounters is a mushroom cloud and his nightingale is a cuckoo bird singing making him a cuckold to his own sexual interests (at one point Slothrop only translates himself a living penis this embodiment disenfranchises his entirety but it is pure consumer fetish in the making).

Yet Oedipa encounters both the songs of a mystic and the beautiful symmetry of the rose in her nightly outpouring where like a mystic experience she is both out of her body but in space and time with it:

Oedipa sat, feeling as alone as she ever had, now the only woman, she saw, in a room full of drunken male homosexuals. Story of my life, she thought, Mucho won't talk to me, Hilarius won't listen, Clerk Maxwell didn't even look at me, and this group, God knows. Despair came over her, as it will when

nobody around has any sexual relevance to you... So she got up after a while and left The Greek Way, and entered the city again, the infected city. And spent the rest of the night finding the image of the Trystero post horn. In Chinatown, in the dark window of a herbalist, she thought she saw it on a sign among ideographs. But the streetlight was dim. Later, on a sidewalk, she saw two of them in chalk, 20 feet apart. Between them a complicated array of boxes, some with letters, some with numbers. A kids' game?... At some indefinite passage in night's sonorous score, it also came to her that she would be safe, that something, perhaps only her linearly fading drunkenness, would protect her. The city was hers, as, made up and sleeked so with the customary words and images (cosmopolitan, culture, cable cars) it had not been before: she had safe-passage tonight to its far blood's branchings, be they capillaries too small for more than peering into, or vessels mashed together in shameless municipal hickeys, out on the skin for all but tourists to see. Nothing of the night's could touch her; nothing did. The repetition of symbols was to be enough, without trauma as well perhaps to attenuate it or even jar it altogether loose from her memory. She was meant to remember... They knew about the post horn, but nothing of the chalked game Oedipa had seen on the sidewalk. You used only one image and it was a jump-rope game, a little girl explained: you stepped alternately in the loop, the bell, and the mute, while your girlfriend sang: Tristoe, Tristoe, one, two, three, Turning taxi from across the sea . . . "Thurn and Taxis, you mean?" They'd never heard it that way. Went on warming their hands at an invisible fire. Oedipa, to retaliate, stopped believing in them.

(Pynchon 80-82)

Oedipa's journey into the night is like Keats' *Ode to Nightingale* and also evokes Borges's nightingale because both Keats and Borges see the nightingale as a mystical creature that represents those dwindling yet untranslatable aspects of the soul. Oedipa's sojourn into the night allows her to see the various variations of Trystero and Trystero itself becomes like a word or an object that attempts to become an Aleph or Zahir; surely, Oedipa treats it as one. In Trystero like the collapsed rainbow of Pynchon's latter work (where the rocket both explodes and implodes at the same time both figuratively and literally for Gottfried attached to it means an internal assassination with an external rupture) many colours are coordinated. A map or genealogy of Trystero can be represented by the philatelic assemblage of "muted horn" that becomes the tapestry akin to the weaving of the girls in the tower of Varo's picture. Trystero like the maidens in the tower is attempting to be a rainbow of meanings with gravitational surge that assorts many meanings.



Borges had had the experience of being outside of space and time of this plane but not necessarily losing consciousness twice in his life so these strings of feeling are pretty important to him (Barnstone interview). Variations of experiences, the need to be fixed at the same time expressive are what also happen when Oedipa studies the editions of “The Courier’s Tragedy”. Emory Bortz helps her with a history but it is sure that its many editions are also resonant to the many identities Oedipa had enacted, possessed and inherited. Trystero, in its ability to manipulate had underestimated people like Oedipa who are recalcitrant to only have one purpose for something. Oedipa is a concomitant to Trystero and has become an embodiment of it and beyond so Trystero somewhat fears her. Though she had become Inverarity’s equal at one point her search for Trystero at which she also found her identity as multifarious and potent has made her surpass Inverarity who could only read Trystero in a collage of post stamps. Like the variations of the play Oedipa’s identities act as both synthesis and prosthesis to people. Like the bones grounded to ink or the bones used as a ploy of fun for Inverarity Oedipa writes with the bones of herself and others yet like some phoenix she resists destruction by entropy rather finds out how to use it to her advantage.

Yet obviously Oedipa does not know everything: she experiences Déjà vu with the muted horn which is how people are when they cannot speak. It is a sign of self and society being censored but Oedipa, though she doesn’t want to hear the children, is able to play the Trystero game. Like the Borges of the tale she cannot translate what has happened yet knows something irrevocably important has happened to her soul. Oedipa the Tupperware enclosed woman, Oedipa the woman who subdues a gunner Hilarius and Oedipa who awaits the crying of lot 49 — permutations to the Fibonacci sequence an emission of thought provoking sketches. Oedipa may be able to go beyond the zero but that zero is untranslatable.

The king and the poet are exiled when they read the poem in the “The Mirror and the Mask” in *The Book of Sand*. The king decides to become a beggar for no throne will now please him and the poet is killed so that he can be censored; of course this is a form of reluctance to accept the finite sense of human longing and universal spiritual constellations but it is what their knowledge can only know to do.

"In the river of the events of that night," mused my father. The other man nodded. "That's it exactly. Within the space of a few hours I'd learned how to make love and I'd seen death at first hand. To all men all things are revealed—or at least all those things that a man's fated to know; but from

sundown of one day to sunup of the next, those two central things were revealed to me. The years go by, and I've told the story so many times that I'm not sure anymore whether I actually remember it or whether I just remember the words I tell it with. Maybe that's how it was with the Captive, with her Indian raid. At this point what difference does it make whether it was me or some other man that saw Moreira killed.

(Borges 450)

Identity is akin to a river. You even have a reference to the Styx the waters of death in association to the ship "The Anubis". A river is the best symbol for the understanding of prosthesis and synthesis. We see that partly in "The Night of the Gifts" after all where there is lovemaking there is also the closeness of death. This is also apparent in "Emma Zunz", "A Biography of Tadeo Isidore Cruz" and "Avelino Arredondo." Emma has to sell her virginity to kill the man who oppressed her father and get revenge and Cruz who though wearing the nation's military clothes decides to fight alongside the rebel as though it was his own cause and kin. Maybe not in the same basket but both can occupy the same house or same space. In Borges's stories "The Wait" in *The Book of Sand* and "The Dead Man" in *The Aleph* the river is mostly a prosthetic, an identity that is extenuating an impending reality:

Otálora realizes, before he dies, that he has been betrayed from the beginning, that he has been sentenced to death, that he has been allowed to love, to command, and win because he was already as good as dead, because so far as Bandeira was concerned, he was already a dead man. Suárez fires, almost with a sneer.

(Borges 200)

Alejandro Villari and a stranger had at last caught up with him. He gestured at them to wait, and he turned over and faced the wall, as though going back to sleep. Did he do that to awaken the pity of the men that killed him, or because it's easier to endure a terrifying event than to imagine it, wait for it endlessly— or (and this is perhaps the most likely possibility) so that his murderers would become a dream, as they had already been so many times, in that same place, at that same hour? That was the magic spell he was casting when he was rubbed out by the revolvers' fire.

(Borges 268)

The river is not the same water each time you touch it but those waters are always connected in a concentric knot of destiny. Otolara is extended honours so that he can be deceived before being killed and the protagonist of “The Wait” decides to wear the name “Villari” though it is the name of his nemesis because it allows him to remember death. Otolara shares in Slothrop’s sadness because both are only allowed to be deceived and to them self-deception is pretty reflexive. Though these stories are morbid they do show how the river of identity is managed by people.

The end of the story can only be told in metaphors, since it takes place in the kingdom of heaven, where time does not exist. One might say that Aurelian spoke with God and found that God takes so little interest in religious differences that He took him for John of Pannonia. That, however, would be to impute confusion to the divine intelligence. It is more correct to say that in paradise, Aurelian discovered that in the eyes of the unfathomable deity, he and John of Pannonia (the orthodox and the heretic, the abominator and the abominated, the accuser and the victim) were a single person.

(Borges 207)

Thirteen hundred years and an ocean lie between the story of the life of the kidnapped maiden and the story of the life of Droctulft. Both, now, are irrecoverable. The figure of the barbarian who embraced the cause of Ravenna, and the figure of the European woman who chose the wilderness—they might seem conflicting, contradictory. But both were transported by some secret impulse, an impulse deeper than reason, and both embraced that impulse that they would not have been able to explain. It may be that the stories I have told are one and the same story. The obverse and reverse of this coin are, in the eyes of God, identical.

(Borges 211)

It is the understanding that there are no sects here rather a feeling that civilisations cannot exist without an accessible “wilderness” — this “wilderness” is intractable but not frenzied. It is faithful to the designs of the human heart and the human need for both chaos and harmony. It is what Shlain and Nietzsche defined as Dionysian/Dionysiac with the Apollonian/Promethean/Apolline. Nietzsche had furthered the concept of Dionysius in *The Birth of Tragedy* saying it is not merely frenzy but rather what can be paraphrased as impulsive towards non-logical things. Here the river is mostly syntactic, synchronic. Even in

Islam sects are disallowed due to their entropic and myopic tendencies as this allows the beauties, and knowledge and loving Allah come to harmony of disharmony.

Lack of discussion and appreciation was also the reason a sectarian force came about in *Gravity's Rainbow* between the characters of Tchitcherine and Enzian. Both being brothers cannot be brothers because they rather find their purpose in trying to murder one another. Borges also elucidates this concept in his stories "Emma Zunz", "Avelino Arredondo" and "The Bribe." Emma Zunz can only live for murder; she gives up her bodily chastity for that and though she is sad for it she decides that it is for the best, Arredondo also was chaste and celibate and attempting to live with the minimalist life of a pious Christian yet decides to murder the president. For him, as he stated, it was not propaganda or any papers or anything but he felt that was something he had to do (a bit like madman in "The Man on the Threshold"). For two scholars in "The Bribe" vanity becomes more important than knowledge and one even flaunts his American passport saying those who have it will have different destinies (the superiority complex is evident). These characters shed a chunk of their identity to pursue an identity rooted in violence.

This sectarianism is also the reason the Hereros and the Tristero enthusiasts/followers/users have a hard time fitting in with others. The Hereros are practically subterranean living in cities underground for they are Black and the rejected progeny (both literally and biologically) and Tristero has managed many covert operations. Of course such sects can be manipulated when things are not apparent. This happened as the Schwarzkommando became more frenzied than revolutionary and decides to just think a rocket is salvation. This also happens with the sailor Oedipa encounters who is exhausted and must die anonymously:

So when this mattress flared up around the sailor, in his Viking's funeral: the stored, coded years of uselessness, early death, self-harrowing, the sure decay of hope, the set of all men who had slept on it, whatever their lives had been, would truly cease to be, forever, when the mattress burned. She stared at it in wonder. It was as if she had just discovered the irreversible process. It astonished her to think that so much could be lost, even the quantity of hallucination belonging just to the sailor that the world would bear no further trace of. She knew, because she had held him, that he suffered DT's. Behind the initials was a metaphor, a delirium tremens, a trembling unfurrowing of the mind's plowshare. The saint whose water can light lamps, the clairvoyant whose lapse in recall is the breath of God, the true paranoid for whom all is organized in spheres joyful or threatening about the central pulse of himself, the dreamer whose puns probe ancient fetid shafts and tunnels of

truth all act in the same special relevance to the word, or whatever it is the word is there, buffering, to protect us from. The act of metaphor then was a 7 thrust at truth and a lie, depending where you were: inside, safe, or outside, lost.

(Pynchon 88-89)

For the sailor who used Tristero and was used by Trysterero a viking funeral (usually giving to those Viking warriors) seemed the best analogy. After all when Mucho falls into the LCD induced collapse of personalities which to him is the orchestra of different statics and even monosyllables he is being as quartered and sectarian and becomes a poor copy of the madness that engulfed Pierce Inverarity.

It is hinted that Oedipa should have searched also at the identity of Mark Fallopian due to his subterranean and conjuring qualities of space and presence. The fact that he weaves his way both in public space and alternative space without boundaries and threats of death is actually pretty cryptic of the nature his identity. But Oedipa wants to find her own identity or rather her identity in various mediums by looking at the Fibonacci Sequence like variations of a Jacobean play.

The Aleph/The Zahir is also in many ways what the physicists would call the 10th dimension because it is also what we humans can or will be able to imagine but at the same time it is more than that. Like Kurt Godel's theorem of incompleteness (which propelled Zia Haider's *In The Light of What We Know* debut novel), there will always be in math and other disciplines things we can't calculate or know. This philosophy is also evident in the mathematical understanding of Prime numbers. It is said that they are finite because at one point numbers will entropy out of the prime space as we may have exhausted the principle of a prime. Yet if we hold "z" as the sign for infinity and say that infinity is a prime then Prime numbers will be both finite but have that last trace of infinity to hold as exception to its case. Thus it is a labyrinth of paradoxes, like a search for identity, but as the deep communion between soul and body the paradox is the perfect rainbow which can resist and accept gravities and zahirs of all sorts.

## Conclusion

Like the spirals of a seashell we see have seen the similarities and differences understanding one another for both the Americas in the authors Thomas Pynchon and Jorge Luis Borges. The theories and ideas expressed here were delineated to approximate or equal to the context and paradigms/anti-paradigms present in the story. Borges has expanded the usage of labyrinths into something more or less a vocabulary of the human self. Pynchon has done the same with entropy and gravity. It is fascinating to see both mathematical architecture and science terminologies being used by what we term as fictional stories even if the circumstances and theories are not fictional.

Both Americas hold identity and spirituality as important things. Both lament if one and the other is lost or can't manage themselves into one. Both authors show the problem of classification if it is not used as addendum but rather defining, unbiased (or in a way biased) projectile (V-2 rockets) or the excesses of Borges' Congress. At the same time both authors talked about the intractable in images as the muted horn and the Varo painting, to coins and tigers/jaguars and to the words such as Trystero and Aleph/Zahir.

As this thesis discussed false binaries even complicated to failed unions (such as orgies and androgynous antagonists) it also detailed the positive of some dichotomies and the endurance and growth of other synchronic spaces. The main themes of variations and contextual singularities with fragments had been an impetus for this work. If Modernism had made icons out of "oneness" to a form of finality and structuralism then Postmodernism/postmodernisms and Magic Realism/magic realisms have made that many angles and forms can be framed into a narrative. That is why math involves both Euclidean and non-Euclidean symmetries and stars are not conducive to only supernovae but also black holes, pulsars, etcetera.

As Kurt Godel's theorem of incompleteness and Fibonacci sequence reiterates there may be definable lines but there may be undefinable planes or depth. For in the end God Himself/Herself, the non-gendered, the non-sexed Creator can be seen in the beauty of natures but also the unimaginable imaginations of other people. It is this dynamics that help our universes, the cosmic and the corporeal, thrive. The anthropic principle may detail only a few things but our existences are the stuff of noumena and phenomena that will be ultimately a DNA helix of predictability with the unprecedented.

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