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Doubling, Subjectivity, and the Role of Ideology in the Novels of Thomas Pynchon

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Declaration

This is to certify that the work contained within is entirely my own and I am the sole composer of this thesis. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. Any quotation or paraphrase from the published or unpublished work of another person has been duly acknowledged throughout the thesis.

Benjamin Brown 17/04/2023

Abstract

This thesis argues that the role of the double in Thomas Pynchon's work is to demonstrate the means by which subjectivity and ideology can be questioned and subverted in order to undermine the dominant systems of power. I provide a thesis length exploration of the doubling motif in three of Pynchon's late novels: *Mason & Dixon* (1997), *Against the Day* (2006), and *Bleeding Edge* (2013). The ideas that form the basis for my understanding of subject and ideology are centred around the work that Louis Althusser has composed on this topic. Althusser's argument that ideology is the imagined relationship that a subject has towards the systems that govern their existence is central to my reading of Pynchon's presentation of these ideas. This imagined relationship is dictated by the ideology itself in order to benefit its own principles. For the subject, this same relationship is what dictates what is and what is not socially acceptable. Ideology and subjectivity are also central features of the Gothic genre. It is for this reason that the Gothic will be my primary point of comparison in terms of the doubling motif and how Pynchon adapts it to his own aims. In Gothic texts, the double is often presented along the binary lines of good and evil. Doubles are usually presented as expressions of a transgression from the dominant ideologies and must be destroyed as a means to restore order to society. It is the assertion in my thesis that Pynchon refuses to engage with the binaries that underpin the Gothic double. Instead, he presents the double not as a cause for fear or danger, but as simply a means of alternative existence for the characters that populate his texts. In fact, the characters that refuse to conform to the singular ideals of the dominant ideology are treated far more sympathetically than those that fully subject themselves to these systems. Conversely, those that do benefit from these ideals are ultimately presented as far more evil than those who challenge it. The final section of the thesis also draws on George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). I utilise the principles of doublethink first introduced in Orwell's text as another example of how doubling can be used by an ideology to dictate the thought processes of its subjects. Orwellian doublethink is centered around the idea that a subject must make two contradictory claims into a single authoritative truth that makes seemingly complete logical sense. This process takes place despite the illogical nature of considering two opposing ideas as resulting in the same thing. Through its use and subversion of both the Gothic and Orwellian examples of doubling, Pynchon's work makes clear that ideologies are oppressive and destructive forces for the majority of those who are subject to them. The thesis concludes that, in Pynchon's work, the double is a means to challenge and undermine the dominant ideals of a particular society. It is not the subjects that challenge the dominant ideologies that are presented as evil, but the ideologies themselves.

Lay Summary

The Thesis provides an exploration of the doubling motif in three of Thomas Pynchon's late novels *Mason & Dixon* (1997), *Against the Day* (2006), and *Bleeding Edge* (2013). My reading of these texts is also highly influenced by Louis Althusser's arguments surrounding ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. I argue that in the Gothic literature, from which the Double initially emerged, the motif is often demonstrative of a transgression from the dominant ideologies which must be destroyed as a means to restore order to society. However, it is the assertion in my thesis that Pynchon refuses to engage with the binaries that underpin the Gothic double. Instead, he presents the double not as a cause for fear or danger, but as a means of alternative existence for the characters that populate his texts. In fact, the characters that refuse to conform to the singular ideals of the dominant ideology are treated far more sympathetically than those that fully subject themselves to these systems. Conversely, those that do benefit from these ideals are ultimately presented as far more evil than those who challenge them.

The thesis is divided into three larger chapters, each focused on one text. Each chapter is further divided into two-subsections. The first chapter, on *Mason & Dixon*, begins with a section focused on the two central protagonists and their relationship as doubles. The following section extrapolates these ideas and considers them in light of the ideologies which existed on the American continent during the early period of European colonisation. It examines the doubling that takes place between these colonial ideological structures and the Native American ideologies which already existed across this space. The next chapter considers doubling in Pynchon's 2006 novel *Against the Day*. The attention is primarily centred on the Traverse family, one of the many groups of characters that the novel focuses on. Section one explores the doubled identity of the family patriarch Webb Traverse before shifting towards a consideration of his doubled relationship with the novel's central antagonist Scarsdale Vibe. Section two casts its attention upon Webb's sons, Reef and Frank Traverse, and explores the doubling that occurs between them as a result of their relationship with Webb. The final chapter of the thesis on *Bleeding Edge* begins with a section on the digital landscape of the early twenty-first century. It examines how doubling has been affected by these new technological developments and the cultural movement towards online identities. The final section considers the impact that neoliberal ideals and societies have had on the individual's identity and again considers what role the double has taken on in light of these developments.

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Abbreviations

AD- Against the Day

BE- Bleeding Edge

GR- Gravity's Rainbow

IV- Inherent Vice

L49- The Crying of Lot 49

M&D- Mason & Dixon

V- V.

VL- Vineland

Introduction

Throughout the entirety of his literary oeuvre, Thomas Pynchon's novels are populated with doubled characters and divided identities. Tony Hilfer notes that Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) is "an extraordinary web of links among characters and actions, doubles, role-playing and role-reversing" (146); Sue J. Kim mentions "the way Pynchon emphasizes the links between selves through doubling and repetition" (120); and Tony Tanner in a reading of Pynchon's early short story "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna" (1959) notes a figure that the main character "half recognizes as a *Doppelgänger*" (26). More in-depth studies have been carried out by Gordon Slethaug, who dedicates a chapter to *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) in his book *The Play of the Double in Postmodern American Fiction* (1993), and Douglas Keesey, who published an article entitled "The Politics of Doubling in "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna"" (5-19). Whilst all of these critics have mentioned or provided short investigations into the role of doubling as it relates to characters in Pynchon's writing, the primary focus has been upon this motif in Pynchon's earlier work, specifically the texts published before the seventeen-year hiatus between *Gravity's Rainbow* and Pynchon's next novel *Vineland* (1990). It is with this lesser focus on doubling in Pynchon's later works in mind that I will provide a thesis length exploration of this motif in three of Pynchon's late novels: *Mason & Dixon* (1997), *Against the Day* (2006), and *Bleeding Edge* (2013). It will be the purpose of this thesis to argue that, in Thomas Pynchon's work, the double is used to demonstrate the means by which subjectivity and ideology can be questioned and subverted in order to undermine the systems of power that dominate the lives of his

characters, as well as those of the reader. By focusing on the similarities and shared traits that characters either begin with, or adopt from each other, I will argue that the encounter with the double in these three late Pynchon texts, often leads not to a questioning of self, but the opportunity to gain a greater level of self-awareness. By presenting this reading in contrast to the Gothic, as I plan to do, the shared motif of doubling between these forms of narrative and Pynchon's work reveals the tensions that exist between them. It will be my claim that the Gothic genre is ultimately conservative in its treatment of ideological transgression, and as a result the double is treated as something to be destroyed in order to maintain social equilibrium. In Pynchon's narratives though, the double's ability to upset this equilibrium is what provides the characters with the ability to experience a greater level of freedom, whilst also illustrating the manipulative nature of all ideologies and the ways in which they are responsible for limiting the autonomy of their subjects.

As mentioned above, although Pynchon's earlier narratives have been read by some critics with a focus on the double, or doubles, critics writing on Pynchon's more contemporary works have been hesitant to offer sustained analyses of this motif in his later novels. Several critics have made passing reference to the ways in which Mason and Dixon are connected, but these acknowledgements are often in service to a broader point about the larger systems of power within the novel. In his essay "'Falling into the Sky': Gravity's and Levity in Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*", Doug Haynes argues that Mason and Dixon's respective professions connote "an unusually benign and productive relationship between above and below: the astronomer's stargazing works

alongside the terrestrial gaze of the surveyor to measure and create spaces and lines" (359), before claiming that it is "it is veiled higher powers who actually commission the duo's work" (359). Haynes recognises that there is a link between the two characters but, in this instance, he is more concerned with the way in which Mason and Dixon are artificially brought together by higher powers, than the connections that might already exist between them if they were to be read as doubles. Similarly, Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds asserts that "for all their palpable characterization, even Mason and Dixon themselves sense that the machine of time, of the Royal Society, of powers beyond their ability to know, much less control — the web of influence itself — is the main character of their paranoid plot" (7). Hinds acknowledges Mason and Dixon's palpable characterisations but offers little actual analysis of these characters. Instead, she, like Haynes, focuses on the fact that both protagonists are part of a larger plot instigated by higher forces. In both of the above examples, Haynes and Hinds are far more interested in how Mason and Dixon's relationship is framed in terms of the "veiled higher powers" within the novel, than on how Mason and Dixon's own respective understandings of these systems are affected as a result of this relationship.

There has been a similar focus on how doubling is used to represent the larger forces of control in Pynchon's next novel, *Against the Day*. Justin St. Clair states that "Pynchon generates depth by juxtaposing "flat" characters in pairs, relying on the reader to process the disparity between the two images" (75, quotation marks in original). One of the examples that St. Clair offers as evidence for how the novel generates depth by pairing "flat" characters is the relationship between "Scarsdale

Vibe, 'the novel's central 'evil capitalist' caricature, and his double, Foley Walker" (76, quotation marks in original). He asserts that "[s]eparately Scarsdale Vibe and Foley Walker are flat, cartoonish figures. Taken together, however, they are a complicated three-dimensional construct situated at the intersection between politics, economics, and religion" (76). St Clair then argues that readers who triangulate characters to plumb the novel's depths quickly fathom that the compound organism of Vibe and Walker is indeed a prototypical corporation" (76). Like Haynes and Hinds in their analysis of *Mason & Dixon*, St Clair does recognise that there are paired and doubled characters in *Against the Day*, but he examines them as means for representing the larger forces which emerge as significant within the novel, in this instance the corporatisation of America. Amy J. Elias notes that "[a]s in picaresque understood as *romance*, Pynchon's novel doubles and mirrors characters and scenes as if to construct an allegorical landscape" (31), but again her focus is how these doubled characters can be viewed within a larger allegorical landscape, rather than as an aspect of the novel deserving of their own sustained analysis.

With regards to *Bleeding Edge*, although some critics have noted the relationships that particular characters share with each other, there has been very little focus on doubling as it pertains to the central characters in the text. Perhaps the closest anyone has come to reading *Bleeding Edge* with a sharper focus on doubling is David Cowart. He argues that "[e]ven at their most seemingly inconsequential, Pynchon's pairs contribute to larger meanings" which he claims is reflected in *Bleeding Edge*'s "recurrent conceit of actors supposedly appearing in biopics as the famous people

(often fellow denizens of Hollywood) they happen to resemble" ("Down of the Barroom Floor of History"). Cowart later asserts that "[t]hese jeux d'esprit—the puns, the faux biopics, the various doublings—reveal themselves as the constituent parts, the molecules and cells, of the larger, more clearly consequential binaries of history and story, his story and her story, history and historiography" ("Down of the Barroom Floor of History"). Cowart, like Haynes and Hinds with *Mason & Dixon* or St. Clair with *Against the Day*, argues that the doubling relationships in *Bleeding Edge* are used to reveal the constituent parts of a larger historical process.

In contrast to the previous criticism I have included here, my thesis will concentrate on readings of *Mason & Dixon*, *Against the Day*, and *Bleeding Edge* which primarily focus on how doubling directly impacts the characters and their relationships with each other, as well as the larger systems of power that dominate their lives. As I hope to have shown, up until this point, critics have mainly focused on the ways that doubled and paired characters have been used to illustrate the practices and methods utilised by the systems of order in Pynchon's later narratives. However, this thesis will argue that, in spite of earlier critics' contentions, Thomas Pynchon's later works also use the doubling motif in order to question and subvert the ideologies of these larger systems of power. Many critics have already offered analyses of Pynchon in the light of the anti-authoritarian leanings presented in his narratives. In his reading of Pynchon as a historical author, Shawn Smith argues that there is "an ethical resistance to the oppression, victimisation, and injustice that, for Pynchon, characterizes the transitional moments of which he writes" (2). Smith claims that Pynchon's novels choose to focus

on the moments of historical transition because they represent a time when resistance is at its most powerful. Joanna Freer, in her book *Thomas Pynchon and the American Counterculture* (2014), has also noted that Pynchon's narratives are "carefully constructed so as to challenge preconceptions and prejudices, and encourage independent critical speculation and investigation" (*Counterculture* 1). Like Smith, Freer recognises Pynchon's desire to challenge the preconceptions and prejudices of society through his narratives. Although Freer, Smith, and many others have noted the anti-authority stances that characterise Pynchon's novels, it will be the main focus of my argument to explore and examine these sentiments, specifically through the motif of the double. The thesis will claim that, whilst previous literary incarnations of doubling, particularly those in Gothic novels, are often presented as sources of fear, in Pynchon's texts the double in only ever terrifying when it is produced by the ideologically dominant forces in society to inhibit the autonomy of the individual.

As doubles will play such a substantial role in my thesis, it is important to offer a brief explanation of the contextual framework which will form the basis for my reading of this motif in Pynchon's work. Perhaps the most influential theoretical reading of the double is that of Sigmund Freud in his essay "The Uncanny" (1919). Using the work of German Romantic author E.T.A Hoffmann as the basis for this analysis, Freud argues that, in examples of the double, the narrative presents:

> characters who are to be considered identical because they look alike. This relation is accentuated by mental processes leaping from one of these characters to another— by what we should call telepathy—, so that the one possesses knowledge, feeling and experience in common with the other. Or it is marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for

> his own. In other words, there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self (210).

Freud goes on to characterise this doubling as "the repetition of the same features of character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names through several consecutive generations" (210). For Freud the double represents a split within an individual identity. He demonstrates that this can be both a physical or psychological phenomenon but, in every case, the original and the double are connected by a shared set of ideas and experiences which unsettles the stability of the original's self-definition. The individual is unable to truly recognise who they are as a complete person. Instead, they are presented with a divided sense of identity that calls into question exactly who they think they are. The double removes the possibility that there is a stable sense of self within a subject, instead indicating that identity can be fractured and divided into several separate and defined aspects that act independently from each other.

Through a reading of Otto Rank's work on the subject of doubling, Freud notes that the double "was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego" (210). In earlier societies, the double acted as a means to preserve the self. Freud uses the example of the Ancient Egyptians making "images of the dead in lasting materials" (210) as proof of this form of doubling. Even after a person had died in the physical sense, the memorials to them that bore their resemblance meant that they were not completely erased from the world. It allowed them to exercise some influence over society after death. In his reading of this form of doubling, Freud understands that this idea "sprung from the soil of unbounded self-love, from the primary narcissism that dominates the mind of the child and primitive man" (211). According to Freud, whilst

the double may be viewed as a means of self-preservation for some, it is those that are focused on themselves as central to their own existence that treat doubling as such. As children and primitive men are not equipped to recognise the contradictions and divisions within their own personalities, the double represents a copy of themselves which is just as perfect, in their own eyes, as the original. According to Freud, "when this [primitive] stage has been surmounted, the 'double' reverses its aspects. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death" (211). In Freud's argument, the double may be associated with ideas of self-preservation for the undeveloped mind, but once the mind reaches a level of self-awareness, the double represents a potential death of the self. Not only does the double then become an indication of a splitting of identity as a result of divisions and uncertainty within the self, but it can also become so dominant that it erases the original altogether.

Freud's concept of doubling will play a central role in my investigation of the motif in Pynchon's novels. The thesis will offer a reading of the double as an insurance against the destruction of self within these texts but argue that this is just as significant for the complex personalities in Pynchon's novels as it is for the "primitive" ones that Freud describes in his analysis of the topic. These characters use the double to reconcile the contradictions within themselves and the societies and systems around them. I am going to argue that doubling provides a means for characters to navigate the issues of self in relation to the dominant systems of power that appear within these narratives. Whilst it will not be commented on directly, I wish to demonstrate that in Pynchon's

texts, the double is often not a means of narcissistic self-preservation, but a way for characters to protect others from the dangers that their unstable ideological position necessitates in the narrative. Pynchon's characters apply the principles of doubling in a way that not only benefits their own sense of self, but also those they care about within these texts.

In their exploration of Psychopathology and Literature, Javier Saavedra Macías and Rafael Velez Núñez suggest that there are two forms of doubling in Romantic and Gothic texts. The first of these is "the psychological double who steals the identity of the protagonist and pursues him. The double continuously threatens the social position of the protagonist, making life impossible" (260). The second form of doubling that Macías and Núñez propose is "a split personality or dark half of a protagonist acting as a physical manifestation of a dissociated part of the self. This type of double breaks away from the protagonist's self, possibly satisfying the latter's desires initially, but then becoming uncontrollable and eventually destroying the hero's life." (261-262). Whilst these two forms of doubling may appear strikingly similar, they can be more clearly divided between an externally and internally manifested form of doubling. The "psychological double" appears as an external threat to the protagonist's sense of self, that is, outside of their own personality whereas the internalised "split personality" double is the manifestation of the protagonist's own desires. In both of these forms of doubling, Macías and Núñez indicate the centrality of the protagonist's relationship to wider society. The double either erases the protagonist from society themselves, or they allow the protagonist to transgress social convention to such a point where they

must be erased by said society. In both cases, these doubles are presented as evil because they prevent the protagonist from maintaining a stable social position as well as a stable sense of self.

It will certainly be the case that this thesis explores examples of both the psychological and split personality doubling characterised in Macías and Núñez's essay. However, I will suggest that, in Pynchon's work, doubles do not prevent characters from achieving a stable sense of self but aid in this task. Whilst the individual's ideological position is more insecure, their personal sense of self is strengthened. The double and doubling is what allows the characters to continue to exist and actually often strengthens the identity of the individual because the ideologies that appear in these texts are plural rather than singular. In their explanation, Macías and Núñez place the individual within a singular social position, rather than occupying several social positions at once. In contrast, I will suggest that in Pynchon's texts, there is never a singular social position but several social roles that the characters occupy within these narratives. The thesis will show that the character's relationship to society is central to their own identity, but the societies in which these novels take place are just as divided as the characters themselves. In a space that is populated with several opposing and contradictory systems of belief and power, the double allows characters to retain a greater sense of identity. It prevents them from having to destroy a particular aspect of self in order to function within the societies of the texts. Instead of leading to death for the characters in these texts, the double allows them a greater sense of self-

identification because the social structures that a character must function within are just as complicated and contradictory as the characters themselves.

In order to provide a literary point of comparison between doubling in Pynchon's novels and Freud's characterisation of the motif, my thesis will focus on offering, where appropriate, examples of Gothic texts that utilise the double as central to their narratives. My choice to focus on the Gothic specifically stems from the breadth of the genre's focus as well as the shared elements between Pynchon's work and earlier Gothic novels. Whilst Gothic literature finds its origins in the late eighteenth century, it has continued to evolve and change throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century to reflect the concerns of the age in which specific writers have taken on the genre. Throughout my thesis I will select the texts that best demonstrate the points of comparison I wish to make between the historical application of the double within the Gothic genre, as defined by Macías and Núñez, and the primary Pynchon texts subversion of the motif. The Gothic writing of the eighteenth and nineteenth century is a useful tool of comparison because, as I will argue, it is an ultimately conservative genre. These sentiments are shared by several prominent critics of the Gothic including Fred Botting who asserts that "terrors and horrors of transgression in Gothic writing become a powerful means to reassert the values of society" (*Gothic* 7) as well as Maggie Kilgour who indicates that "the gothic appears to be a transgressive rebellion against norms which yet ends up reinstating them, an eruption of unlicensed desire that is fully controlled by governing systems of limitation" (8). Both Botting's and Kilgour's arguments that the Gothic wishes to reassert social values place the genre in a

counter position to the reading of Pynchon's writing that I will offer within my thesis. Working from the basis of the Gothic as conservative, I will argue that whilst Pynchon's novels wish to undermine the dominant systems of power, the earlier works of Gothic that I will focus on hope to reinforce their authority.

The double is often used within the narratives of Gothic Literature as a means to demonstrate the dangers of transgressing the dominant systems of power. Within these novels, works such as *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), the double is "a clear indication of the internalisation of 'evil'" (Smith 94). Andrew Smith goes on to assert that in "the Gothic tradition 'evil' is often defined by the threat it poses to 'civilisation'" (100). In the Gothic then, the double is presented as a manifestation of evil that threatens the civilised society in which the narrative takes place. Smith's reading of the double as an internalised evil, places it in line with both Freud and Macías and Núñez's argument with regards to the motif. Like them, Smith recognises the psychological aspect of the double, adding that it is the evil elements that exist within the character's mind that form doubles in the Gothic. Not only does the double pose a threat to the integrity of the individual's identity in these novels, but also a threat to the wider society of the text as well. As a conservative genre, the narrative of the Gothic often ends with the destruction of the double in order to restore order to society. In Pynchon's writing, the double is applied as a means to benefit the individual, often as a direct result of the freedom to challenge pre-conceived ideas about society that the motif provides the characters. Contrastingly, In the Gothic any challenge to the dominant social structures

is presented as evil and therefore must be erased in order to protect the wider society in which the narrative exists.

Although the double in relation to the Gothic will be my primary focus, the Gothic genre is by no means the point where the doubling motif ceases to be of literary significance. Several writers after the Gothic's heyday have utilised the double to varying degrees in their own work. Notably, the modernist literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century made great use of the doubling motif. In the introduction to the 1928 modern library edition of *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), Virginia Woolf explicitly refers to "the first version of Septimus, who later is intended to be [Mrs Dalloway's] double" (225). The Septimus that Woolf refers to is Septimus Smith, the second protagonist of the novel alongside the eponymous Mrs Dalloway. Woolf makes clear that she directly intended to cast these two characters as doubles within her novel. Furthermore, the critic Daniel Darvay, in his book *Haunting Modernity and the Gothic Presence in British Modernist Literature* (2016), cites Joseph Conrad's use of the double in his novel *Under Western Eyes*. Darvay argues that "[t]his novel, like several other major works by Conrad, uses the double as the receptacle of failed confidence as well as the emblem of threatening otherness" (82). As the title of Darvay's book suggests, he believes that the Gothic's influence can still be felt in modernist writing. Darvay's recognition of Conrad's use of the double in several of his works as emblematic of threatening otherness indicates that this motif is still present, and being applied for similar purposes, even in works that are not explicitly produced within the Gothic genre. Both Woolf and Conrad's use of doubling demonstrates that whilst the

Gothic text itself may have been one of the earliest purveyors of the doubling motif, its application continued to play a central role in the other literary movements that followed.

As is perhaps obvious from the focus of my thesis, the double has carried through the modernist movement into the postmodern literature of authors such as Thomas Pynchon. Whilst the sole focus of my thesis will be Pynchon's works, several other postmodernist writers have featured the doubling motif in their own work. As I noted above, Gordon E. Slethaug has produced a book-length study of the double in postmodernist American fiction. In the introduction to his text, Slethaug contends that "[t]raditionally, authors have employed the double to affirm rational humanist views of a unified and stable self and totalized cultures" (*Postmodern American Fiction* 2). Slethaug goes on to argue that "[b]oth male and female writers have been attracted to this approach, which strives for pattern and order, values the subject, and emphasizes the synthesis and resolution of differences between dual aspects of the self" (*Postmodern American Fiction* 2). Slethaug's argument hinges on the idea that the double is indicative of what happens when the subject is unable to reconcile the differences that exist within themselves. It offers an image of the self-destructive self, as is most apparent in texts such as *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, in which the individual cannot find a resolution between the conflicting elements of their identity, and as a result this identity is erased altogether. Postmodern fiction, according to Slethaug, uses the double in the opposite way to these earlier examples. He indicates that, in postmodernist writing, the double's "mission is to decenter the concept of the self"

(*Postmodern American Fiction* 3) going on to add that "it assumes the human being is a locus of contradictions in a reality of conflicting discourses and discursive practices" (*Postmodern American Fiction* 3). Rather than attempting to use the double as a warning against the divided self, postmodern writing, for Slethaug, focuses on the double not as a means to vilify contradiction within a single identity, but to showcase these contradictory aspects of self as the real state of human existence.

Whilst the literary movements that have succeeded the Gothic have adopted several of its motifs, the Gothic itself has not disappeared from the literary landscape by any means. Jerrold E. Hogle argues that "[t]he regressive *and* progressive nature of the Gothic has been *and remains* necessary to deal with the social unconscious of modern humanity in all its extreme contradictions spawned by its looking backward and forward so much of the time, even today" (7, italics in original). Hogle's argument, which comes from *The Cambridge Companion to the Modern Gothic* (2014), is that, in contemporary society, the Gothic genre is still a useful means for demonstrating the contradictions that exist within contemporary society. The final chapter of the thesis, which focuses on Pynchon's most recent novel *Bleeding Edge*, will draw heavily from these more recent developments within the Gothic genre, specifically those sub-genres that deal with the digital space. I would like to specifically single out the techno-Gothic as one of these Gothic sub-genres which have developed upon the Gothic of the past. The techno-Gothic is far more in line with ideas presented in Pynchon's narratives when it comes to the dominant social systems. These texts, which often operate in conjunction with the Cyberpunk genre, actually do undermine the dominant systems of

power. In his monograph on *Key Concepts in the Gothic* (2018) William Hughes indicates that "Cyberpunk is, strictly speaking, a subgenre of science fiction, though its aesthetics frequently draw on Gothic preoccupations" (52) adding that Cyberpunk presents narratives where "the high capitalism that […] technology enables has been responsible for an underworld of dispossessed and alienated individuals (nominally human, but often cyborg) that it fails to recognise and is struggling to contain" (53). Hughes asserts that Cyberpunk narratives, which can be read as techno-Gothic, focus on the marginalised and alienated as victims rather than aggressors. It will be my aim, not to contrast the techno-Gothic's use of doubling as I wish to do with the other Gothic texts in my thesis, but present Pynchon's writing as being in conversation with these texts. Although I do not want to make a case that *Bleeding Edge* is a techno-Gothic text, it will be my goal to show the ways that the novel engages with some of these conventions more explicitly than other forms of Gothic literature.

At this point, I will also provide an explanation for the terms "subject" and "ideology", as they will be central to my thesis. The basis for my interpretation of these terms stems from the ideas of the Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser. Although I do not intend to argue that Pynchon himself is a Marxist, I do believe that Althusser's theory of ideology is an appropriate framework for my reading of the doubling motif in Pynchon's later novels. Both writers share similar understandings of how ideology constitutes individuals as subjects, as well as the methodologies that an ideology uses to exercise control over these subjects. Near the beginning of his essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1970), Althusser posits that the maintenance of

dominant social structures requires “a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression” (6-7). In order to maintain the rules of established order within a society, those who make up the majority of the workforce must submit to the dominant ideology, and those who wish to exploit this workforce must be able to manipulate the ideology for their own purposes. As I have already suggested, Pynchon’s novels often frame the ruling systems of power as similarly repressive and exploitative in their domination of society. Characters are constantly being presented as cogs in the machinations of a larger power structure which they are powerless to escape or change. In essence, the ways in which Pynchon characterises the individual’s experience in his novels echoes, though not deliberately, the experiences of the vast majority of subjects in Althusser’s definition of ideology.

Now that I have started to establish my reasoning for reading Pynchon’s novel through Althusser’s ideas, it is important that I give a more detailed account of Althusser’s conception of ideology. Althusser’s essay begins with his reading of Karl Marx’s interpretation of ideology as “the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or social group” (32). According to Althusser’s reading of Marx, it is ideology that dictates how individuals act and what their position is in the class structure of society. He then elaborates that Marx characterises ideology as “an imaginary construction whose status is exactly like the theoretical status of the dream among writers before Freud” (33). Before Freud began to seriously consider

dreams as representations of deeper truths in the psychology of the individual, they were disregarded as simply imaginings within the mind that were *made to appear* significant and important by the person experiencing them but, in reality, were meaningless. In *The German Ideology*, the text that forms the basis for Althusser's thesis, Marx and Engels write that:

> each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aims, to represent its interests as the common interests of all the member of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones (94).

Marx and Engels argue that ideology is simply the ideals of the ruling class being presented as the best and most logical means of society for all who exist within it. Ideology, in this definition, represents an illusion of social ideal for all, when in reality it only represents the social ideals of a specific group of people. For Marx, ideology was nothing more than a meaningless system of ideas that allowed for the ruling class to maintain its power under the guise that society could not properly function outside of the dominant social and cultural norms.

After presenting Marx's approach to ideology, Althusser sets out exactly what his own understanding of ideology is and how it functions within society. He states that "[w]hat is represented in ideology is […] not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (39). In other words, an ideology is the product of the imagined version of the relationship that an individual has towards the structures and systems that govern their lives. Whilst, ideology is imagined, for Althusser, unlike

Marx, it is not a meaningless system of rule but a significant aspect of how the individual understands their position in wider society, even if this is not their true position. This imaginary relationship that Althusser draws upon stems from Jacques Lacan's imaginary. In his theory of "the mirror stage", Lacan states that the imaginary is the result of a child witnessing themselves in a mirror for the first time and seeing a totalising image of themselves. The imaginary creates an idealised version of the self which is situated around the notion of coherence rather than fragmentation.[1] In Althusser's thesis, ideology is the subject's imagined, coherent, and whole relationship to the society in which they live. In her reading of this argument, Catherine Belsey understands ideology as:

> both a real and an imaginary relation to the world—real in that it is the way that people really live their relationship to the social relations which govern their existence, but imaginary in that it discourages a full understanding of these conditions of existence and the ways in which people are socially constituted within them (48).

Belsey asserts that ideology is a means for subjects to function in society in a way that allows them to be useful contributors, without fully understanding what exactly the purpose of their contribution is and how it affects them and those around them. In Althusser's reading of ideology, the real relations that govern the individual are never provided to them, so the individual is forced to imagine what this relationship might be

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[1] A more in-depth explanation of the mirror stage can be found in the section of Lacan's *Écrits* (1966) entitled "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" (pp. 75-81).

from the information that is given to them. It is from this limited information that they form a coherent idea of what their position is in society. As the information that the subject receives is controlled by the ruling class, the subject can be manipulated, through ideology, to act in a way that keeps them in their place without questioning what this position actually means for them within society.

Althusser's assertion that ideology is used to obscure the individual's true relation to the world is indicative of further similarities between his ideas and those of Thomas Pynchon. Robert J. Lacey claims that Pynchon believes "modern men live at the mercy of economic and political forces of which they have little understanding and even less control" ("Thomas Pynchon on Totalitarianism"). Lacey's assertion that, for Pynchon, individuals have little understanding of the systems that dictate and control their lives is concurrent with Althusser's ideas on the role of ideology. The characters in Pynchon's texts always exist within a larger system of power, but they are never able to gain a totalised understanding of how these systems actually function. Lacey later suggests that "Pynchon sees a life in which people are self-governing and able to shape their own destinies as an ideal that can never be realized. The existing political and economic system is invulnerable to resistance" ("Thomas Pynchon on Totalitarianism"). Lacey's description of the invulnerability of the political and economic system in Pynchon's work, along with the impossibility of a self-governing life for the individual, suggests a further affinity between Pynchon and Althusser's views on people's ability to define themselves. In both instances, larger systems work to dictate and maintain the individual's place in society, and any possibility of true self-governance is deemed

to be ultimately futile. By pairing my reading of Pynchon with Althusser's thesis on the nature of ideology, I will not only be able to argue that the individual has little control over the systems which dominate their lives, but also frame these ideas through an exploration of the methods and apparatuses which allow for this domination to take place.

As ideologies are so significant to the construction of the subject, it is important to understand how they are formed themselves. Althusser offers this explanation for how ideologies are produced:

> An Individual believes in God, or Duty, or Justice, etc. This belief derives (for everyone, i.e. for all those who live in an ideological representation of ideology, which reduces ideology to ideas endowed by definition with a spiritual existence) from the ideas of the individual concerned, i.e. from him as a subject with a consciousness which contains the ideas of his belief. (41)

According to Althusser, ideologies are derived from the subject's existing beliefs. An ideology uses these existing beliefs to create a set of ideals that it can instil within all of its subjects. Therefore, if a subject believes in God, this will become a central pillar in the ideology to which they subscribe. In turn, a belief in God then becomes a central aspect in the subjection of others into that ideology. This then strengthens the ideology by reinforcing the beliefs of its subjects, beliefs that it was responsible for constituting in the first place. One of the examples that Althusser uses is "[i]f he [the individual] believes in Justice, he will submit unconditionally to the rules of the Law, and may even protest when they are violated, sign petitions, take part in a demonstration, etc." (41). The subject has a specific set of beliefs that already exist within their own consciousness and will, in turn, look for aspects of ideology that conform to this belief.

Therefore, when the rules of Law are presented to them as a representation of ideology, they will naturally subject themselves to this ideology because it appears in accordance with their imagined idea of what an ideology should be and how they develop their own place within that ideology.

The above example is illustrative of the other key thesis in Althusser's argument: "Ideology has a material existence" (39). He elaborates that "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices. This existence is material" (40) before going on to indicate that "every 'subject' endowed with a 'consciousness' and believing in the 'ideas' that his 'consciousness' inspires in him and freely accepts must '*act* according to his ideas', must therefore inscribe his own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice" (41-42, italics in original). For Althusser, ideology is perpetuated by the visible actions of subjects acting in line with the dominant ideals of their society. For example, if a subject breaks the law, they are not simply told that this is wrong, they are put on trial and imprisoned by other subjects in an act of ideological reinforcement as well. In turn, these other subjects demonstrate their ideals by acting upon them in ways that support these beliefs. They wish to uphold the law by punishing those who do not in a visible way. In Althusser's example, the subject does not simply state that they believe that injustice is wrong, they actively demonstrate their resistance to injustice through the practice of protest. In contrast to Marx and Engels, who assert that ideology exists purely in the realm of ideas, Althusser argues that ideology is practical. It is not maintained purely by a shared belief amongst its subjects,

but a willingness in these subjects to practice their beliefs, through visible action, in a way that reinforces these ideals to themselves and the subjects around them.

It is through these material practices that Althusser defines the significance of the subject in the construction of an ideology. In a footnote to his thesis, Althusser states the "ideological notion: man is by nature a subject" (44). This leads Althusser to another significant assertion that "there is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects. Meaning, there is no ideology except for concrete subjects, and this destination for ideology is only made possible by the subject" (44). In other words, for Althusser, the material actions that the subject takes are what gives an ideology its structure, but these structures are also responsible for constituting subjects within an ideology. If it is the case, then, that "the 'ideas' of the human subject exist in his actions" (42) when a person performs an act that is in accordance with an ideology, they automatically become subject to it. There is no ideology without a subject to perpetuate its ideals through their actions, but the subject has no foundation for these actions without an ideology. It is the subject that is responsible for the maintenance of the ideology, which in turn produces more subjects within the same ideology or, as Catherine Belsey puts it, ideology "exists in the behaviour of people acting according to their beliefs" (48). The ideology is what forms the basis of these beliefs and then continues to exist as people act upon them and set examples to be followed by other subjects.

The means by which an ideology comes to dominate a subject's existence is characterised by Althusser as "obviousness" (45). Althusser goes on to state the most fundamental obviousness of an ideology is that "it is clear that you and I are subjects"

(45). He suggests that because it is made so obvious to the subject that they are a subject, it does not cause them to question or have a problem with the ideology that they are subjected to. Althusser argues that it is "a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are 'obviousnesses') obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot *fail to recognize*" (46, italics in original). When a subject recognises that they are obviously part of an ideology, its ideals and practices appear as obvious to the subject too. As a result, the subject does not question these ideals or the authority that they have over their lives because they appear as an obvious aspect of the ideology. The subject acts in a manner that becomes automatic because it is presented as the only correct possible outcome of an event or interaction. As an example of what he means, Althusser notes that when we recognize somebody in the street "we show him that we have recognized him (and have recognized that he has recognized us) by saying to him 'Hello, my friend', and shaking his hand (a material practice of ideological recognition in everyday life […])" (46). The action of recognition is committed without even thinking about an alternative. The ideological practice is obvious to the subject and so is completed without further consideration, thus the ideology is also reinforced through this unquestioned act.

Towards the end of his thesis, Althusser explains the way that individuals are constituted as subjects. He asserts that this subjectification takes place through a process of what he calls "*interpellation* or hailing" (48, italics in original). In order to better explain this process, Althusser offers another analogy of "the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: "'Hey, you there!'" (48) and, if we

assume that this hailing is taking place in public, “the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion he becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was ‘really’ addressed to him and that ‘it was really him who was hailed’ (not someone else)” (48, italics in original). In the example, the police officer is already a subject. Therefore, the individual’s acknowledgement of this subject immediately makes them a subject to the same ideology as well. They recognise that it is specifically them being hailed without any prompt from an outside entity and as a result engages with the practices of the ideology with another subject, the police officer, almost automatically. The automatic response acts as an example of the obviousness that forms the basis of ideology. The individual is hailed, recognises that it is obviously them being hailed, and acknowledges this hailing in a way that is most obvious within the confines of the ideology. As a result, the individual engages with a subject in a way that reinforces the ideology and thus constitutes them as a subject too.

Althusser also adds that whilst his analogy proceeds along a linear course, the policeman hails the individual, who in turn acknowledges the hail and becomes a subject, in reality, “these things happen without any succession” (49). He posits that “[a]s ideology is eternal, I must now suppress the temporal form in which I have presented the functioning of ideology and say: ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects” (49). There is no linear path to the relationship between the subject and their ideology because, according to Althusser, ideology has always existed and, as a result, the subject is already interpellated. As soon as an

individual acts in any way they have both acknowledged an ideological position and subjected themselves to that ideology simultaneously or as Althusser puts it "*individuals are always-already subjects*" (50, italics in original). The individual who is hailed by the police officer, in the earlier example, is already a subject because they know exactly how to act in that situation. It is not so much that they are becoming a subject through this process of hailing, but, in Althusser's view, they are merely reinforcing their subjectivity through their response to the situation. There is no point at which an individual is ever not a subject because it is the ideology that has made these actions appear obvious. In fact, the response only appears to be this way because the individual has been made to believe this is the case by the ideology to which they are and have always been a subject.

Before moving on, I would like to briefly consider the critique of Althusser's analogy in Terry Eagleton's chapter of *Mapping Ideology* (1994) entitled "Ideology and its Vicissitudes in Western Marxism." In his reading, Eagleton argues that "Althusser's model is a good deal too monistic, passing over the discrepant, contradictory ways in which subjects may be ideologically accosted – partially, wholly, or hardly at all – by discourses which themselves form no obvious cohesive unity" (217). Referring to Althusser's analogy for the role of obviousness in ideology, Eagleton asserts that "[t]he fact that Althusser's friends apparently never mistook his cheery shout of greeting in the streets is offered as irrefutable evidence that the business of ideological interpellation is invariably successful" (216-217). However, what if, asks Eagleton, "we fail to recognize and respond to the call of the Subject?" (217) or "return the reply:

'Sorry you've got the wrong person'?" (217). Eagleton wishes to consider the prospect that the response the individual gives may not be the anticipated one, as Althusser suggests, but one that runs counter to the expected ideological action. He argues that although "we have been interpellated as *some* kind of subject is clear" (217, italics in original), there is "no reason why we should always accept society's identification of us as this *particular* sort of subject" (217, italics in original). Eagleton notes that "[s]omeone may be a mother, Methodist, house-worker and trade unionist all at the same time, and there is no reason to assume that these various forms of insertion into ideology will be mutually harmonious" (217). Eagleton suggests that Althusser does not leave enough room in his thesis for the plurality of responses that a subject can have to a specific situation. All of these responses are still ideological, but that does not mean that they are from the same ideological position.

Although I understand the stance that Eagleton takes with regards to the monism in Althusser's thesis, I am not entirely convinced by it. It is true that Althusser does not expressly consider the prospect of a subject occupying multiple ideological positions, but he does note that "the ideology of ideology thus recognizes, despite its imaginary distortion, that the 'ideas' of a human subject exist in his actions, or ought to exist in his actions, and if that is not the case, it lends him other ideas corresponding to his actions (however perverse) that he does perform" (42). Althusser leaves space for the idea of subjects having alternative ideologies by suggesting that the ideas of a person's actions will either demonstrate their subjection to an ideology or conceal that they are not a subject to this ideology, and by extension, are subject to another ideology. Even in his

analogy of the individual being accosted by the policeman, Althusser states that "[o]ne individual (nine times out of ten it is the right one) turns around" (48-49). Althusser again recognises that whilst the expected reaction is the one that occurs on the majority of occasions this is not always the case. Whilst I agree that Eagleton's reading of Althusser as monistic is not entirely incorrect, there is also evidence that Althusser recognises this point as well. In fact, Stuart Hall has argued that "Althusser's break with a monistic conception of Marxism demanded the theorization of difference-the recognition that there are different social contradictions with different origins" (92). These recognitions may not be made explicit here, but Althusser does leave space for the prospect of these social contradictions also having a pluralising effect on the subject's relationship to ideology in a more significant way than Eagleton suggests in his critique.

In fact, Althusser explicitly recognises the existence of plural ideologies in a postscript to "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Although Althusser is consistent in his belief that "ideology is eternal" (49), he does indicate that:

> [t]he ideology of the ruling class does not become the ruling ideology by the grace of God, nor even by virtue of the seizure of State power alone. It is by the installation of the ISAs in which this ideology is realized and realizes itself that it becomes the ruling ideology. But this installation is not achieved all by itself; on the contrary, it is the stake in a very bitter and continuous class struggle: first against the former ruling classes and their positions in the old and new ISAs, then against the exploited class (58-59).[2]

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[2] ISAs refers to "Ideological State Apparatuses." A more in-depth explanation of these apparatuses can be found on pp. 105-108.

As the individual is always already interpellated as a subject, they cannot break out of ideology entirely. With that said, there is room for resistance to the *dominant* ideology. Althusser asserts that the dominant ideology is in a constant struggle with other ideologies. Initially, in order to become the dominant ideology, a new ideology must usurp the existing ruling ideology. After this new ideology has managed to install itself in a position of dominance, it is then under constant attack from the class of people who are now being exploited by it. For the most part, these attacks are defeated by the apparatuses of the ruling ideology. However, the notion that there are constant attacks on the dominant ideology in the first place, indicates that there are always alternative ideologies which continue to resist its dominance. Furthermore, these resistant ideologies will necessarily have subjects as there can be "no ideology except by the subject and for subjects" (44). As such, although the subject is never not interpellated by an ideology, it is not always the case that they are interpellated by the dominant ideology.

The particular approach that Althusser takes towards the ideological conflicts between the ruling and exploited classes further situates his ideas as the most useful framework for my reading of Pynchon's novels and doubling. In her interpretation of Pynchon's work as a postmodernist allegory, Deborah L. Madsen argues that allegory "as a genre is designed to reveal the operations of absolutist ideologies" before stating that in "Pynchon's postmodernist allegory this absolutist discourse is seen to be oppressive of both the individual and the whole of culture" (114). Madsen's understanding of Pynchon indicates that he, like Althusser, is concerned primarily with

the oppressive nature of dominant ideological systems, not just in terms of characters but in relation to the whole of culture. In light of Madsen's claims here, it will be my aim to show that, just as Althusser suggests is the case for alternative ideologies, in Pynchon's later work other forms of ideology continue to be marginalised, co-opted, or destroyed by the absolutist ideological apparatuses of the dominant system of power. As Althusser states is the case with ideology in general, there is never a point in Pynchon's work where characters can fully exist outside of an ideology, but there are spaces for resistance to the dominant form. Even though they have often already been co-opted by the dominant ideology, it will be my contention that the characters' beliefs in these alternative ideologies often provide them with a sense of comfort in the face of otherwise constant oppression.

Before I offer a brief summary of each chapter in this thesis, I would like to make one more observation about the nature of ideology, as defined by Althusser, and how this will affect my reading *Mason & Dixon*, *Against the Day*, and *Bleeding Edge*. Although none of the texts I will examine take place within the same historical era in which Althusser was writing "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses", from the Althusserean point of view, because ideology has always existed, these time periods can still be understood to have been ruled by a dominant ideology. In fact, Althusser himself posits that "on the one hand, I think it is possible to hold that ideolog*ies have a history of their own* (although it is determined in the last instance by the class struggle); and on the other, I think it is possible to hold that *ideology in general has no history*" (34-35, italics in original). Althusser differentiates between ideology in general and

specific ideologies that are related to a historical moment. He maintains the belief that ideology as a broader concept has existed eternally, but the ideas and beliefs that ideologies are used to present have been, and continue to be, adapted to reflect the changing aims and values of different societies' ruling classes throughout the course of history. With this in mind, I want to suggest that analysing Pynchon's novels alongside Althusser's approach to ideology will allow me to give a more specific account of the machinations of the dominant systems of power in each of Pynchon's novels. Furthermore, by providing this specific theoretical framework, I will also be able to better examine and explain how doubling plays a role in subverting and transforming the understandings that characters have with regard to their own ideological subjection.

Although ideology will play a central role in my reading of doubling in *Mason & Dixon*, *Against the Day*, and *Bleeding Edge*, each novel's specific historical context means that the ideologies that appear in each of these narratives cannot all be understood as functioning in service to the ruling systems of power. With that in mind, there is one particular distinction I would like to make about what can be understood as history in the works of Pynchon and Althusser. As I have indicated above, Althusser's ideas are based in Marxist philosophy and his understanding of *ideologies*, not ideology in general, is that their history is determined "in the last instance by the class struggle" (34). Due to his focus on the class struggle in particular, Althusser refers to the forces that dominate society as "the ruling class." However, I find Althusser's focus on history and ideology purely as it relates to the class struggle a little too specific for my readings

of Pynchon's work. All of the Pynchon texts I focus on do consider class structures as oppressive, but also encompass other forms of ideological oppression, racial oppression being a key example. Therefore, for the purpose of my thesis, I find it more useful to refer to the groups who dictate ideologies not as the ruling class but as *the dominant systems of power* or *the dominant ideological systems/structures*. I feel these terms better encompasses repressive systems in all forms rather than having a singular focus on the class structure. A more expansive understanding of ideology and history will allow my thesis to better consider the vast number of divisions and distinctions which allow doubles to appear in Pynchon's novels.

As I have indicated several times, the thesis itself will focus on three late Pynchon novels: *Mason & Dixon*, *Against the Day*, and *Bleeding Edge*. Each text will have a single dedicated chapter, which will then be split into two sub-sections. The chapter on *Mason & Dixon* will focus initially on the two eponymous characters as doubles. As a text which takes place during the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment is depicted as the central influence on the ideologies within this text. A more in-depth explanation of the Enlightenment can be found in the section itself, but briefly, the Enlightenment called for an application of rationality and reason in the face of irrational forces such as religion, superstition, and uncontrolled emotion. Mason and Dixon are characterised in my thesis as subjects to Enlightenment-influenced forms of ideology. However, the thesis will claim that, despite apparently being subjects to the same Enlightenment-influenced forms of ideology, both characters have differing ideas of what can be considered an idealised form of Enlightenment methodology and thought. It will be the

purpose of this section to demonstrate the way in which the novel uses the double to illustrate the fallacy that an idealised form of subjectivity can exist. When read in conjunction with Althusserean ideological principles, the fact that these two characters can have differing, yet equally valid, subjectivities reveals the contradictions that exist within ideology. Mason and Dixon's differing approaches to Enlightenment thought ultimately undermines the common-sense unity that the dominant systems of power wish to present through their ideological apparatuses. Furthermore, I will argue that Mason and Dixon's doubling is not a source of fear and terror, as is the case in Gothic texts. Instead, when read in an Althusserean context, their doubling acts as a means for both characters to develop a greater understanding of the ideological structures to which they are subjected. The section will posit that Mason and Dixon's doubling is presented as mutually beneficial to both characters and allows them to consider their own ideals more rigorously in a way that ultimately leads to a greater level of understanding of, rather than completely undermining, the values that they hold in highest esteem.

Following on from this section, the second part of the *Mason & Dixon* chapter will explore the doubling that takes place between ideologies themselves within this text. The thesis will consider how the novel presents and characterises the ideologies of various Native American cultures and the means by which they exist as an alternative to the colonial ideals, which have an intellectual basis in Enlightenment thought. During the Enlightenment period, it was widely believed that Native Americans were inferior to the colonial European cultures. These views were also reflected in the early

American Gothic novels that were being produced around this time. As Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet states "[i]n order to justify their morally and often legally unjustifiable actions, white settler colonists told themselves that Native Americans were savage, bestial, possibly cannibalistic. The animalistic Indian is a trope that figures among the very first American gothic novels" (60). As works produced by those who were subject to Enlightenment-influenced colonial ideologies, early American Gothic narratives reflected the wider beliefs of the systems responsible for interpellating these Gothic authors as subjects. In contrast to these early Gothic works, I will argue that far from being presented as inferior and uncivilised ideologies, *Mason & Dixon* presents several Native American societies who utilise different, but equally significant, ideological structures from those of the European settlers. In fact, it will be my claim that, in *Mason & Dixon*, Enlightenment-associated ideologies and those who are subject to them are ultimately represented as being far more savage and violent than any of the Native American cultures which appear in the novel. Far from being the "good" aspect of the double in its relationship to these Native American cultures, the European colonists are represented as being "evil" in their wish to destroy and replace the ideologies which already exist on the American continent.

Moving on to *Against the Day*, this chapter will be focused primarily on the members of the Traverse family. The first section will largely address the characterisation of Webb Traverse, the patriarch of the family. Webb is closely associated with trade union ideals, as both a miner and as an anarcho-syndicalist bomber. It is through these doubled associations with trade unionism that I will argue

Webb is subject to the dominant ideologies of the text, those of late nineteenth and early-twentieth century capitalism, as well as the alternative ideologies which appear in the form of anarcho-syndicalism. Nathan J. Jun's observation that "[f]rom a purely historical vantage, there is no question that anti-statism–in the sense of actively endorsing, encouraging and seeking to bring about the abolition of the state, rather than merely condemning or disapproving it–has been and continues to be a central element of anarchism" (28) initially suggests that anarchism cannot be understood in terms of ideological practices and apparatuses because, for Althusser, ideology is expressly a tool of the state. However, as I will demonstrate, the anarcho-syndicalist form of anarchism that Webb subscribes to can be characterised as functioning within the dominant ideological structures, due to its association with trade unions. After initially exploring how Webb is presented as a heroic figure, the thesis will then take the opportunity to examine the ways in which Scarsdale Vibe, one of the Plutocratic elites in the novel, is cast as an evil antagonist. It will be my assertion that, in a reversal of Gothic doubling, *Against the Day* positions those who represent the dominant capitalist ideals as villains and a danger to the heroic characters who wish to challenge the governing systems of power. Alongside my analysis of the ways in which Webb and Vibe are presented as heroic and villainous respectively, I will also make the case that, from an Althusserean perspective, the ideologies that they are subject to actually function as part of the same ideological apparatuses. By identifying the ways in which capitalism and anarcho-syndicalism can been seen as functioning within these same ideological structures, I will demonstrate that *Against the Day* presents these two

forms of ideology as doubles which ultimately exists as tools for the same dominant systems of power.

The following section will focus on Webb's two eldest children, Frank and Reef. I will argue that Frank and Reef are doubles of each other as a direct result of their relationship with Webb. The claim within this section will be that both characters have different understandings of who exactly their father is, in terms of subjectivity and identity, and this causes an unstable subjectivity in both of them. The section asserts that whilst both characters are doubles of each other, their subjectivity is ever shifting in a way that means that they always remain doubles, but their ideological position changes constantly throughout the narrative. Frank begins in subjection to the dominant capitalist ideologies in the book, whilst Reef takes on more anti-capitalist sensibilities, although he never fully adopts the same anarcho-syndicalist beliefs as his father. However, at certain points within the novel Frank shifts his subjectivity becoming more closely associated with those who sympathise with anarchism, whilst Reef conforms to the dominant social norms. With that said, Frank and Reef are still never presented in conflict with one another. Instead, they remain sympathetic to each other and, although they are never able to fully relinquish the influence of the dominant ideologies, by the end of the novel they are able to at least loosen the grip that the dominant systems of power have on them by establishing an unconventional family unit. Although it will be my contention that this is perhaps the most optimistic conclusion to any of the three texts I explore in the thesis, Frank and Reef's alternative family unit still exists within the larger structures of the dominant ideology, and for the

most part they still remain subject to it. Although *Against the Day* offers some optimism about the individual's ability to enact small scale resistance to the dominant ideology, it retains the Althusserean pessimism that individuals can never fully escape subjection to ideology in general.

Finally, the thesis will explore the presentation of doubling in *Bleeding Edge* and the neoliberal ideologies that dominate the society of this text. As a text set around the event of the 9/11 attacks in 2001, thirty years after Althusser's thesis was originally published, *Bleeding Edge* will serve a means for me to explore how Althusserean concepts of ideology have developed into the twenty-first century, specifically with the rise of neoliberalism and digital cultures. In the first section of this chapter, the thesis explores doubling in this digital space. It is with reference to *Bleeding Edge* that the thesis will argue Pynchon's work utilises certain aspect of the techno-Gothic genre. The doubles in this text emerge from the ideological expansion into the digital space. I will also explore the ways in which the traditional Gothic focus on the rational and irrational is subverted through the digital environment. The virtual space allows for the creation of irrational occurrences and uncanny events through the scientific means of computer technology. Characters are forced to create new virtual identities, which are doubles of their physical selves, in order become subjects within a new ideological space. The virtual landscape is initially presented as being a space where alternative ideologies can flourish, but by the end of the text it is clear that the dominant ideological system has already started to co-opt this space for itself. By making this observation, the thesis will posit that even in new environments, the dominant

ideological systems are ready and willing to force their own ideals onto these environments. Those who wish to escape the subjectivity of the dominant social structure, even briefly, are always prevented from doing so and as a result it is impossible to escape subjectivity not only in the physical space but the digital as well.

The final section on *Bleeding Edge*, and of the thesis, will offer a brief explanation of neoliberalism before positioning *Bleeding Edge* as a text that wishes to fully consider the consequences of these ideologies. In the previous Pynchon novels I will have looked at, there were clear examples of dominant and alternative ideologies that could be read as encompassing the struggles for power that Althusser asserts are constantly occurring between ruling and ruled ideologies. However, I will argue that in *Bleeding Edge* this is not the case. Instead, each character is subject to a neoliberal ideology, even if they believe they're acting in opposition to it. Through a consideration of Maxine Tarnow, and her relationship with the initially villainous Nicholas Windust, I am going to examine the way that neoliberalism impacts the doubling motif in this text. Maxine and Windust are initially framed as antagonistic doubles, but as the narrative progresses their similarities ultimately become more and more apparent. By the close of the novel Maxine is forced to consider the binaries of good and evil, binaries that often form the basis of Gothic doubling, as essentially useless within the neoliberal space. The section will serve as a contrast to *Mason & Dixon*, where the two eponymous characters serve as representations of subjects who believe they are submitting to the same ideology, when in fact they are not. In *Bleeding Edge*,

characters believe that they are subjecting themselves to many different forms of ideology, but in reality, they can all be placed under the umbrella of neoliberalism.

All three of these texts present doubles and ideology in very specific ways, depending on the time and place in which they occur. *Mason & Dixon* considers the role of ideology in the colonial settlement of the American continent. It uses doubles to reveal the instability of ideological dominance and the inability for a singular form of subjectivity and ideology to exist. *Against the Day* deals with the hierarchical nature of ideology. It reveals the framework that forms the basis of all ideology, and the means through which doubled forms of ideology can begin to emerge out of these frameworks. It also suggests that, as a result of these doubled ideologies, an individual can be subject to several ideological structures at once, whilst still maintaining a stable sense of identity. *Bleeding Edge* moves into the digital space to reveal the all-encompassing influence of ideology both environmentally and subjectively. The neoliberal ideals within the text influence every aspect of the characters' lives, often in ways they cannot even comprehend. By considering these novels, I will show how the doubling motif is adapted and subverted in order to suit and criticise specific ideologies. Regardless of when or where the narrative takes place, ideologies are always exerting an influence on the subject, but the level of authority they have is constantly undermined by the largely positive application of doubling within these novels.

(Anti)American Gothic: *Mason & Dixon* and Doubling in The Age of Enlightenment

Doubling and the Formation of Independent and Co-Dependent Approaches to Reason in *Mason and Dixon*

As a novel set during the Age of Reason, *Mason and Dixon* (1997) is the Pynchon text that has perhaps the most visible connection to the Gothic genre. Like the Gothic texts that were beginning to emerge around the time of the novel's setting[1], the narrative's central ideological frameworks are based in and influenced by the Enlightenment ideas that were prevalent during this period. However, the Enlightenment itself has been the focus of much speculation and uncertainty with regards to its ability to form a universal ideology. In his introduction to a section called "Intellectual Origins of the Enlightenment" from the 2004 collection *The Enlightenment World*, Peter Jones opens with the assertion that "[n]o single idea, belief or practice unites all of the writers associated with Enlightenment thought" (3). Jones goes on to state that "no one definition embraces the ways in which the most self-consciously used terms were employed- terms such as 'science', 'republic', 'scepticism', 'Christian', 'atheist'" (3). It is also important to note that, despite its lack of fixed definition, the Enlightenment was very much a global concern. Sebastian Conrad has argued that contrary to previous assumptions of the Enlightenment being "a specifically European phenomenon" (999), it was actually "the work of historical actors around the world- in places such as Cairo,

[1] Mason and Dixon's narrative takes place in the 1760s, around the same time that Horace Walpole published *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which is widely considered to be the first Gothic novel.

Calcutta, and Shanghai- who invoked the term [Enlightenment], and what they saw as its most important claims, for their own specific purposes" (1001). Conrad's observation demonstrates that not only was the Enlightenment a cause for debate on a European level, but even in its earliest genesis it was very much a global concern. The multitude of individuals defining the Enlightenment in a way that satisfied their own personal beliefs necessarily diminishes the possibility of a unified understanding of events. The result, of course, being that this mode of thought can also be manipulated in a way that best suits the individual or in some cases the dominant ideologies at large. As is often the case, it is when the dominant ideologies take liberties with how certain ideas are presented that those ideas start to become corrupted in the minds of the subjects that inhabit these ideologies.

The inability to come to a general consensus on how the Enlightenment can be defined is something that *Mason & Dixon* explores within the text. In the context of the novel, explorations of the uncertainty surrounding Enlightenment values are often centred on the characters of Mason and Dixon and their approaches to reason. Both characters, at least in the novel's opening, have a very distinct approach to the ideas of reason that underpin the Enlightenment mode. For Mason, the Enlightenment appears to be very much a philosophical concern. His central relationship with this ideological framework stems from his association with the Royal Society which was a significant force in the early British Enlightenment. The Royal Society describes itself through the motto *"Nullius in verba,* [which] is taken to mean "'take nobody's word for it'" ("History of the Royal Society"). In order to fulfil this belief, the Society expects a "determination

of [its] Fellows to withstand the domination of authority and to verify all statements by an appeal to facts determined by experiment" ("History of the Royal Society"). One of its founding principles was the belief that "the production of experimental knowledge commenced with individuals' acts of seeing and believing and was completed when all individuals voluntarily agreed with one another about what had been seen and ought to be believed" (Shapin 97-98).These foundational principles of the Royal Society can be traced back to the prominent Enlightenment philosopher Rene Descartes' commitment to "never accept anything as truth that I did not *incontrovertibly* know to be so" (17, italics in original) and "to include nothing in my judgements other than that which presented itself to my mind so *clearly* and *distinctly*, that I would have no occasion to doubt it" (17, italics in original). These central principles serve as the foundation for Mason's own approach to knowledge.

Despite Mason's proximity to the ostensibly Enlightenment institution of the Royal Society, he is also, as Timothy Parrish puts it, "[c]omfortable in the twilight of superstition and enlightenment" (170). In several cases, especially early on in the novel, this twilight of superstition and enlightenment often leads to Mason's blurring of these apparently separate modes of thought in order to reach a desirable conclusion. He applies the principles of reason primarily to justify his own pre-determined opinions and ideas which often lead "to moments of using careless reason or no reason at all to reach a quick, easy end" (McEntee 190). These moments of careless reason mean that it is often the case that Mason loosely applies the principles of Descartes and the Royal Society without fully considering the complete methods that will make these ideas into

a verified form of knowledge. The result being that it is often easy to resist Mason's claims towards authoritative knowledge through an application of the features that Mason has neglected to consider in his own thought process. Mason's comfort in the realms of careless reason represent him as a subject that follows the same ideological contradictions that Terry Eagleton explicitly refers to in his critique of Althusser. As I have already argued, Althusser does leaves room for these contradictory aspects of subjectivity as well and, in an Althusserean reading of *Mason & Dixon*, these contradictions are fully on display in the characterisation of Mason. Just as the mother that Eagleton describes can also be a "Methodist, house-worker and trade unionist all at the same time, and there is no reason to assume that these various forms of insertion into ideology will be mutually harmonious" (217), Mason's own subjectivity is rife with contradiction. As an astronomer for the Royal Society, he is subject to ideological structures with an intellectual link to the Enlightenment, but often applies the irrational principles that would undermine this subjectivity whenever he deems it necessary.

Any resistance to Mason's contradictory rationality often comes in the form of Dixon's own understanding of how best to apply Enlightenment reason to a situation. Unlike Mason, Dixon's concern is with the physical experience of the Enlightenment rather than the philosophical. He takes the opposite tack to Mason when applying his own ideas of the Enlightenment's key principles. In fact, Dixon will often point out Mason's careless reason in order to re-assert the principles of Enlightenment that he personally feels are most significant to understanding a situation. It is these tensions

that ultimately fuel what Louis Menand describes as Mason and Dixon's "rather touching friendship of a very inarticulate, very 'guy' sort" ("Entropology"). Whilst Mason is often open to ideas of Enlightenment and superstition being married together, Dixon will almost immediately dismiss any areas of superstition on the grounds that they must be irrational and therefore inhibit his ability to reach a rational conclusion. For Dixon, the ideas of the Enlightenment serve as a means by which to consider all information, rather than a loose set of ideas that can be used to justify one's own opinion. From Dixon's perspective, he makes decisions about what he has seen based on all of the principles that he understands to be correct, whereas Mason is far more interested in applying the principles that best suit *his* own pre-determined ideas. With that said, *Mason & Dixon* eschews the idea of the double that Andrew Smith characterises as "a clear indication of internalised 'evil'" (94), and instead suggests that it is simply a differing approach to the same ideological questions that form the basis of Mason and Dixon's doubling. Whilst the two characters initially appear to have very distinct ideas on reason and rationality, as the novel progresses there starts to a appear a symbiotic relationship between the two men and their approaches to knowledge. It becomes more and more difficult to separate their perspectives on knowledge and information. By the novel's conclusion, they are entirely co-dependent. They lean on each other to not only pursue their own approaches to knowledge, but also utilise one another's ideas in order to strengthen their personal understanding of events.

This is the complete opposite of the doubling that occurs in a Gothic text such as William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). In Godwin's novel, the eponymous narrator, Caleb Williams, is doubled with his employer Ferdinando Falkland. The doubling between these two characters is apparent from the text's opening chapter, in which Caleb claims that "[t]o [Falkland's] story the whole fortune of my life was linked: because he was miserable, my happiness, my name, and my existence have been irretrievably blasted" (Godwin 10). However, as Maggie Kilgour points out, rather than the equal but different relationship that Mason and Dixon share in Pynchon's novel, Williams and Falkland are "a complex conflation of the relations of master/slave, father/son, hero/worshipper, and copy/imitator" (63). They are not presented as equals in their relationship, instead there is a clear distinction between one in power and one in submission. After Falkland confesses the murder of his neighbour to Williams, he insists that "I will benefit you in respect of fortune, but I shall always hate you. If ever an unguarded word escape from your lips, if ever you excite my jealousy or suspicion, expect to pay for it by your death or worse" (Godwin 157). Kilgour also notes that at this point within the narrative, "the relation between the two, victim and victor, detective and criminal, pursuer and pursued, is reversed" (65). Not only is there a distinction between these two characters, but these power dynamics also shift between them. Rather than gaining a greater understanding and respect for each other as doubles through shared information and ideas, as is the case with Mason and Dixon, the shared knowledge between Williams and Falkland leads to a greater level of defined separation between the two characters.

The characterisation of Mason and Dixon's relationship is instead closer in comparison to two real life figures that were central to the early Royal Society. To begin with Mason, he is presented as sharing many of the English experimentalist views of Robert Boyle. Boyle was very much of the opinion that witnessing an event made it far easier to believe than just being told it took place. However, Boyle was highly aware of the difficulty that most people faced when conducting these experiments for themselves and thus advocated for "virtual witnessing." Steven Shapin explains that the "technology of virtual witnessing involves the production in a reader's mind of such an image of an experimental scene as obviates the necessity for either its direct witness or its replication" (82-83). This opinion is indicative of the Royal Society at the time. As the Society was populated with gentlemen, such as Boyle, there was an inherent trust that the experiments that took place, if viewed by a few members, could be understood as fact among all and therefore be disseminated to the wider public. The process of virtual witnessing champions the concept of accepting something just because it can be rationally explained, and others claim it has taken place. This concept becomes applicable to Mason during an episode in the novel when he is tasked with observing the transit of Venus from a specific position. Mason's observations will most likely be deemed truth because he has the approval of the Royal Society to conduct these experiments and record the results, despite the fact it will only be him, and his companion Dixon, who actually witnesses the event. Like Boyle before him, Mason understands that the viewing of an event by one authorised member of the Royal Society is enough to make a claim towards truth.

The concept of virtual witnessing does not mean that the Royal Society did not encourage personal experimentation where possible. In fact, during Boyle's lifetime, they appointed Robert Hooke as Curator of Experiments in order to conduct their research. Like Mason and Boyle, there are several parallels that can be drawn between Hooke and Dixon. Both men were surveyors and came from lower class backgrounds than Boyle. Most significantly, however, Hooke advocated the use of instruments for experimentation and research. Hooke's famous work *Micrographia* is, according to Jim Bennett, considered to contain "the first sustained attempt to provide an intellectual justification for the use of instruments" (66). In a similar fashion to the novel's presentation of Dixon, Hooke was far more concerned with the practicalities of attaining knowledge rather than the ideas that necessitated these experiments. Instead of simply applying the process of virtual witnessing, as Jim Bennett notes, within Hooke's *Micrographia* there is "a general account of what [instruments] were, why they were needed and what they could do" (66). Hooke placed a far greater focus on giving the reader the ability to conduct these experiments themselves as opposed to just taking the word of someone else. Like Dixon in the novel, Hooke wanted to be able to apply Descartes ideas in a practical way. Not only should the individual not look for knowledge in information they have no reason to doubt, but they should also be responsible for conducting the research to discover this information using the correct tools for the job. Despite differing methods, both Boyle and Hooke's ideas are integral to the experimental knowledge and rationality prioritised by the Royal Society. Hooke

was just as keen to stress the importance of self-defined knowledge as Boyle; they simply had different ideas about how this knowledge should be achieved.

It was these varying ideas and approaches to knowledge that formed the basis for the Royal Society in the first place. Its existence, Theodore K. Hoppen claims, "provided a focus for the exchange of opinions, while its meetings and publications became forums for scientific debate" (1). In fact, Hoppen goes on to directly state that:

> views which see a single, logically consistent conception of the nature of the scientific enterprise informing the work and outlook of the Royal Society and its members involve a serious oversimplification of the complexity of the nature of philosophy in the late seventeenth century (1).

Hoppen's observation on the early Royal Society demonstrates the plurality of scientific and philosophical understandings that existed within the scientific community that would be responsible for the emergence of the Enlightenment ideas and values. The Royal Society's existence as a forum for debate and disagreement serves as a useful tool for understanding how the Enlightenment, even in terms of England, was a collection of disparate ideas and thoughts, rather than a single, logically consistent system of thought. Despite Shapin's indication that the production of experimental knowledge commenced, under the principle of virtual witnessing, Hoppen's observations suggest that the means by which acts of experimental knowledge were carried out was the subject of much variability and debate. In light of these various different starting points and directions, it makes sense that the ideologies that emerged during the Enlightenment period would include so many disparities and pluralities in their methodologies and philosophies.

The differing subjective positions that Mason and Dixon use to approach Enlightenment can be read as illustrative of the "different social contradictions with different origins" (92) that Stuart Hall claims Althusser wished to recognise in his writing. Mason and Dixon are both subject to ideologies which place a strong intellectual importance on the Enlightenment, but the exact methods around which these ideologies enact these commitments varies greatly between the two of them. They are surrounded by other subjects within the same ideological structure who can continue to constitute them as subjects, just as they do to those around them. Furthermore, they also adhere to Catherine Belsey's reading of Althusser when she states that ideology "exists in the behaviour of people acting according to their beliefs" (48). As Althusser states, "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (40). Mason and Dixon, working within the apparatus of the Royal Society, freely disseminate their own understanding of what Enlightenment thought should be through their own personal actions and practices. However, in doing so, they behave in distinctly different ways from each other, despite wishing to display the same intellectual principles. Mason acts upon his ideas through a more theoretical approach, whilst Dixon's have a far more practical basis, but in both cases, they are able to freely display the material practices that they feel best represent the role of Enlightenment thought in their own ideologies. When read in conjunction with these Althusserean principles*, Mason & Dixon*'s characterisation of its protagonists, can be understood as indicative of the idea that there is no single set of material practices that indicate subjection to an ideology. Additionally, as in this case, the novel can also be used to

demonstrate how these different material practices can at times be contradictory to each other.

The initial introduction of Mason and Dixon's relationship demonstrates the variations in knowledge production between the two characters themselves. Mason's position as "Assistant to the Astronomer Royal" (*M&D* 12) immediately places him within the realms of philosophical and experimental forms of knowledge. Furthermore, Mason's initial introduction to Jeramiah Dixon is brought about by the previously mentioned "[e]xpedition to Sumatra, to observe the Transit of Venus" (12). In reality, the observation of this transit was commissioned by the Royal Society to make it "easier to calculate the Earth's distance from the Sun" (Mawson, "Mason-Dixon Line"). The expedition that these two men are about to embark on, ostensibly led by Mason, indicates that, by calculating the Earth's distance from the Sun, Mason and Dixon will be central to the production of fact through observation and thus be tied to the Royal Society's aims though their actions. By extension, the novel makes it possible to trace a through-line from Mason's occupation to the early Enlightenment thinkers. In his letter of response to Dixon, Mason notes that they will each have "his own twin Telescope, by Mr Dollond, fitted with the latest of his marvellous Achromatics" (*M&D* 13). Each character will be provided with the most up to date instruments in order to complete the task they have been assigned. Through his relationship with the Royal Society, Mason is provided with the best possible tools to practically apply the theoretical framework that people such as Descartes deemed essential to the production of knowledge. His position in relation to the Royal Society indicates his apparent

commitment and willingness to put into practice the theories and ideas that would come to be defined as imperative to the Enlightenment mode. Furthermore, the Royal Society also provides him with access to instruments that will allow him to achieve these practices through his own research.

Dixon is introduced as existing in a far less exclusive environment than that of Mason. During his and Mason's first meeting, Dixon wonders "[h]ow many Royal Astronomers are there? How many Royal Astronomers' Assistants are there likely to be?" (*M&D* 16). He then goes on to point out that within his own profession, that of surveying, they are "runnin' about numerous as Bed-Bugs, and twice as cheap" (17). What primarily appears to be a humorous observation based upon Mason and Dixon's respective occupations, actually introduces the distinct and differing social positions of the two men. It adds validity to Elizabeth Jane Wall Hinds' indication that "Dixon, a mere surveyor, hasn't a clue why he's been hired to work with astronomer Mason, and vice versa" (7). Mason's association with the Royal Society and his relationship to the Royal Astronomer is indicative of an environment in which his main field of influence is those in similar positions to his own, whereas Dixon is afforded far more occasion to socialise and engage with every aspect of society, and the novel's detailing of his having "civilian Slouch grown lop-sided, too often observ'd […] in Devotees of the Taproom" (16) indicates he has taken full advantage of these opportunities. This serves as a means for the novel to create an early division between the professional spaces occupied by the two characters. Unlike Mason, Dixon is not confined by a very specific set of principles defined by a single institution. Instead, Dixon has an array of

experiences that he can apply to other situations in the future. Whilst Mason may be able to offer the theoretical ideas of Descartes and the Royal Society, this will be his first chance to independently apply these principles in his own work. Dixon, on the other hand, has the social and physical experience to apply these theories in a practical setting on a daily basis.

The shared significance of these two apparently differing forms of rationality can be traced back to the earliest Enlightenment figures, such as Descartes. Whilst I have briefly mentioned Descartes already it is important to recognise his influence on the Enlightenment.[2] In his book *The Dream of Enlightenment*, Anthony Gottlieb notes that despite "Descartes's current reputation, the man himself seems to have been less interested in metaphysics than applying algebra to geometry, and delving into the innards of cows" (4). Whilst Gottlieb acknowledges that Descartes is often remembered as an abstract thinker, he also recognises the significance of the practical elements of discovery that were of great to concern to the Cartesian philosophy. According to Gottlieb, Descartes was just as interested in the physical as the theoretical in his construction of knowledge. This suggests that even the earliest Enlightenment thinkers recognised the importance of these two forms of rationality being used in tandem, much like Boyle and Hooke would later do in their own work. When considering Descartes's own resolve "to include nothing in my judgements other than

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[2] Peter Schouls goes as far as suggesting that "if […] Locke belongs to the Enlightenment's trinity of greatest men in history, so does Descartes" (173).

that which presented itself to my mind so *clearly* and *distinctly*, that I would have no occasion to doubt it" (Descartes 17, italics in original), the significance of practical understanding becomes abundantly clear. When these two modes of investigation, theoretical and practical, are used to mutually benefit each other's arguments, the Enlightenment systems of knowledge are able to make the strongest claims of authority. Whilst it is easy to theorise that something may or may not be true, until this idea can be proven in real-life there will always be the possibility of doubt.

These possible spaces for doubt were considered even in the earliest formations of the Enlightenment. Isaac Newton, who has been described as "[t]he personification of the early Enlightenment in Britain" (Murdoch 104), is known to have been interested in Alchemy.[3] Although this might initially suggest that Newton still held onto the "irrational, and superstitious practices" (Lewis 97) that Rhodri Lewis argues "the modern, secular, and scientific" (97) Enlightenment process of thought hoped to triumph over, it actually works as an extension of the Cartesian ideals that form the basis of Enlightenment methodology. Newton's interest in alchemy points towards a ridding himself of the assumptions of others in order to test them with his own reason, the practice that Descartes claimed was essential in the construction of knowledge. Before applying the secular and scientific principles that the Enlightenment called for in

[3] Several works have been published on this topic including B.J.T. Dobbs' *The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy* (Cambridge University Press, 1975) and William R. Newman's *Newton the Alchemist: Science, Enigma, and the Quest for Nature's "Secret Fire"* (Princeton University Press, 2019).

its eradication of the irrational, it was important to define what was rational and irrational. However, to merely base these definitions on the previous assumptions of others would have been an act of irrationality in itself. Instead, Newton's interest in alchemy points towards the rational application of personal observation and understanding to all aspects of knowledge. In fact, B.J.T. Dobbs notes that "Newton attacked alchemical questions with quite definite chemical processes" (1-2). Newton's use of chemical processes demonstrates his treatment of the alchemical as a form of science. He believed that alchemy could be examined through the same experimental knowledge that Shapin argues was the basis of the Royal Society's approach to the formation of facts. Rather than immediately dismissing certain factors, Newton committed to conducting research into all aspects of science and the supernatural in order to form a more concrete definition of these two seemingly opposing fields. He was not trying to completely eradicate that which had previously been deemed superstitious. Instead, Newton was conducting the necessary research that would allow him to personally define what was merely superstition and what could be defined as scientific.

In *Mason & Dixon*, Enlightenment approaches to rationality and the supernatural are first explored during Mason and Dixon's meeting with the Learned English Dog.[4] This meeting leads to Mason's pondering "[w]hy mayn't there be Oracles, for us, in our

[4] From this point onward the Learned English Dog will be referred to as the L.E.D.

time? Gate-ways to Futurity? They can't all have died with the ancient Peoples" (*M&D* 19). According to Paul Larson, an oracle can be defined as "a specific person who practices divination" (1252) and "the medium who bridges between the spiritual world and the mundane world" (1252). Larson's definition of oracles points towards the notion that Mason, at this point, appears to be embracing the irrational, and superstitious practices that Rhodri Lewis argues the Enlightenment wished to erase. However, as I suggested in my exploration of Newton's alchemical interests, these apparent lapses in rationality do have some standing in the Enlightenment mode. Just as Newton sought to explore every aspect of the science and experimentation to define what was and was not rational, so too does Mason in this episode. He is correctly, in terms of the Cartesian approach, discounting the assumption that oracles only exist within the realms of superstition, and instead trying to approach the situation with the intention of only accepting what he has seen himself, something that Newton and Descartes would have argued was essential to the production of knowledge. Whilst it may at first appear that Mason is acting in an irrational manner, he is actually applying the processes that were practiced by two key figures within the Enlightenment's intellectual framework.

Dixon on the other hand has a different definition of rationality. He dismisses Mason's apparently superstitious belief by stipulating that "[t]here is something else in progress,– something Mason cannot quite confide. Happens he's lost someone close? And recently enough to matter aye,– for he's a way of pitching ever into the Hour, heedless, as Dixon remembers himself, after his father passed on…" (*M&D* 20). This is

not to say that Dixon is displaying any less of an Enlightenment mentality than Mason. Whilst it is true that Dixon has himself seen the L.E.D speak, he does not make any presumption as to why this must be the case because he does not have the required information that is necessary to allow him to do so. As Dixon cannot see any evidence to prove that oracles exist and that the L.E.D embodies this form, he is uses his own experience of when "his father passed on" to come to what he considers a more rational conclusion. However, Dixon does not have the necessary proof to categorically say that Mason is wrong either. As a result, whilst he applies some of Descartes's ideas to his own judgement, he also ignores Descartes's other assertion that one should not "believe too firmly in anything that example and custom had persuaded [him] of" (11). Dixon assumes that oracles cannot exist because he has been raised to simply accept the beliefs of his own society that they are products of superstition. If Dixon were to challenge social custom, as Descartes suggests, it would undermine his own definition of Enlightenment, so he naturally chooses to ignore it. Like Mason's belief in the possibility of oracles and his own justification for it through another interpretation of the Enlightenment mode, Dixon has tailored this philosophy in order to suit his own argument.

Even the L.E.D. is able to manipulate these Enlightenment principles to suit his own individual conclusions. When Mason asks whether the L.E.D is the spirit of a human reincarnated as a dog, the L.E.D reflects "I may be præternatural, but I am not supernatural. Tis the Age of Reason, rrrf? There is ever an Explanation at hand" (*M&D* 22). The L.E.D. then reveals that "the only reason Men kept Dogs was for food. Noting

that among Men no crime was quite so abhorr'd as eating the flesh of another human, Dogs quickly learn'd to act as human as possible- and to pass this Ability on from Parents to Pups" (22), before concluding that "I am but an extreme Expression of this Process" (22). On the face of it, the L.E.D could be characterised as one of "the more fabulous" (176) insanities within the novel that Ian D. Copestake believes "break through any prolonged pretence at historical realism" (176) within the text. However, the L.E.D. is able to provide a reason for his existence in the statement above. Not only can the L.E.D speak, which defies the typical understanding of reason, but the ideas of a prevalent Enlightenment thinker can be applied to rationalise this phenomenon. Furthermore, it is the L.E.D. who appears as the rationalising entity whereas Mason appears to be acting irrationally. The L.E.D. calls into question the notion that humans forcibly domesticate pets. He suggests that it would be in the best interest of a rational animal to engage with these actions in order to avoid becoming a source of food. The L.E.D. becomes a rational extension of this notion by taking the further step of learning how to talk, thus making himself even less animalistic and therefore more human. He has fulfilled the Gottfried Leibnitz[5] condition that "there can be found no fact that is true or existent, or any true assertion, unless there is sufficient reason why it is thus and not otherwise" (20). The L.E.D. rationalises himself based on Leibnitz principles. He can provide a sufficient reason as to why he can talk and thus it can be considered true.

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[5] Gottfried Leibnitz was a central figure in the German Enlightenment and exchanged ideas with Isaac Newton through letters.

Through the L.E.D's utilisation of this Enlightenment process, the novel reveals how these apparently authoritative theories of truth and knowledge can be used to challenge the pretence of historical realism. If something as apparently irrational as the L.E.D. can be reasonably explained, then so can other seemingly irrational subjective narratives of the past.

Whilst the L.E.D. appears to be one of the fabulous occurrences that Copestake argues breaks through a pretence of historical realism, he seems averse to admitting to doing so himself. In fact, he assures Mason that there is "no such thing as a Talking Dog,– Talking Dogs belong with Dragons and Unicorns" (*M&D* 22). Both Mason and Dixon have seen the L.E.D. speak, which points towards a more solid understanding of the existence of a talking dog, based on the principles of the Royal Society no less. In spite of this, the dog himself appears to equate his existence to fantastical creatures such as "Dragons and Unicorns". For Doug Haynes, the L.E.D.'s "tense daily performances nevertheless squeeze a humor and human-ness from dogs, the stakes of which are that failure entails death" (362). According to Haynes, whilst the L.E.D represent a humorous inclusion in the narrative, in order to survive he must successfully mimic the human condition as closely as possible. This suggestion goes some way to explaining how the L.E.D. views himself and why he equates the idea of talking dogs with existing in the realms of "Dragons and Unicorns." He is not simply a talking dog but "Learned". He has become educated to a higher status than simply a fantastical curiosity. The L.E.D. has managed to mimic human qualities so closely that he has started to believe himself as no longer being just a talking dog. As this is "the

Age of Reason", the measure of success with regard to knowledge is the level of rationality and reason a subject possesses. Therefore, the L.E.D. adheres as closely as possible to the understood rationality of human society in order to project his "human-ness." He believes that this display of rational thought-processes elevates him above the status of the fantastical and into a subject of the ideological structures associated with the Enlightenment. The result of this yearning for ideological acceptance necessitates the L.E.D.'s refusal to acknowledge his own existence because, as Dixon demonstrates through his bias towards Mason's suggestion, that would be deemed irrational by society and thus undermine the L.E.D.'s status as "Learned." If he were to lose this status it would undermine the rationalisation of himself and thus reinforce his doggishness.

In my reading of *Mason & Dixon* alongside Althusserean ideological principles, the L.E.D. challenges the "obviousnessess" that Althusser indicates are central to the maintenance of an ideology. In my introduction, I analysed Althusser's claim that it is "a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are 'obviousnesses') obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot *fail to recognize*" (46, italics in original). Ideologies make their own ideals appear as obvious to their subjects. As a result, the subject does not recognise certain concepts and ideas as ideologically derived, but as irrefutable facts. However, in the example of the L.E.D., that which appears to be obvious, that there is no such thing as a talking dog, leads to a confused subjectivity. As the subject of an ideology with an intellectual basis in the Enlightenment, the L.E.D. must denounce his own existence because of the perceived

obviousness that this ideology instils in its subjects. He undermines the idea of obviousness within the ideology that he is subjected to, because this obviousness clearly contradicts what is actually true. The L.E.D. illustrates Althusser's assertion that "in ideology 'men represent their real conditions of existence to themselves in an imaginary form'" (37). As an Enlightened citizen, the Learned English Dog must imagine that talking dogs do not exist and thus provide another explanation for his ability to speak. This explanation then becomes an imagined, and Enlightenment-sanctioned, version of his real conditions of existence. The L.E.D.'s imagined relationship to the systems of power which prioritise Enlightenment approaches to knowledge have led him to reach an irrational conclusion through rational explanations. As such, the novel reveals how the obviousnesses that are presented through Enlightenment-influenced ideologies as rational are flawed and can in fact lead to further forms of irrationality in the thought processes of the subject.

Mason & Dixon's implication that Enlightenment rationality has the potential to be flawed in its explanation of preternatural events subverts the writing methods of one of the Gothic genre's most significant female writers, Ann Radcliffe. Dale Townshend defines Radcliffe's writing as the "explained supernatural" ("Radcliffe"). Townshend then characterises this narrative technique as one in which "several plot-based occurrences that momentarily seem, for both reader and heroine alike, to be of preternatural, other-worldly causes are eventually revealed to have rational, material origins" ("Radcliffe"). In a reading of Radcliffe's novel, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Terry Castle asserts that "[b]latantly supernatural-seeming events *are* 'explained' in

Udolpho, and sometimes most awkwardly" (121, italics in original) adding that "[m]ysterious musical sounds, groans emanating from walls, the sudden movement of a supposedly dead body: however incredibly, rational explanations for such phenomena are inevitably forthcoming" (121). The rational explanations of seemingly supernatural events that are central to Radcliffe's novel are also being applied in *Mason & Dixon* to the L.E.D. In fact, the L.E.D. announcement that there is "ever an Explanation at hand" directly reflects Radcliffe's own attitude to the supernatural in her novels. However, the explanation that the L.E.D. gives would not be appropriate for a Radcliffe novel, because it still involves a preternatural occurrence being the rational explanation, rather than being explained away through rational thought. *Mason & Dixon* is applying the ideas of the explained supernatural that characterise Radcliffe's work but using them to rationalise an incident that Radcliffe's writing would deem irrational from the outset. In doing so, the text undermines the principles and divisions that Gothic writing applies to the rational and irrational by demonstrating the ease with which one can manipulate the definitions of these terms.

This is not to say that the novel is expressing a notion that rationality and irrationality are subjective terms. It is more the case that, in Pynchon's novel, those in power are able to withhold information from individuals such as Mason and Dixon to force them towards a point of speculative irrationality rather than a rational exploration of their initial hypothesis. This withholding of information is also the means by which Radcliffe's "explained supernatural" takes place. A key example of this in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is the appearance of what initially appears to be a disfigured

corpse. The novel's protagonist, Emily St Aubert, comes across an object behind a black veil. Upon lifting the veil and seeing the object, Emily is so frightened that she drops "senseless on the floor" (Radcliffe 249). Almost four hundred pages later, it is revealed that Emily believes she had discovered "a human figure of ghastly paleness, stretched at its length" (Radcliffe 662) whose face "appeared partly decayed and disfigured by worms" (Radcliffe 662). However, it is quickly explained that "[h]ad she dared to look again, her delusion and her fears would have vanished together, and she would have perceived, that the figure before her was not human, but formed of wax" (Radcliffe 662). Emily believes that she has seen the figure of a grotesque body which causes her to faint with shock. She does not have the required information to view the object as anything other than a corpse. However, when Emily has the rational explanation disclosed to her, the horror of the object is removed. In Radcliffe's novel the supernatural terror is not actually the result of a supernatural occurrence, but the product of a withholding of the rational explanation for events.

A similar occurrence takes place when Mason and Dixon are preparing to set sail on their expedition to observe the transit of Venus. After Dixon reveals that "Collier Sailors believe tis bad luck" (*M&D* 26) to sail on a Friday, Mason immediately shows signs of fear. He is willing to submit to the superstitions of others without fully considering the irrationality, and therefore unlikeliness that this belief represents the most logical explanation of truth within the ideology. Dixon, despite being the character who drew Mason's attention to it in the first place, immediately dismisses this fear, reminding Mason that it is "'the Age of Reason […] we're Men of Science. To huz must all days run

alike'" (27). Unlike the instance involving the L.E.D., Mason has no personal observation to back-up his fear and is therefore acting irrationally in his conclusion. Like Emily St Aubert in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Mason jumps to conclusions without taking the time to fully consider the information he has to support this claim. Through his dismissal of Mason's superstition, it is Dixon who adheres to a belief in "the rule of reason" as "the chief instrument of overcoming primitivism and barbarism including religious fanaticism and fundamentalism, plagued by superstition, ignorance, myth, and other cultural irrationalism" (Zafirovski, 158) that often characterises definitions of Enlightenment thought. Although Dixon is highly aware of this superstition and it having to do with Friday being "the day of Christ's Execution" (*M&D* 26), he still reminds Mason that they are "Men of Science" (27). The novel evokes the idea that not only does Dixon believe in the rule of reason as essential to the betterment of society, but also that they should be the people to expound this reason to other subjects in order to achieve this goal. Mason may well be the typical definition of a man of science but, in this instance, it is Dixon who appears most fully committed to upholding these principles.

However, in order to confuse matters further, upon setting sail, the ship that Mason and Dixon are travelling on is attacked by a French vessel. It would appear that this prophecy that Dixon dismisses was actually correct. Mason and Dixon have found themselves in a situation that seems to prove the seemingly superstitious omen of the Collier Sailors is correct. As men of science though, Mason and Dixon place their own suspicions on a more concrete entity, reflecting:

> [starting with Dixon] "Were I less of a cheery lad, why I'd almost think…"
> [Mason] "It has occur'd to me."
> "They knew the French had Bencoolen,– what else did they know? Thah's what I'd like to know." (*M&D* 41).

The two men do not even consider the previous omen, instead they imagine that it may have been a deliberate move on the part of the governing systems of power to put their lives in danger. At this moment, they are considering the most rational explanation to be the most likely, just as is the case in Radcliffe's novel. The issue here though is that they have no proof that this is the case and so cannot deem their explanation to be the truth either. The novel's juxtaposition of apparent superstition so closely with the feelings of paranoia that Mason and Dixon seem to be exhibiting, indicates how easy it is to blur the characterisation of these two modes of thought. Both superstition and paranoia can be considered as irrational, but Dixon's offering that they "knew the French had Bencoolen" at least forms the basis for a line of questioning that would lead to a rational conclusion. [6] However, because neither of these men have the method or instruments that Boyle and Hooke would deem essential to prove their hypothesis, or the evidence that is presented in Radcliffe's novels to support rational conclusions, it remains merely speculation on their part.

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[6]Paranoia has almost become synonymous with Pynchon's work, most notably in *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), but all of his novels touch on the subject in some way or another. See Mark Siegel's *Pynchon: Creative Paranoia in Gravity's Rainbow* (1978); Ali Chetwynd "Pynchon After Paranoia" in *The New Pynchon Studies* (2019); as well as numerous other works on the topic.

Consequently, Mason and Dixon's fears, from the perspective of Enlightenment thought, are as seemingly irrational as the Colliers Sailors' belief in bad luck.

In fact, when Mason later ponders the possibility that the attack was "of an apparent Design, by well-known Gentlemen, to put [him] in harm's way" (*M&D* 44), Dixon has now come to the decision that "'[t]hey would have attacked anyway. Why would they believe any story from the English, be the Messenger King Louie Himself?'" (44). Dixon's rejection of Mason's fears initially seems to fit the patterns of previous conversations between the pair. However, in this case, unlike with the L.E.D., there is knowable grounding in Dixon's suggestion. It was a well-known fact that the English and French were in constant conflict during the period in which the novel takes place. Therefore, on the basis of Cartesian thought, Dixon does offer the more rational explanation. In his account of conspiracy in the text, Samuel Chase Coale argues that "conspiracy saturates the text, from Dixon's wondering if he and Mason are being used by the invisible forces to the bizarre tale that Eliza Field spins about her capture by Jesuits" (168). In his example, Coale notes that it is Dixon who displays the paranoid belief that invisible forces may be governing his and Mason's lives. However, as this episode shows, Mason is also susceptible to these suspicions and Dixon is also capable of refuting them. Despite it being true that England and France were in conflict during this time, Dixon does not personally have the definite proof that would give him absolute certainty in his belief, other than knowledge provided through assumption. In contrast to the L.E.D. encounter though, Dixon's assertion is not as obviously a reaction against something society might consider irrational, such as the supernatural. Both

possible explanations do carry a line of rational thought. The novel is now pointing towards the idea that whilst one's own rationality can be used to dismiss that which is seemingly an obviously irrational line of questioning, it can also be used to make an apparently rational line of argument appear irrational when it does not fit another individual's personal ideas.

Despite his rational response to their ship being attacked, Mason's careless reasoning in response to irrational events continues to emerge throughout the text. One of the best examples of this shift into irrationality occurs when Mason begins being haunted by the ghost of his wife Rebekah. Whilst spending an extended amount of time on St. Helena after his and Dixon's expedition to observe the transit of Venus, Mason "realizes he has been hearing [Rebekah's] voice, clearly, clean of all intervention" (*M&D* 163-164). He then begins rationalising this event stating that "if Reason be also Permission at last to believe in the evidence of our Earthly Senses, then how can he not concede to her some Resurrection?" (164). Mason's experience contributes to Marcel Cornis-Pope's characterisation of Mason and Dixon's movement "across different ontological realms (dream, superstition, myth)" which superimposes "a polysystemic structure over regulating borderlines" (110). In his reading of the novel, Cornis-Pope asserts that Mason and Dixon's experiences with other ontological spaces usurps the singular boundaries that the regulating systems of power wish to maintain. In fact, in this episode, Mason is able to use the methodologies of these regulating borderlines to justify the encroachment of the ontological other across them. Mason's acknowledgment of his "Earthly Senses" points towards a more

complete application of Descartes principles. He only includes information in his judgements that has been gained from personal experience. Mason remains committed to the Cartesian approach to knowledge by not dismissing an idea simply because his wider ideology has deemed it to be obviously irrational. Just as the seemingly irrational existence of the L.E.D. can be rationalised, Mason's wish to utilise reason to justify Rebekah's apparent resurrection, demonstrates that the opposite is also possible. The principles of the Enlightenment are so various and potentially contradictory that even seemingly clear examples of irrationality can be twisted into apparently rational manifestations.

The principle that allows Mason to apply his own interpretation of Enlightenment thought, unchallenged, as a justification for Rebekah's haunting is the absence of a conflicting argument. Whereas during the L.E.D. section, Dixon was there to prevent Mason from fully embracing his singular approach to reason, on this occasion, he is not. When Mason encounters Rebekah's ghost on St. Helena he occupies a side of the island founded upon "Superstitions, mortal Hatreds, and unnatural Loves, of a solemnity appropriate to the unabating Wind" (*M&*D 159). This wind is revealed to have driven occupying Soldiers to set-up "various Suicide-Banks and Madness-Pools" (159) in order to "convert this Wind into Cash" (159). In terms of Enlightenment thought processes, this collective betting amongst the soldiers points towards a situation in which a group of individuals have "voluntarily agreed" (Shapin 97) that the wind is a contributing factor in how people react to the island. After the revelation of the wind's impact on those who occupy St. Helena, Mason's adoption of the Cartesian

mode as well as the principles of the Royal Society are called into question. Ascertaining the knowledge that wind has driven soldiers to set-up Madness-Pools, this should offer Mason at least the inclining of doubt that Descartes believed should be completely absent from an individual's understanding. Of course, whilst Mason is alone, he can discount this knowledge of the external factors that may be affecting his judgement. He is not in the company of others that can experience the same events and so there is nobody to contest his beliefs. However, if Dixon had been present at this point, he would more than likely be aware of these Suicide-Banks and Madness-Pools. He would then have been able to make the more substantial suggestion that Mason's visitations from his wife are a symptom of the wind's effect on the minds of those who occupy the island. However, because there is nobody to argue against Mason's personal rationalisation in this instance, his interpretation becomes concrete in his own mind. Mason's own manipulation of reason demonstrates how the seemingly irrational can be rationalised, but the revelation that there is already a more reasonable explanation in existence demonstrates how the individual ultimately chooses which explanation best fits their purposes.

When he returns to London, Rebekah ceases to appear to Mason. He makes several failed attempts to bring about her resurrection in this space before ultimately resorting to searching for her resemblance in his sons. Mason tries to filter his own likeness out of his sons' faces "leaving, if the Trick succeeded, Rebekah's [face] alone, her dear living Face,- tho' at about half the optikal Resolution, he guesses" (211). Mason has returned to London, a space where his explanations and beliefs can be scrutinised by

others and, as a result, he is no longer able to rely solely on his own careless reason to justify his experiences. This can be equated back to the principles upon which the Royal Society was founded. As previously noted, Royal Society members believed "the production of experimental knowledge commenced with individuals' acts of seeing and believing and was completed when all individuals voluntarily agreed with one another about what had been seen and ought to be believed" (Shapin 97-98). As a member of Royal Society himself, Mason is forced to conform to its rules once he re-enters its sphere of influence in London. When Mason is visited by Rebekah in St. Helena, he is the only person there to witness her, and therefore his belief goes unchallenged, but also lacks the scrutiny from others to be considered true. Upon returning to London, the tools for closer direct scrutiny are more freely available and therefore his lapses in careless reason are less attainable. Mason is unable to re-enact the process and cannot offer the necessary description so others can replicate his experience either. His attempts to bring about Rebekah's resurrection in dreams suggests that Mason is starting to realise his lapses in rationality are impossible in the cosmopolitan setting of London. As a result, he is trying to recreate his experience in a personal space where he can indulge irrationality, that of his dreams. His flawed rationality on St. Helena has been overwhelmed by the rationalising forces of his own society, and for Mason this means that, whether he wants to or not, he must return to a society that is governed by the reason he has been able to ignore on St. Helena.

Despite the Age of Reason being concerned with the individual's experience to define that which is visible and known, in reality it was still the larger collective

experience which was mostly highly valued in the creation of knowledge and facts. When the individual refused to accept these collectively agreed upon facts, they were then isolated from the rest of society. This sense of isolation is something that Mason feels when he returns from St. Helena. Upon experiencing the disappointment of no longer being able to conjure the ghost of Rebekah, Mason, who finds himself "not quite undeceiv'd as to Places that may no longer exist, nor yet quite reluctant enough, to be push'd into someone else's Notion of Futurity" (*M&D* 212), is "restricted to the Suburbs that ring the Earthly City" (212). Whilst Mason's flawed rationality is acceptable in the context of a singular perception of the Enlightenment, as the number of individuals who share a different understanding of rationality increases, Mason's own ideas begin to lose their authority. His experience is indicative of Samuel Thomas's contention that the dominant systems of power "rely on making everything *visible* except for their own corrupt internal workings (which must remain invisible in order for the system to survive)" (*Political* 59). In Thomas's argument, the dominant systems of power draw attention away from their own inner workings by drawing attention to and explaining how everything else that impacts society works. Althusser would argue that this is achieved through the obviousness that I discussed in the above L.E.D. section. As I have used the L.E.D. to demonstrate, the subject can be silenced and manipulated by these corrupt internal workings of the dominant systems of power, regardless of how rationally they are acting, if they do not adhere to what the ideology presents as being obvious. Despite his application of the methodologies of the dominant ideological systems, the wider belief amongst other subjects that it is obvious that ghosts do not

exist makes his beliefs irrational regardless of the justification he can provide. Whether they are correct or incorrect, the individual's own ideas are ultimately manipulated into those of the wider society. Furthermore, if the individual refuses to embrace these authoritative narratives they will ultimately find themselves, through one means or another, "restricted to the suburbs" of society.

The inability to manipulate and develop reasoning in order to construct a subjective discourse are certainly demonstrative of how the ideological structures of a society protect the dominant systems of power. However, the novel is also interested in pointing out the way that these same methods can be used to undermine the ideals of these systems. After changing their destination from Sumatra to the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, Mason and Dixon finding lodging with a Dutch family in Cape Town. The two men are sent to dine with the family's neighbours, the Vrooms. Mason almost immediately finds himself accosted by all of the women of the Vroom house. Later in the night after this encounter, Mason finds himself "awaken'd by the naked Limbs of a Slave-girl" (*M&D* 64). The "Slave-girl" reveals her name is Austra and informs Mason that it is the Dutch family's wish she "become impregnated, – if not by you, then by one of you" (65) and adds that "[a]ll the Mistress prizes of you is your Whiteness" (65). The reason for this prizing of whiteness is in the hope that the child conceived "being fairer than its mother, will fetch more upon the Market" (65). Not only does this represent the racism that slavery, at a minimum, reinforces, but also demonstrates Samuel Cohen's belief that there was "a concealed truth of the Enlightenment World, namely that freedom is reserved for only some" (*After the End of*

History 39-40). The "some" in this instance refers to the White settlers who have imposed their own ideological structures upon the colonised society. The Dutch settlers covet whiteness in their slaves and this scene also demonstrates that Austra, as one of their slaves, has been taught to do the same in order to increase the profits of her owners. Therefore, when Mason appears, the Vrooms see him as a potential source of greater profit, and encourage Austra to do the same. The result is that the exploited are also encouraged to exploit in order to benefit the markets that they are traded within but have no power to shape or change.

With that said, whilst not being as openly opposed to the practice as Dixon, which I will argue later, Mason is still hesitant to personally take part in slavery's machinations. When he is confronted with Austra during this episode he is quick to point out that "in England, no one has the right to bid another to bear a *child?*" (*M&D* 65). However, as Austra points out, many "White Wives" are "oblig'd to go on bearing children- for no other reason but the man's pride" (65). Furthermore, when Mason points out that "[o]ur Women are free" (65), Austra quickly picks up on the fact that "Our" is indicative of possession in the same vein as slavery. Sean Carswell argues that this comparison between marriage and slavery "subtly reminds [Pynchon's] readers that marriage laws in eighteenth-century England still considered wives to be the property of their husbands, perhaps not chattel slaves, exactly, but humans who were legally the property of other humans" (*Occupy* 61). Whilst Carswell's point stands, it does not take into account the dynamic of the conversation. Austra, the slave, is being used to demonstrate how a practice of agreed upon rationality, that of marriage, can be used

as a comparison that rationalises slavery to Mason, the Englishman. By creating this scenario, the novel is also interrogating the justification that existed for slavery during the time period. The prospect of slavery has become so normalised that even Austra, a character who has been enslaved, has the tools to rationalise its existence. She applies the same principles of careless reason as Mason does during his visitations with Rebekah. Austra has been told that people being the property of other people is perfectly acceptable within the confines of marriage and so there is reasonable grounds for it being acceptable within the realms of slavery as well. Austra's ability to justify this slavery allows the *Mason & Dixon* to demonstrate the significance that subjects place on their own ideology, even if it means literally sacrificing autonomy. In a similar vein to the L.E.D., Austra's only means of maintaining the role that her ideology has forced upon her, is to justify, through apparently rational means, the reason she is in this specific position. Whilst the belief that slavery was a justifiable practice is not shared by the overwhelming majority of enslaved peoples, as my exploration of Dixon's relationship with other slaves will demonstrate shortly, the inclusion of a character like Austra reveals the means by which Enlightenment thought could be manipulated. Even something as irrational and inhuman as slavery could be rationalised with the right choice of evidence and an application of the right methodology. This is made all the more disturbing in this instance, because the novel chooses to demonstrate these methods of justification through a subject who suffers the most from slavery's practices.

In an Althusserean sense, the novel extrapolates similar ideas of ideological "obviousness" that were used in the Learned English Dog's justification for his own existence and Mason's encounter with Rebekah, but the stakes in this example are based far more in reality. Whereas the L.E.D. was a somewhat humorous demonstration of the Enlightenment's intellectual shortcomings, and Mason's hearing Rebekah's voice could be attributed to the environmental effect of St. Helena, Austra's justification for her own enslavement is far more sinister. The speed with which she is able to respond to Mason demonstrates that she has been using these justifications on a relatively regular basis, at least regularly enough that she can call them to mind instantly. So ingrained are the ideological principles that slavery is acceptable within Cape Town, that even Austra, who directly suffers as result, has been instilled with the "obviousness" of her situation and how it can be justified by Enlightenment practices. Her argument acts as a reminder of Althusser's indication that "ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects" (49). Austra has been born into an ideology that has interpellated her into its ideals, one of which is the justification for slavery. However, as Althusser also points out "there is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects" (44). As well as being interpellated into this pro-slavery ideology by other subjects, Austra is also responsible for the same interpellation with regards to other subjects. If she were to give birth to a child, as the Vrooms hope, that child will also be interpellated into the same ideology as Austra, by Austra and others around it like the Vrooms. By extension, the child could be interpellated into

recognising the "obviousness" that Austra does because they would both be subjected to the same ideology.

Dixon more overtly recognises and questions the hypocrisies within colonial society and in turn alienates himself from the Cape Town residents. Soon after Mason and Dixon's arrival in Cape Town, the colonists recognise Dixon as "unreliable in any white affairs here. They have noted his unconceal'd attraction to the Malays and the Black Slaves" (*M&D* 61) and their wishes to be "deliver'd out of oppression" (61). He is immediately dismissed as a potential suitor for those enslaved because he recognises them as human beings. In fact, it is made clear that, with regards to the Vroom's prioritising profit through slavery, "Dixon, out of these particular meshes, can see it,– Mason cannot" (68). Though it is possible for Mason to be "highlighted as the subject of a different type of exploitation, this time at the hands of the disenfranchised [Vroom] women" (Carswell, *Occupy* 62), Dixon makes it clear from the beginning that he will not participate in this process of selective breeding. In his refusal to engage with the practice of slavery, Dixon does not so much pose a threat to the Cape Town community but rather no benefit to the markets of this society. Whilst it may have been the aim of the Enlightenment, as Chris Baldick argues, to "clear away ancient superstition, prejudice, dogma and injustice" ("Enlightenment"), the novel demonstrates that these elements were often ignored in order to achieve greater profit. Dixon recognises the injustice of slavery, which Baldick argues the Enlightenment wished to "clear away", but because these ideas threaten the colonists'

ability to maintain their own economy, he is treated as a threatening rather than a reasonable force.

The wilful double standards that existed between slavery and Enlightenment thought within Europe is central to the writings of John Locke.[7] In his *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke states that "[s]lavery is so vile and miserable an Estate of Man […] that 'tis hardly to be conceived, that an *Englishman*, much less a *Gentleman*, should plead for't" (141, italics in original). Through this statement Locke appears to be actively condemning the practice of slavery, a stance that seems to connote the eradication of injustice that characterises the Enlightenment mode. However, when the Royal Africa Company was formed in 1671, "to supply slaves to British Colonies" (Welchman 73), such as America, "Locke was one of its original subscribers" (73) and "increased his investment in 1674 and 1675" (73). When attempting to reconcile the disparity between Locke's writing and his actions, James Farr argues that we must "divorce his theory of slavery from the context of Afro-American slavery, and re-marry it to the English political context of the 1680s. Local targets were in Locke's sights" (281). Locke had no interest in attacking the slavery occurring in the colonies, in fact, he actively supported it, at least financially. Even though the actions of the Dutch colonists of Cape Town are clearly reflective of the prejudice and injustice that the Enlightenment theoretically opposed, they were still endorsed by the thought

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[7] John Locke was considered to be at "the centre of inspiration of the English and French Enlightenment and in Germany he rivalled Leibnitz" (Rosicka 237).

processes of its thinkers, such as Locke. This ideological hypocrisy is justified by the notion that Samuel Cohen identifies as freedom being reserved only for some cultures. Locke did not view African cultures as being relevant to his own understanding of Enlightenment and so it was perfectly acceptable in his mind to actively support institutions that led to the enslavement of African people, whilst still claiming to support the Enlightenment's ideas of civility in his own society.

Mason, seemingly placated by Austra's earlier justifications, reflects these sentiments in Cape Town. During a discussion on the topic of slavery, he tells Dixon that "I have found it of help, Dixon, to think of this place as another Planet whither we have journey'd, where the Dutch-speaking White Natives are as alien to the civilisation we know as the very strangest of Pygmies" (*M&D* 69). Mason wishes to simply dismiss this slave-holding society as separate from their own civilisation and thus not governed by the same principles of rationality. In doing so, Mason can still make a claim to the Lockean idea that although in European culture slavery is vile and miserable, it cannot be treated in the same way with regard to the uncivilised society represented by the Dutch-speaking White Natives of Cape Town. He even jokes about "Astronomy in a Land where Slavery prevails…!" (69) imagining that "'One might lie, supine, Zenith-Star positioned, all Night,…being fann'd, fed, amus'd,– ev'ryone else oblig'd to remain upon their feet, ever a-tip, to respond to a 'Gazer's least Velleity'" (69). Whilst Mason does not actively fund the practice of slavery, he does treat it as a novelty rather than a serious political issue. He allows himself to indulge in the imagined benefits that slavery would allow him in his own profession and thus appears to be ignorant of the horrors

that allow this practice to take place. For Mason, his recognition of the alien environment that he occupies in Cape Town is enough to justify an unenlightened attitude towards slavery. By treating Cape Town as a place ungoverned by reason he can relinquish his responsibility to apply reason to the events and practices he witnesses in the space.

As has become almost a cliché at this point, Dixon immediately attacks Mason's attitude to the slavery they find in Cape Town. Dixon calls Mason's joke about astronomy and slavery disgusting and, after Mason explains his theory on the White Natives, Dixon cannot contain his agitation. He vocalises this anger in his rejection of Mason's theory by telling him "'[i]t doesn't help, what are tha talking about…? Tha've a personal Interest here, thy Sentiments engag'd, for all I know'" (*M&D* 69). Dixon refuses to simply allow Mason to dismiss the horrors of slavery through his own ignorance. He even goes as far as suggesting that Mason is beginning to allow his ideas to be influenced by the ideology of the Cape Town residents. According to Cyrus R.K. Patell, "slavery is but one form of dehumanization in Western Culture" (92) in Pynchon's work. In Patell's reading of Pynchon, the slaves themselves are dehumanized, but Mason goes a step further by dehumanising those who enact the system of slavery. He refuses to acknowledge the Cape community as human beings, instead referring to them as like pygmies. In doing so, he undermines the physical realities of the institution of slavery as a product of human reason. By defining himself as an observer of a lesser civilisation, Mason essentially relinquishes responsibility for directly addressing the issue because he has already deemed it the product of an

irrational society on a philosophical level and can thus treat it as such in his own personal understanding. This is something that Dixon refuses to do. He presents himself as far more concerned with the political implications of reason and rationality than Mason. For Dixon, the Dutch colonists of Cape Town are still human and thus should be subject to the same level of philosophical and ideological interrogation as those of his own society.

Dixon is given the public opportunity to display these objections toward slavery when Mason leaves for St. Helena. He is taken by Cornelius Vroom, the patriarch of the Vroom family, to visit the "Company Lodge, where the women are of all races, sizes, and specialties" (*M&D* 149). It is in this lodge that Dixon is confronted with "Austra, in a black velvet Gown and a leather collar, being leash-led by a tiny, expressionless Malay Sylph" (150). Austra recognises Dixon and knows that "he will not help her, either, before she passes into another Room […] to continue this slavery within Slavery" (150). Even when "Dixon has some idea of roaming the Lodge, finding a secret Tunnel to the Castle, searching for Austra" (153) he "gets no further than a small on-Premises Tap-room" (153). Dixon is given the opportunity, twice, to intervene on behalf of Austra but ultimately does nothing. In his writing on this topic, Angus McFadzean indicates that an earlier section where Dixon displays an enthusiasm for Malay cuisine "suggests that there might be something between Dixon and the Malays that genuinely escapes the master-slave relations of direct representations" (167). McFadzean argues that by eating and socialising with the Slaves, Dixon is publicly defying the hierarchical master-slave relationship. However, when the opportunity arises to attack the direct

representations of these relations, rather than just defying them, Dixon does nothing. Whilst McFadzean is correct in his observation that Dixon may participate in a personal escape of the master-slave relationship, his inaction in the wider, public context of this dynamic ultimately deems these personal objections useless. For all of his condemning Mason's suggestion that the Dutch colonial settlers should be treated as aliens to essentially be observed, this later section reveals that this attack may also be an act of self-loathing with regard to Dixon's own inability to intervene against the institutions of slavery.

The parallels that start to appear with regard to Mason and Dixon's experiences of slavery are indicative of the "constant recurrence of the same thing" (210) in Freud's definition of doubling. Both Mason and Dixon are given the opportunity to publicly challenge the institution of slavery, and both do nothing. Dixon is starting to reveal his psychological similarity to Mason. However, rather than being rejected by the society that he occupies, as is often the case in the Gothic form of doubling, Dixon achieves a great level of acceptance. After the incident in the "Company Lodge" occurs, Dixon is warned by Greet, one of the Vroom daughters, to "[p]lease go carefully" (*M&D* 156) because the Dutch have come to believe "the Royal Society's Clock" (156) that he and Mason travelled with on their voyage can keep "[e]rrorless Time at Sea,– a British State Secret" (156). By placing this apparent act of protection towards Dixon after his experience at the "Company Lodge" there is the suggestion that even the Dutch women are starting to recognise similarities between himself and Mason. Whereas Dixon was previously deemed as unreliable in white affairs, there appears to have been

a softening towards him. Just as both men are starting to display common personal responses and reactions, those around them are also beginning to treat them as if they are dual entities. However, rather than having a negative impact on his social standing, Dixon finds himself achieving a greater level of social acceptance when indulging his and Mason's shared personality traits.

On a personal level for the characters, this crisis of identity is treated as a moment of self-indulgence in a similar way to the Gothic's treatment of the double as an expression of unacknowledged desires. Whilst Mason is falling into his lapses of careless reason, brought about by the haunting of Rebekah, Dixon is struggling to maintain his political reasoning in the face of slavery because Mason is not there to present an alternative argument that he can rally against. Julia Jordan recognises the importance of the two men's perspectives on each other when she notes that "[a] boundary dispute means that two different perceptions of a mark are in conflict, but Mason and Dixon instead negotiate between their dual perspectives to reach certainty, knowledge, and consensus" (271). The boundary dispute that Jordan refers to is the border between Pennsylvania and Maryland that Mason and Dixon are tasked with surveying in America. For Jordan, Mason and Dixon's own reaching of consensus is predicated on their dual perspectives working together. Dixon's more practical approach to reasoning, is often presented in response to Mason's lapses in philosophical reason. Conversely, Mason's own flawed philosophical reasoning is completely undermined by his inability to fully pursue the practical aspects of his line of thought. However, when Mason is without Dixon to remind him of the impact

physical elements and conditions have on an experience, such as the effect the wind around the Cape of Good Hope has had on others, he dismisses this aspect of his reasoning in order to suit his preferred conclusion. Mason is even able to realise the importance of Dixon in his own life. When asked to disclose his fondest wish, during an episode with a pickled Ear on St. Helena, as well as Rebekah's resurrection, he asks for "[a] speedy and safe passage for Mr Dixon, back to this place. For his personal sake, of course, but for my Sanity as well" (*M&D* 179). Mason realises that for his own sanity he needs Dixon to remind him of the irrationalities of his thought and, whilst Dixon does not articulate this, Dixon needs Mason to remind him of his commitment to combat injustice.

The two characters' need for each other in order to function within their own fields of reason becomes apparent during a section towards the end of the novel when Dixon is once again publicly confronted with the realities of slavery. During their time in America, Mason and Dixon witness a Slave Driver "screaming, having abandon'd all control, and Striking ev'rywhere with the whip" (*M&D* 698). Seeing this act of violence causes Dixon to seize the whip and tell the Driver to "[t]urn around. I'll guess *you've* never felt this" (698, italics in original). After the slaves have freed themselves, Dixon tells the Slave Driver that "[i]f I see *you* again, *you* are a dead man […] dead *you'll* be, ere *you* see again this Instrument of Shame. For it will lie in a Quaker Home, and never more be us'd" (699) to which the Driver replies "'[d]on't bet the Meeting-House on that'" (699). Unlike in the episode involving Austra, Dixon is finally pushed to act upon his impulses against slavery. Several critics have cited this instance as an example of

Dixon's realising his "hunger to pursue good" (McEntee 193) and as a moment when he "rises to true heroism" (Boyle "The Great Divide"). However, neither of these critics have pointed out that the difference between this scene and the earlier one involving Austra is the presence of Mason. Dixon even makes a point of reminding Mason before he attacks the slave-driver that "'thou're the only one nearby who knows how to watch my Back'" (*M&D* 698). The presence of Mason in this moment gives Dixon the confidence to pursue his beliefs in the physical way that he did not at the "Company Lodge" in Cape Town. Not only does Dixon need Mason in order to strengthen his commitment to practical acts of reason, but as this scene shows, it also allows him to physically act upon his wishes to do the right thing in a way that he could not without Mason's presence.

The extent to which Mason and Dixon's own approaches toward action and reason have been influenced by each other also becomes apparent during a conversation Dixon has with a mechanical duck. Dixon proclaims that they are part of a "Global Scheme!" (*M&D* 669), to which Mason replies "[g]et a grip of yerrself, man […] what happen'd to We're 'men of Science'?" (669). The dialogue is almost exactly the same as the two characters' earlier discussion before leaving for Sumatra, except the roles have been reversed. It is now Mason who is chastising Dixon for his paranoia. Even Dixon's response that they are "the simple Tools of others" (669) is reminiscent of Mason's earlier suggestion that it is certain well-known Gentlemen who wish to put them in harm's way. The obvious reversal of the characters' subjective positions during this moment serves as a clear confirmation of doubling taking place between the two

characters. The opening of the novel testifies to Diana Benea's claim that there is a "potential for strife and enmity resulting from incalculable singularity and the boundless unknown" (111) which Mason and Dixon represent for each other. Benea asserts that each character has a very distinct approach to their experiences, which she suggests indicates a potential for conflict between them. However, at this point, they have lost their incalculable singularity and have begun borrowing each other's subjective positions. The result is that they can now freely adopt the traits that are required to best process and understand the information they have at a particular time, rather than offering distinct points of view on a topic before all of the information has been made available.

This shift between the two characters seems to have been completed during a conversation Mason has with Dr Johnson during his time in Scotland, years after Mason and Dixon's return from America. When asked about the Native Americans, Mason replies "the Magickal in all its Occurrences, to others of us now absent, was ever [Dixon's] Subject…Potions, Rain-Making, the undoing of Enemies remote,–" (*M&D* 746). Mason indicates that he, on the other hand, can "testify to little beyond the giant Mounds that the Savages say they guard as Curators, for some more distant Race of Builders" (746). In contrast to the two men's initial meeting in which Mason ponders the existence of oracles and ancient magic, it is Dixon who has become the authority on these topics with regard to the Native Americans. Mason, on the other hand, is only willing to disclose the existence of the giant Mounds that he saw and repeat what the Native Americans say is their purpose. Mason himself does not express any personal

opinion or belief on the purpose of the mounds and has thus inhabited the role that Dixon had in the earlier encounter with the L.E.D. Despite the two positions on reason remaining the same, the characters who reflect these positions has now been inverted. It is Dixon who is open to the existence of magical occurrences whilst Mason is only willing to elaborate on what he has physically seen. Not only have Mason and Dixon learned to adopt a position on reason that the other does not, but their influence upon each other is so strong that the default positions that both men occupy have been reversed so that Mason is the proponent of physical observation whilst Dixon is the authority on the philosophical. Whilst these two characters at first appeared to embody the typical doubling relationship at the beginning of the novel, each occupying a defined point of opposition to the other, at this stage both characters have gained the ability to adapt and take on the traits of the other in order to best suit the situation.

It may well be the case that in the opening of the novel Mason and Dixon's "first encounter dramatizes [a] stark contrast between them- their attitude towards rationalist versus anti-rationalist modes of knowledge" (Benea 105) but Diana Benea's conclusion does not go far enough when explaining the two characters' relationship. By the end of the novel, Dixon's relationship with Mason not only produces "a gradual acknowledgement of the value and explanatory power of alternative practices of knowledge" (Benea 111) but leads to his adoption of some of these alternative practices in his own mode of thought. Conversely Mason also begins to adopt the practical reasoning that Dixon so strongly adheres to in the novel's opening. Despite

the Royal Society claiming that the production of knowledge should begin with one individual's act of seeing and believing and be complete when all individuals voluntarily agreed with one another about what had been seen, the novel suggests that in practice this is rarely the case. Instead, the individual will necessarily approach a topic with a set of prejudices based on experience and thus apply these prejudices to a new situation. For Mason and Dixon, these prejudices are ultimately challenged by the opinion of the other. Whilst both men initially appear to have very specific approaches to what they define as reason, by the conclusion of the novel their doubling creates a beneficial co-dependence upon each other's ideas on how reason can be understood and applied in a practical setting. The result of these two shifts in attitude also signifies a change in attitude towards doubling. It may be the case in Gothic novels that the double is presented on the "presumption that the duality centers on the good and evil" (Strengell "Monster"), but this is not true in the case of *Mason & Dixon.* Mason and Dixon certainly present the characteristics and traits of being doubles. However, their similarities are indicative of a move towards a more complete understanding and knowledge rather than the divided binaries that previous incarnations of this motif have sought to present.

It is with this concept of the double as a means to achieve a greater understanding of events in mind that I would like to shift focus to a larger scale example of this motif within the text. It will be the purpose of the following section to demonstrate the way in which *Mason & Dixon* utilises the doubling trope in its presentation not only of subjects, but the ideologies themselves within the text. Despite being a text in which

the majority of the narrative takes place on the American continent during the eighteenth century, I have spent little time discussing this aspect of the novel so far. However, it will be the purpose of the next section to focus almost entirely on the doubled ideologies that exist on the American continent. The double, it will be argued, is a means to demonstrate the ways in which the colonial ideologies associated with Enlightenment thought and the Native American ideologies in the novel are presented. Like Mason and Dixon as characters, neither ideology is depicted as superior or lesser than the other, they are simply different. The novel indicates that any attempts to claim superiority by the systems of European colonists are just as false as their claims to civility when dealing with the Native American ideologies that already exist on the continent.

"Like wood-borers inside a Post in a great House": Undermining the early American Gothic in *Mason & Dixon*

Mason & Dixon offers a distinctly anti-colonial approach to the meeting of European and the variety of Native American cultures within the novel. The text presents the colonial attitude as one of assumed superiority over the Native American populations which already inhabited America at the time of its discovery by Europeans. These ideas reflect the conclusions drawn by several historians writing about the period of early American settlement during which the novel takes place. Peter Charles Hoffer indicates in his book, *The Brave New World: A History of Early America* (2006), that in the colonial settlers' minds, "[i]f Indians brought gifts, it was because they recognized the superiority of the Europeans' technology, morals and faith" (5). Hoffer goes on to assert that, rather than offering this new culture gifts in return, "European settlers believed that great men did not give, they took" (5). Hoffer's observation is indicative of the sense of importance that the colonial society placed upon itself. The Settlers saw the offer of apparent friendship from Native American groups as an indication of submission to their authority. In fact, Hoffer notes that, in the eyes of the Europeans, if the Native Americans "fought or fled, it was because they were less than human, and could not undertake the common diplomatic courtesies that Europeans expected of one another" (6). Whilst in hindsight the Native Americans' decision to fight or flee seems perfectly reasonable in light of the colonists' attitudes and actions towards these groups of people, for the colonists themselves this was considered a show of weakness and an indication that they were a lesser society.

This sense of European superiority also extended to the fiction that was being produced at the time of colonial expansion. One of the genres that best expressed European colonial attitudes towards Native American societies was the American Gothic fiction being written at the time. In order to better trace how these representations of Native Americans came to be so prevalent in Gothic literature it is first necessary to briefly examine the captivity narrative genre. These stories more or less repeat the same basic structure. The protagonist is captured by Native Americans during a conflict between settlers and Natives; the protagonist experiences some sort of ordeal at the hands of their Native American captors that challenges their perceived civility; the protagonist is then returned to the civilised society of the colonial settlers. Brigit Hans' entry on captivity narratives in *The Encyclopedia of the Great Plains* (2004) notes that "[f]rom the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth century such accounts accompanied the westward-moving frontier" (326). The entry goes on to indicate that within these captivity narratives "Native American cultures are considered inferior to European American civilisation, and Native Americans are perceived as emotionless, cruel and traitorous" (326). Native Americans were very much cast as a threatening entity to the civility of colonial ideologies. During their experience with the Native Americans, the protagonists, usually female, often find it "impossible to exert a civilizing influence on their captors" (Hans 326) and thus the narratives reinforced the idea that "Native Americans had to disappear in order for civilization to come" (Hans 326). The entry suggests that these narratives' representations of Native American nations served as a means to justify the colonial expansion that was taking place at the

time. By presenting Native American people as evil, the settlers were able to assert themselves as a morally and intellectually superior force. This could then be used to justify their colonial expansion as a civilising entity, in a similar manner to the Gothic literature that would appear later.

The earliest example of these captivity narratives is widely believed to be Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs Mary Rowlandson* (1682). In her narrative, Rowlandson wastes very little time before presenting Native Americans as "merciless heathen" (Rowlandson 4) and "Barbarous Creatures" (Rowlandson 5-6). Rowlandson's text chooses to present the Native Americans as animalistic and sub-human. By doing so it can demonstrate the savagery Native Americans are capable of when left to their own devices and the threat that they pose towards the civility of the colonial settlers. Furthermore, several critics have noted the Gothic tropes that Rowlandson's text utilises in its storytelling. In her book, *American Gothic Literature: A Thematic Study from Mary Rowlandson to Colston Whitehead* (2019), Ruth Bienstock Anolik notes that there are "moments when [Rowlandson's] narrative takes a delightfully Gothic turn" (*American Gothic* 56) going on to describe "Rowlandson's demonization of the Native Americans, and the wrought Gothic excess of her prose" (*American Gothic* 56). For Anolik there are direct links between the Gothic and Rowlandson's narrative. In fact, there is a section in which Rowlandson's protagonist describes a "swamp by which we lay, was, as it were, a dungeon" (Rowlandson 21). Anolik suggests that the description of the swamp as a dungeon is in "anticipation of Brown's American revision of the site of horror" (*American Gothic*

Literature 56).[1] I am not convinced that Rowlandson's narrative could have self-consciously taken a "Gothic turn" considering Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, which is widely considered to be the first Gothic novel, was not published until 1764. It would be difficult to anticipate a revision of a genre that did not exist at the time of initial publication. With that said, it does demonstrate the link between the captivity narratives of early American writing and the Gothic literature that would follow it. Whilst Rowlandson's narrative is not expressly a Gothic work, it does start to utilise some elements that would be central to the genre as well as the Gothic's representation of Native Americans.

One of the key examples of these captivity narratives' transition into Gothic works can be found in Abraham Panther's "A Very Surprising Narrative of a Young Woman Discovered in a Rocky Cave After Having Been Taken by the Savage Indians of the Wilderness in the Year 1777" (1787), which does appear after the publication of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. Panther's text is a work within the Native American captivity narrative genre that Matthew Wynn Sivils suggests "may qualify as the first fully realized work of American Gothic fiction" (89-90). The narrative takes the form of a letter and recounts the narrator's encounter with a woman who, like the protagonist of Rowlandson's narrative, is captured by a group of Native Americans after they murder her lover by "cutting and mangling him in the most inhumane manner"

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[1] Brown here refers to Charles Brockden Brown who, as I will discuss, wrote one of the earliest American Gothic novels *Edgar Huntly* (1799).

(Panther 213). She then describes the Native Americans burning his body at a stake and "while he burnt, they ran round, singing and dancing, rejoicing in their brutal cruelty" (Panther 213). By presenting the Native Americans as rejoicing in their brutality, Panther's narrative sets-out the basis of how Native Americans would be presented in later works of Gothic literature and demonstrates the dangers of allowing these Native inhabitants of America to continue to exist within the landscape. When the colonial subjects are met by members of one of America's Indigenous cultures, they are immediately faced with a threat to their lives. By extension the colonial ideologies that these individuals are subjected to also become threatened by Native American societies. It is in these narratives describing scenes of Native barbarity that there starts to emerge the means by which the Gothic genre facilitates an American form of literature which can also be used to justify European colonial expansion in the name of progress and safety.

In his analysis of the early American frontier Gothic, Matthew Sivils argues that "entering the American Gothic wilderness […] is as much about risking dehumanization and insanity as it is about the threat of Native Americans and animals" (90). Sivils' understanding of the American Gothic indicates a division between the psychological threats that occupy the landscape and the physical ones. Whilst both of these features represent a danger to the characters in the Gothic novel, Silvis treats them as separate perils rather than being a direct influence on each other. However, in Panther's narrative these two elements are mutually influential. After escaping these Native Americans, the female protagonist is captured again by "a man, of a gigantic figure"

(Panther 214). She promptly cuts of his head with “the hatchet he had brought” (Panther 214) and then cuts “him in quarters” (Panther 214). The protagonist then takes up residence in the cave where she was being held and is discovered by the narrator to still be living there nine years later. She has become just as barbarous as the Native Americans who initially took her hostage. Panther’s narrative utilises the greatest fear that the colonial ideology had towards Native American societies. It depicts a European settler who is corrupted by her experience with Native Americans, to the point where she begins to display similar traits and becomes exiled from the ideological structures to which she was previously a subject. The narrative indicates that if colonial subjects become too entrenched within Native American ideologies, they will lose their civility and no longer be able to function within the colonial ideological framework.

The dangers of losing one’s subjectivity to the colonial ideology after prolonged exposure to a Native American culture is also a central concern in what is often considered the first American Gothic novel, Charles Brockden Brown’s *Edgar Huntly* (1799). In the Author’s Note to his novel, Brown describes the sources of the American Gothic novel’s “terror and suspense” as “[t]he incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of Western wilderness” (3). Whilst the novel’s eponymous protagonist does not go as far as joining the Native Americans, the text does offer several instances in which Edgar commits acts that would be associated with Native American savagery. During a section in which Edgar comes across a group of Native Americans, they are described as “a savage band” (Brown, 166) who might “commit, in a few hours the most horrible

and irreparable devastation" (Brown 167). During a later episode, after personally killing a Native American, Edgar "makes a prize of his tom-hawk" (Brown 194) whilst leaving "his musket in the ground" (Brown 194). These two episodes are indicative of how the novel depicts Native Americans. By evoking images of the horrible and irreparable devastation that Native Americans are capable of, Brown's text reinforces the idea that Native Americans are less than human. Furthermore, Edgar's taking of the tom-hawk is used to indicate his own degeneration into savagery. By adopting the weaponry of the Native Americans and laying down the musket which represents the colonial settlers, Edgar appears to abandon his European ideals in favour of the apparent barbarism of the Native American people. Of the texts I have talked about so far, Brown's novel goes the furthest in its presentation of the dangers of allowing Native American cultures to continue to exist. Rowlandson's text never has the protagonist fully submit to Native American savagery, although she does eat horse liver that is "half ready" ending up with "blood about [her mouth]" (Rowlandson, 21) but this is specifically presented as the result of starvation rather than impulse. The Panther narrative goes a step-further but has the protagonist recount an incident where another settler exhibits the tendencies of Native American barbarity, rather than having them partake in it themselves. However, in Brown's text, Edgar directly describes his own experience of submitting to savagery. It serves as the most terrifying example of the loss of civility that can occur when settlers meet with the Native culture because even a character like Edgar, who presents himself as a well-educated

gentleman, is not immune to the animalistic elements of his personality that the Native Americans embody for the colonial society.

It is with a novel like *Edgar Huntly* in mind, that Teresa Goddu argues the "translation of the Indian into gothic form solved the problem of how to create a uniquely American Literature and also provide a discourse that justified the nation's expansion" (56). In Goddu's argument the Gothic Literature of the eighteenth century served as a means for further justification of the European colonial project, which I would add, is based upon the foundations of captivity narratives. Goddu also points out that by associating "the Indian's childlike and savage nature with an underdeveloped, archaic state" (55) the colonial forces could argue that "in the wake of progress's inevitable forward movement Indians were doomed to extinction unless they could be civilised and brought into the present" (55). Goddu's reading of the American Gothic echoes Brigit Hans' assertions with regards to captivity narratives. For Goddu, the Native Americans of the Gothic were represented as a danger to the European colonial way of life, just as Hans claims is the case for captivity narratives. As a result, it was believed that they must be civilised or erased in order to preserve the colonial ideologies that were being constructed on the American continent. Goddu's argument also complements Hoffer's assertion that Native Americans were less than human in the colonist's opinion. By framing Native American societies as underdeveloped and archaic, the colonial forces could make the case that Native Americans represented the irrational and superstitious elements that were inferior to their own Enlightenment-influenced ideologies. Furthermore, the colonial society could use the representation

of Native Americans in Gothic works to insist that it was essential to erase all of the different Native American cultures in order to civilise the American landscape. By continuing the captivity narratives tradition of representing Native Americans as inferior and dangerous in Gothic fiction, it was far easier to maintain these characterisations in the ideological consciousness of colonial subjects.

These methods of ideological reinforcement through Gothic literature can be understood, in Althusser's presentation of ideology, to be part of the "ideological State apparatuses (ISAs)" (16) of the colonial systems of power. Although the time period to which I am currently referring precedes Althusser's thesis by around two hundred years, as I mentioned in the introduction, Althusser indicates that ideology is "omnipresent, trans-historical and therefore immutable in form throughout history" (35). He also claims that ideology's "structure and function are immutable, present in the same form throughout what we call history" (35). Not only is ideology itself omnipresent, but its structure and function have also remained constant throughout history. For Althusser, these structures of ideology are formed by the ideological State apparatuses (ISA) of a given ideology. As previously stated, Althusser asserts that "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (40). The content of these apparatuses may change, but the apparatuses themselves remain consistent in their general function. Each is tasked with maintaining an ideology which reflects the values of the ruling systems of power. In my Althusserean reading of early American settlement, the dominant ISAs function in service to the systems of early American colonialism. Therefore, it is the role of these ISAs to continue instilling subjects with the

belief that Native Americans are dangerous and threatening because this is how the colonial systems of power wish to present them.

As ISAs play such an important role in the continued interpellation of subjects, it is at this point that I will offer a more thorough explanation of what they are and how exactly they function within a society. Althusser argues that States maintain their control over subjects through two forms of apparatus: the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses. The Repressive State Apparatus is a singular force which, according to Althusser, is made up of "the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc." (16-17). ISAs, on the other hand, are plural and can be listed as follows: ""the religious ISA"; "the educational ISA"; "the family ISA"; "the legal ISA"[2]; "the political ISA"; "the trade-union ISA"; 'the communications ISA"; and "the cultural ISA" (17). In order to differentiate between the Repressive State Apparatus and ISAs, Althusser states that "the Repressive State Apparatus functions 'by violence', whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function '*by ideology*'" (19, italics in original), before clarifying "that every State Apparatus, whether Repressive or Ideological, 'functions' both by violence and by ideology, but with one very important distinction which makes it imperative not to confuse the Ideological State Apparatuses with the (Repressive) State Apparatus" (19). This distinction is characterised by the fact that "the (Repressive) State Apparatus

[2] Althusser specifies that the law is both a part of the Repressive State Apparatus and an ISA in itself.

functions massively and predominantly by *repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology" (19, italics in original) whereas "the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly *by ideology*, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic" (19, italics in original). Although these apparatuses can be, and are, influenced by each other functionally, they are generally operating along separate lines. In Althusser's thesis, the Repressive State Apparatus functions within "the *public* domain" (18, italics in original). It is the threat of violence towards the individual within the public spaces of society that ultimately allows the dominant systems of power to reinforce their authority through the RSA. On the other hand, ISAs function within "the *private* domain" (18, italics in original). All of these apparatuses are concerned with the personal thoughts and ideas of the subject and ensuring that the ideals of the ruling class continue to be reflected within the private space.

It is essential that the RSA and ISAs both function in relation to each other in order to maintain the dominant social structures of the ruling class. In his characterisation of the public nature of the Repressive State Apparatus and the private domain of the Ideological State Apparatuses, Althusser makes clear that he regards Ideological State Apparatuses as "institutions which for the most part do not possess public status, but are quite simply *private* institutions" (18, italics in original) going on to list Churches, families, some schools, and most newspapers as examples. He also recognises that although the Repressive State Apparatus is controlled directly by the State itself, the

ISAs are not. This leads to his consideration of how the state influences and uses these private institutions as ISAs, without directly controlling them. He addresses this challenge through the ideas of Antonio Gramsci[3], specifically, as Althusser puts it, Gramsci's argument that "[t]he distinction between public and private is a distinction internal to bourgeois law, and valid in the (subordinate) domains in which the bourgeois law exercises its 'authority'" (18). Like Althusser, Gramsci saw society as divided into two overlapping spheres: political society and civil society. Gramsci believed that political society ruled by force, whilst civil society ruled by consent. However, in order to have power over a state, the ruling class must control both of these societies. Similarly, for Althusser, the laws of bourgeois culture govern both the private and the public space. As a result, both can be controlled by the ruling classes through an insistence that all institutions should abide by these laws. Despite being private institutions, ISAs still have to function as part of the ruling systems of power through their need to adhere to the laws and ideals of these systems. If they fail to adhere to these laws, the Repressive State Apparatus can then enact violence against these institutions in order to restore their adherence to these dominant ideals of the ruling class and thus ensure they continue to function as ISAs.

In this instance, my main focus will be on the role the "cultural ISA" (Althusser 17), which Althusser argues encompasses all literature, including the Gothic, and how it aids

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[3] An Italian Marxist philosopher who was highly influential on Althusser's work.

in the interpellation of subjects. In the case of colonial ideologies, captivity narratives and Gothic novels were essential for reproducing the views and ideals of the dominant systems of power. Despite being written by private individuals, and published by private institutions, Gothic texts were still produced by those who were subjected to ruling colonial ideologies. Therefore, as Althusser argues is the case with all ISAs, the private individuals and institutions that produced these Gothic works were also responsible for reproducing and maintaining the belief amongst other subjects that Native Americans were savage because this was how the ruling systems of power wished to present the Indigenous societies in America. As I have noted, Althusser posits that the ISAs work predominantly by ideology but secondarily by repression. Althusser's example of this for the cultural ISA is the use of censorship to repress undesirable ideas. If these texts were to contain anything that did not conform to the larger ideals of the governing ideological systems, they could be erased in order to ensure the continued functioning of the cultural ISA. In the case of the captivity narrative and early American Gothic, the repression of Native Americans stems from these texts refusal to give them a voice. The ideals of the colonial ideological systems, with regards to Native Americans, cast them as uncivilised and savage. Therefore, it is the role of the cultural ISA to maintain this belief within colonial subjects. If the Native American people were allowed to offer their own contribution to the literature, and by extension, the cultural ISA, this would weaken the authority of the dominant systems of power's presentation of and attitude towards Native Americans. As a result, these

forms of literature must be repressed from its subjects' knowledge in order to maintain their ideological submission to these beliefs.

It is under the guise of civilising and bringing about rationality to the American continent, that Enlightenment principles were used by the Western colonial system to justify the destruction of entire cultures. As we now know to be true, it was not the European ideologies that were threatened by Native American cultures, but these Native American cultures that were threatened by European ideologies. This is brought to the fore in *Mason & Dixon*'s construction of the relationship between these opposing societies, and the ideologies that form their basis. Joanna Freer argues that Pynchon represents "colonial brutality, capitalist exploitation, and certain Western forms of knowledge production as fundamentally interrelated forces" ('Decolonizing America' 385). As I have argued, Enlightenment-influenced ideologies can be considered central to Western knowledge production in this era. In Freer's argument the colonial method of demonising and othering the various Native American cultures that appear in the text is a means not only to assert ideological, but physical ownership of the American space. The Gothic novel's suggestion that the assortment of Native American societies that populate the American landscape are lesser and must therefore be erased in order to preserve civility both enacts a form of cultural hierarchy upon the American space, as well as removing a potential competitor for the wealth that can be gained from the landscape itself. In *Mason & Dixon* the Native American ideologies are treated not as a threatening force or as a threat to the European settlers

who colonise America. Instead, it is the settlers themselves that are the destructive force with the aim of asserting total dominance over the American continent.

In order to provide a basis for this approach to Native American cultures and their ideologies as victims rather than perpetrators, *Mason & Dixon* again applies the motif of the double. However, the novel reverses the traditional roles that the motif is structured around in the Gothic text. As a product of the Enlightenment, the Gothic was tasked with maintaining the ideological legitimacy of the Enlightenment through motifs such as the double. However, Pynchon's text uses this same motif to undermine the colonial ideological mode. *Mason & Dixon* reverses the concept of Native American societies as the "defining Savage Other by which the Civilised American could be known" (Carr 8). The ideologies of European colonisation represent themselves as acting in the common interests of all of those who are subject to them. In order to do so they must facilitate the belief in their subjects that those who threaten the ideological dominance of the colonial systems of power also threaten the lives of those who are subject to these systems. However, *Mason & Dixon* considers those who are not European-colonial subjects. It challenges the notion that those who subscribe to alternative ideologies are the aggressor. Instead, the novel suggests that it is the colonial ideologies associated with Enlightenment thought that represent the evil half of the double. The Native American ideologies that already exist are the ones under threat from European interlopers in this text. Furthermore, when faced with alternative modes of ideology, the ideological apparatuses of these interlopers use the

same techniques of manipulation and destruction that they claim their use of Enlightenment methodologies encourages subjects to reject in their own lives.

In contrast to Gothic Literature, and, from an Althusserean perspective, the larger cultural ISA of Enlightenment-influenced ideologies that it existed within, *Mason & Dixon* attempts to represent rather than repress the diverse narratives of the Native American cultures found in its pages. The novel aims to present Indigenous ideas and beliefs as being just as useful and significant, if not more so, than the colonial interpretation of events. Mason and Dixon's encounters with Native American nations offer a picture of cultures which are far more advanced than the descriptions of their childlike and savage nature found in Gothic literature. In his book *Everybody's America: Thomas Pynchon, Race and the Cultures of Postmodernism* (2008), David Witzling argues that Pynchon's writing "dramatizes and mediates the relationship between African-American claims to authority (both literary and political) and a mainstream liberal culture that, however unwittingly, maintained the prerogatives of white privilege" (7). I would add that this reading is also applicable to *Mason & Dixon*'s treatment of Native Americans. The novel dramatizes and mediates the relationship between the Native American ability to claim literary and political authority over their own history and the prerogatives of white privilege that prevent these histories from being made authoritative. There are many instances in *Mason & Dixon* that offer an alternative understanding of events with regards to the treatment of Native Americans. However, these understandings are rejected by white settlers in the novel because they have already claimed authority over these events through their own

interpretations of them. By presenting these alternative histories, *Mason & Dixon* dramatizes its anti-colonial sentiments by representing the origins of the white privilege that underpins the given historical narratives of colonisation and then undermines the historical and literary origins of this privilege itself. It attempts to reconstitute Native American culture not as inferior but as a different, but crucially equal or superior, set of ideals and ways of understanding that should be treated as equally significant to those maintained by the colonial ideological apparatuses.

In order to reinforce its resistance to the colonial narrative, the novel also points out that in general "times are unfriendly towards Worlds alternative to this one. The Royal Society Members and French Encyclopædists are in the Chariot, availing themselves whilst they may of any occasion to preach the Gospel of Reason, denouncing all that was once Magic"" (*M&D* 359). In fact, the only place where these alternative thought processes are allowed to prosper are in "Gothick Fictions, folded acceptably between the covers of Books" (359). In their efforts to narrow the field of ideological possibilities, the representatives of the European ideology wish to relinquish any ideals and ideologies that are different to their own. They wish to confine them to the pages of Gothic fiction in which these alternative ideologies can be understood as just that: fiction. It may well be the case, as Tore Rye Andersen argues, that *Mason & Dixon* "describes the Age of Reason as the crossroads it really was and leads us down a number of roads not taken" ("Mapping the World"), but it also demonstrates how these roads not taken are dismissed by the dominant historical mode. Whilst Mason and Dixon's line is a physical representation of cultural destruction, it is the attitudes of

the Royal Society Members and French Encyclopædists that the text suggests will lead to the eradication of many Native American cultures. The novel demonstrates that early-American Gothic narratives are not simply fiction to be enjoyed and viewed as a reaffirming of colonial expansion, but also a means through which the European colonial ideology was able to undermine the legitimacy of these roads not taken by continuing to represent Native American ideologies as inferior to their own beliefs and values.

The novel further articulates its resistance to the colonial undermining of Native American ideologies through the character of Ethelmer. Ethelmer is first introduced as the nephew of Mr. J Wade LeSpark, who owns the house in which Rev. Wicks Cherrycoke is narrating the story of Mason and Dixon. Despite their familial relation, Ethelmer is conscious of the fact that "Mr LeSpark made his fortune […] selling weapons to French and British, Settlers and Indians alike" (*M&D* 31). Despite the Native Americans being presented as savages in the narratives of the era in which this framing story takes place[4], Ethelmer's recognition of Mr LeSpark selling weapons to them, as well as settlers, reveals how these colonial narratives have been constructed in a particular way. Although Native Americans were presented by settlers as being an inferior and dangerous people, men like LeSpark were still willing to sell weapons to

[4] Whilst Panther's Narrative and *Edgar Huntly* were published after *Mason & Dixon* takes place, the captivity narratives such as Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs Mary Rowlandson* were published around the same time as the novel's setting.

them in order to accumulate personal profit. In fact, Ethelmer notes that if there are "Account-books in which Casualties are the Units of Exchange" (31) then LeSpark is "deeply in Arrears" (31). Despite knowing the effect that his business will have on the lives of both settlers and Native Americans, LeSpark is willing to sell these weapons to anyone who can pay for them. This hypocrisy between the wider attitude of the settlers' society and the actions of individuals within this society allows the novel to further undermine the constructs of the colonial narrative. In spite of the fact that Native American nations were considered a danger to the civility of the colonial settlers, these same settlers were still willing to provide the resources that allowed for apparently dangerous Native cultures to attack and defend themselves, in order to personally profit from them.

Later in the novel, long after his questioning of LeSpark's motives, Ethelmer also demonstrates his awareness of the wider hypocrisies within the colonial narrative. He protests that it "may be the Historian's duty to seek the Truth, yet must he do ev'rything he can, not to tell it" (*M&D* 349). Ethelmer goes on to state that "[history] is hir'd, or coerc'd, only in Interests that must ever prove base. She is too innocent, to be left within the reach of anyone in Power" (350). In my reading of *Mason & Dixon* through Althusserean ideology, Ethelmer's recognition of the significance of the historian, alongside the writers of Gothic fiction, in the production of ideologically sanctioned narratives surrounding Native American cultures is illustrative of an important aspect of Althusser's positioning of ISAs in relation to each other. Despite appearing to be a "disparate body of ISAs" (20), Althusser posits that if "the ISAs

'function' massively and predominantly by ideology, what unifies their diversity is precisely this functioning, insofar as the ideology by which they function is always in fact unified, despite its diversity and its contradictions, *beneath the ruling ideology*" (20, italics in original). The ISAs may appear to occupy contrasting positions but, in Althusser's argument, they are still always unified by their adherence to the same ideology. In this instance, historians are responsible for producing non-fiction whilst novelists work within the realms of fiction. In broader terms, the cultural ISA, through fiction and literature, works alongside the educational ISA, to which historians, in their production of facts, primarily belong, and are unified in their larger ideological production despite working in seemingly contradictory roles. Furthermore, as Althusser asserts and Ethelmer recognises in the novel, they will always be unified in the production of specific larger ideals, even if this means ignoring certain truths in order to maintain the authority of the governing systems of power.

The novel itself offers a condemnation of writers such as Brown who aid these historians in their attempts to conceal anything but their own version of events. Ethelmer's observation that history is "too innocent to be left within the reach of anyone in Power" (*M&D* 350) extends to the Gothic writers such as Charles Brockden Brown. Whilst Brown is a fictional writer, his author's note at the beginning of *Edgar Huntly* specifically cites "incidents of Indian hostility" (3) as an inspiration for the work. He does not however, offer any instances in which Native Americans act in a friendly or, at the very least, indifferent manner. Brown may well have witnessed these acts of hostility for himself, but, as I hope show, *Mason & Dixon* offers an alternative

representation of Native Americans in contrast to Brown's description of them as savages. The novel's treatment of Native American cultures is indicative of Robert R. Hill's assertion that "Pynchon dramatizes how, amid the world-altering idealism of the Enlightenment, imperial capitalism and colonial slavery stilted preterite voices and foreshortened the chances of equality and freedom in America" (124). By stilling and ignoring the voices of preterite groups, such as the various Native American societies that occupied the country, Hill argues that the European settlers erased the possibility of an equal and free America in order to pursue their own ideological aims. If the reader of Brown's novel only experienced Native Americans through his literary descriptions, then it was far easier for historians writing contemporarily with Brown to present similar descriptions of Native Americans as historically accurate without being challenged by other subjects. Whilst the Gothic literature of the eighteenth century is a work of fiction, Teresa Goddu's observation that it provided a means to justify colonial expansion across America demonstrates the influence that these works had on the historian's ability to do everything they could not to tell the truth.

To better explain the idea of history and fiction being in discourse throughout a work like *Mason & Dixon*, I would like to briefly explore Linda Hutcheon's concept of "historiographic metafiction." Hutcheon's understanding of postmodernism indicates that what "the postmodern writing of both history and literature has taught us is that both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past" (89). Through this reference to history and fiction as discourses, Hutcheon is able to indicate that there are no true singular narratives of

events, but rather narratives constructed by certain groups and societies in order to reflect their own ideas and beliefs. The systems of signification that Hutcheon refers to will naturally be influenced by those who are constructing these narratives. In *Mason & Dixon* the systems of signification are, as observed by Ethelmer, constructed and shaped by the colonial settlers in order to benefit their own construction of events. Hutcheon also notes "the meaning and shape [of history] is not *in the events,* but *in the systems* which make those past 'events' into present historical 'facts.'" (89, italics in original). In Hutcheon's argument, the events of the past are treated as raw materials for these systems of signification to develop their own version of historical fact into a narrative, rather than being the elements that the narrative is shaped around. These systems take the events of the past that best demonstrate their own argument and then apply them to the construction of the narrative they wish to create, much like I'm doing with specific events in the narrative of *Mason & Dixon* to support my arguments in this thesis.

Whilst Hutcheon's argument does not go as far as Ethelmer's suggestion in *Mason & Dixon* that historians are actively tasked with concealing the truth, she does recognise that the postmodern "reinstalls historical contexts as significant and even determining" (Hutcheon 90) in the production of a historical narrative. These specific historical contexts provide the framework for the narratives of a particular ideology. In terms of history, this may appear to be the historian trying to conceal specific aspects of the truth, but for Hutcheon it is more the case that systems of historical production adapt the events of the past to fit within the ideological restrictions of their own society. In

his writing on history and ideology based on Hayden White's *Metahistory* (1973) [5], Bo Stråth indicates that "the fact that history is interpretation and translation means that there is no zero point of absolute security" (28). Stråth's argument that there is no point at which we can be sure that something is the absolute truth, leaves room for several accounts and interpretations of the same event. It is these spaces of interpretation where Hutcheon's argument that historical context is a determining feature in historiographic metafiction takes on a pivotal role. In order to understand how an event is interpreted, a specific set of contexts must be in place. However, the number of contexts is determined by the number of ideologies which exist as the time of the event. *Mason & Dixon* offers a variety of approaches to narratives in order to demonstrate how these historical contexts determine a subject's understanding of history. In this case, the novel points towards the plurality of histories that exists within the history of American expansion. Even though the ideologies that Mason and Dixon subject themselves to use a specific discourse to construct their own historical facts, the novel indicates that these are not the only discourses of history and by extension not the only narratives of historical events.

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[5] White's approach to historiography was seminal in its ideas on narrative and the construction of history. He believed that "[a] historical narrative is thus a mixture of adequately and inadequately explained events, a congeries of established and inferred facts, at once a representation that is an interpretation and an interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in the narrative" (281). White's interpretation of historical narratives is one in which the historian includes elements that are both based on fact and inference. It is from these two elements that historical narratives are produced and, for White, this undermines how authoritative any historical narrative can truly be.

The novel's anti-colonial perspective becomes clear during Mason and Dixon's early meeting with George Washington. Shortly after arriving in America, Washington and the surveyors discuss the Native American population, and Dixon asks "[w]hy else refrain from expanding West […] but out of regard for the Humanity of those whose Homes they invaded?" (*M&D* 277). Dixon is acting under the assumption that allowing the Native American cultures to exist is an extension of the Enlightenment mode. He is applying his understanding of the discourses and systems that are shaping the American colonial project and making assumptions about their true intentions based on these ideas. Dixon sees the decision to let Indigenous populations retain some of the land that they already inhabit as indicative of the commitment in Enlightenment thought to eradicate prejudice and injustice. With that said, this commitment still removes the seemingly irrational ideals of the Native American ideologies from the colonial society by clearly separating them from this ideology. Dixon shows his belief that the colonists are acting out of respect towards the existing traditions of the Native American Nations who occupy the landscape. He trusts that the colonial settlers still afford the Native Americans the ability to continue to practice what European settlers would understand as irrational and superstitious aspects of their culture without the interference or prejudices of colonial ideologies. In Dixon's eyes, this approach to the Native culture is reflective of the Enlightenment-influenced systems of power's sense of superiority being put to positive effect in their respect of alternative ideologies. He believes that the colonial society's lack of westward expansion up to this point is to minimise the potential injustice that this may incur upon the Native Americans, and

thus uphold the ideals that Dixon believes the Enlightenment to represent, whilst still conducting the experimentation and discovery that was also central to this ideological framework.

However, Washington informs Dixon that the only reason expansion has not yet taken place is out of the English colonists' "desire to confound their enemies" (*M&D* 277). This passage's recognition of the colonial forces' weaponization of expansionist ambiguity, through its treatment of the Native Americans, acts as a rejoinder to Greg Deinert's assertion that, in the novel, Mason and Dixon "are constantly forced to look upon the violence of the colonial project in which they are complicit, yet repeatedly they and their fellow Westerners prove unable to acknowledge the horrific injustice of the enterprise" (87). In this instance, Washington is not only recognising the injustices of the colonial enterprise, but explains when and where these injustices are enacted. It is not a case of the European colonists making amends for these invasive actions, but rather they have ceased their injustices because it is of benefit to them. Whereas Dixon's own observation does display the inability to acknowledge these colonial evils, Washington recognises that the only reason that the English colonists have not continued their enterprise further west is as tactical ploy rather than out of any sense of humanity. The English colonial force has taken the view that the uncertainty surrounding the different Native American cultures is enough of a deterrent for other colonial forces to refrain from attacking the British occupied land. Like the African slaves of St. Helena earlier in the novel, Native American groups are not treated as human but rather as objects to serve the European colonial venture. Whilst the

uncertainty that these Native American societies presents is beneficial to the English settlers in the short-term, Washington's revelations demonstrate that Dixon's belief in a respect for the humanity of the colonised is ultimately naïve. As history shows, when these Native cultures cease to be useful in a tactical sense, the injustices of the colonial enterprise will continue its expansion westward.

It is no accident that it is Washington who delivers this rejoinder to Dixon's apparently romantic view of the American colonial society. The idea of Washington, in the words of Gordon S. Wood, as fitting "the 18th Century image of a great man, of a man of virtue" (313), is directly challenged in this scene. Wood goes on to indicate that Washington "was in fact a child of the 18th Century Enlightenment" (313) who took "its moral standards more seriously than his contemporaries" (313). Despite being viewed as a virtuous figure, in *Mason & Dixon* Washington offers no condemnation of British injustices in this scene. The novel again challenges, as Linda Hutcheon would put it, the systems of signification surrounding this presentation of Washington and his morality by having him recount the manipulative intentions of the English colonists, and then immediately lose interest in them when Dixon indicates an aroma which turns out to be Washington's own "new-cur'd Hemp" (*M&D* 278). The novel indicates that the view of Washington as a man of the highest moral standards is itself a romanticised construct of this person. For all we know Washington was far more interested in smoking his "new-cur'd hemp" than pursuing Enlightenment ideals. According to Shawn Smith, *Mason & Dixon* works to "delegitimize [the] aspects of the ideology of sanctioned American history" (152) that men like Washington "rightly or wrongly, came

to embody for the vast majority of Americans" (152). Washington is still presented as a significant figure but instead of embodying the height of virtue, he becomes a means of disillusioning Dixon of his romanticised view of America. By questioning the integrity and character of the forefathers of American Society, the novel is also simultaneously questioning the justification and methodology used in the creation of this society.

An even stronger rejoinder to the colonial systems of power, and their making of past events into present historical facts, is the novel's exploration of the Lancaster Massacre.[6] During an episode in a tavern near the massacre site, Mason and Dixon are informed that "[a]t Lancaster,– day before yesterday,– the Indians that were taking refuge in the Gaol there, were massacr'd ev'ry one, by local Irregulars" (*M&D* 304). Another of the tavern's patrons adds that "[n]ow the entire Tribe is gone, the lot" (304) to which Dixon asks, "[w]ere there no Soldiers to prevent it?" (304). However, he is further informed that "Colonel Robertson and his Regiment of Highlanders refus'd to stir, toasting their Noses whilst that brave Paxton Vermin murder'd old people, small children and defenceless Drunkards" (304). Dixon's earlier belief that the European Colonists are acting out of any regard for the humanity of the existing Native American cultures is fully erased with the revelation that the Paxton Boys have not even engaged warriors or other soldiers, but a group of refugees who were powerless to defend themselves. Regardless of the disgust that other members of colonial society display

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[6] Although the account in the novel is fictionalised, the events described are based on fact. The Paxton Boys killed twenty Susquehannock (Conestoga) near Lancaster, Pennsylvania on 14th December 1763.

towards them, the real Paxton Boys were "a band of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians" (Dunbar 3) and, by extension, just as much a product of the ideals of Western colonial forces as those who are scornful of them in the tavern. When considered in light of the Gothic's presentation of Native culture, *Mason & Dixon* reverses the suggestion that Native Americans were aggressive and dangerous whilst the colonists were civil and well-refined. Although in this section it is a minority element, the text demonstrates that colonial settlers were capable of the same levels of savagery that were often reserved for Native Americans in the literary representations of early American settlement.

Furthermore, the location of this massacre is treated as a tourist spot by the colonial society. When Mason and Dixon decide to visit the scene, they are greeted by a guide who asks whether they are "[h]ere for a look at the Massacre Site?" (*M&D* 341). The guide further informs them that some people bring "Sketching-Books, some Easels, others their Specimen-Bags, but all converge thro' the same queer Magnetism" (341-342). The guide's reference to a "queer Magnetism" is indicative of the sense of spectacle that surrounds the site. Furthermore, it is through this spectacle that the massacre location becomes a means of profit for this guide, and others, rather than a tragic reminder of the evils that colonial forces are capable of committing towards the Native people. Joanna Freer also uses this section to argue that:

> [i]n attempting to create their own representations of the scene of the massacre and to appropriate its objects to become display items in white homes, the tourists—who include Mason and Dixon themselves—raise the issue of how knowledge about an event like this is produced and perpetuated, by whom and for whom, and for what purposes ("Decolonizing America" 385-386).

Freer's assertion points towards a further act of destruction by the colonial forces. By taking items and artefacts as display pieces for their homes, not only do the tourists take control of how knowledge surrounding the event is produced, but in doing so they further eradicate this particular Native American culture. When these objects are repurposed through colonial ideals, they lose the significance they had to the Conestoga culture in the first place. By extension, the aspects of historical narrative that these objects represented for that society are also lost. Through this appropriation, *Mason & Dixon* reveals that not only are colonial forces content to let cultures disappear from the American landscape, they also actively seek to erase the significance of cultural artefacts from these societies and re-purpose them as symbols of European dominance.

When the surveyors, separately, reach the location where the massacre actually took place, they offer significantly different reactions to the event. Mason is angered at the ease with which the Paxton Boys took the lives of the Native Americans, and their lack of regard for the humanity of these people. After visiting the site, he exclaims that "[t]hese Louts believe all's right now,– that they are free to get on with Lives that to them are no doubt important,–with no Glimmer at all of the Debt they have taken on" (*M&D* 346). Mason's anger is directed at the Paxton Boys' ability to massacre this group on Native Americans with no consideration for the lives they have taken, despite the Paxtons considering their own lives to have great value. Additionally, the earlier revelation that "Colonel Robertson and his Regiment of Highlanders refus'd to stir" (304), indicates that the representatives of law and order within the colonial society

also share the Paxton Boys lack of respect for Native American people. In many ways, the beliefs of these settlers reflect the attitudes of the Gothic literature that was starting to take shape during the time period in which this massacre took place. In her tracing of early colonialist attitudes towards Native Americans in relation to *Edgar Huntly*, Christine Yao asserts that early American history was "the site of the further reification of the Western animal/human binary, with the colonizers violently treating Native Americans like abjected animals, unable to comprehend the Native perspective that would allow for more complex relationships between living beings" (29). In Yao's reading of the human/animal binaries that existed within colonial thought, she notes that Western ideas of animality, and viewing Native Americans through this lens, served as a justification for the colonial violence perpetrated against America's Indigenous cultures. Groups like the Paxton Boys were able to commit these heinous acts because the ideologies they belonged to placed Native Americans in a position of animalistic non-subjectivity. Consequently, the lives of America's Indigenous populations had little value in the eyes of the colonists because they were not truly viewed as human beings.

Mason goes on to lament that what he smells at the massacre site is "Lethe-Water" [7] adding that "[i]n Time, these People are able to forget ev'rything. Be willing but to wait a little, and ye may gull them again and again, however ye wish,– even unto their own

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[7] The Lethe River is one of the rivers of Hades in Greek myth. Drinking the water was said to cause the drinker to forget their past life in order to prepare them for their reincarnation.

Dissolution" (*M&D* 346). By using Mason to evoke the image of Lethe water, the novel suggests that these colonising forces have such a short memory that they can be gulled into their own dissolution. The implication that the settlers could essentially be tricked into their own destruction demonstrates how their lack of consideration for the lives of the Native Americans could evolve into a lack of consideration for all human life, even the lives of those close to them. If groups like the Paxton Boys are able to so quickly forget the humanity of the Native Americans they have murdered, there is nothing to stop them forgetting their own humanity and turning on each other. *Mason & Dixon* is directly reversing the concept that Native Americans possess a "childlike and savage nature" which is representative of "an underdeveloped, archaic state" (Goddu 55). By drawing attention to the European settlers' inability consider the long-term consequences of fulfilling their ideological desires, it is the colonists who appear far more child-like in *Mason & Dixon*. The novel directly undermines the notion in early American Gothic literature that the Europeans were a civilising force under threat from barbaric Indigenous societies by indicating that, in this instance, the opposite is true.

Despite his condemnation of the Paxton Boys' actions, just over one hundred pages after the Lancaster episode, Mason himself begins to espouse his own colonial views with respect to landownership of the American continent. During a conversation about the identity of "those who truly own" (*M&*D 468) the Pennsylvanian landscape, Dixon suggests "[t]he Indians" (468) but Mason explains that he means "the Penns" (468). The Penns in this instance refers to the noble British family that founded Pennsylvania. When considered in light of the Althusserean principles of ideology, Mason is

displaying the influence of the colonial systems of power's ISAs on his own subjectivity. Mason, as a subject of the colonists' legal ISA, prioritises the legal claim the Penns have over the land because they are representative of the colonial ownership. In turn, he reinforces this belief in other subjects by stating it in a public setting. In this sense, Mason is guilty of a similar act of subjugation as the Paxton Boys. Although he is never directly involved in the actual murder of Native Americans, his insistence that the Penns are the true owners of the land does expedite the process by which the settlers "are able to forget ev'rything" (346). Although in this case it is geographical rather than physical, by reinforcing the colonial view that European settlers own the colonised land, Mason also advocates for the erasure of the historical and cultural significance that this space holds for the existing Native American cultures.

In fact, Mason's opinion that the American landscape belongs to the colonisers reflects the beliefs in European superiority that the philosopher and historian Adam Ferguson articulates in *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767). Ferguson indicates that "rude nations in general" will "in the course of a continual struggle, always yield to the superior arts, and the discipline of more civilized nations" (93-94).[8] In an example of this apparent yielding, the Penns now own the land because, in the eyes of the colonists, they have brought the discipline of more civilized nations to the environment and laid claim to it. In an Althusserean sense, the legal ISA has created the

[8] Ferguson's "rude nations" are those he considers to be less civilised than his own. He directly refers to the "savage nations, as in most parts of America" (81) in his categorisation of rude nations.

laws of ownership, and the educational lSA, through texts written by academics like Ferguson's, reinforces and justifies these ideals. The novel posits that the dominant systems of ideological discourse are so engrained into the subject's psyche that even those like Mason, who have witnessed evidence to dispute the image of Native Americans as barbaric and savage, still maintain the dominant colonial understanding of the relationship between the colonist and the colonised. By having Mason espouse these views, *Mason & Dixon* is able to reveal the myriad ways that Native American cultural erasure was taking place during these early colonial settlements. In many cases, the acts of abjection and subjugation enacted by groups like the Paxton Boys were often underlined by the intellectual views and opinions of the ideologies from which they emerged, often to the extent that even those subjects, like Mason, who objected to these acts of violence were unaware of their own complicity in allowing the events themselves to take place.

The actions of the Paxton Boys, and the views that characters like Mason hold, represent a challenge to the "subjunctive America" (127) that Adam Lifshey argues exists with reference to a section which directly precedes Mason and Dixon's visit to the Lancaster massacre site. In this episode, the novel describes:

> the Net-Work of Points already known, that slowly triangulates its Way into the Continent, changing all that is subjunctive to declarative, reducing Possibilities to Simplicities that serve the ends of the Governments,– winning away from the realm of the Sacred, its Borderlands one by one, and assuming them unto the bare mortal World that is our home, and our Despair (M&D 345).

The transformation of the subjunctive to the declarative in order to serve the ends of the colonial government is treated as an afront to the sacred in the text. This

subjunctive space "compromises not one narrative or narratological element but many, an aggregate that is extraordinarily varied and irreducible" (Lifshey 127). Lifshey's assertion that subjunctive America is comprised of many narrative elements suggests that a large number of ideologies and societies are able to exist in this space. During their expedition across America, Mason and Dixon alone come across or are told about "a giant Golem" (*M&D* 485) created by "an Indian tribe widely suppos'd to be one of the famous Lost Tribes of Israel" (485); a valley where "plants,– Vegetables,– grow big,– very big" (654); and both share a dream where they are led to "a great Bridge, fashion'd of Iron, quite out of the reach of British or for that matter French Arts" (677). All of these elements are associated with Native Americans and their own historic narratives. In this instance, it is the Native American cultures who are using *their* systems of signification to produce and circulate facts out of past events. In fact, Hutcheon's assertion that it is these systems that shape events into history, rather than the events themselves, takes on a greater significance here. If this is a subjunctive space, it is not only a single ideological structure that dictates the systems which make events into facts, but several systems all presenting their own discourses of history. The variety of narrative or narratological elements in this subjunctive space allows for several systems to shape these events and thus has the potential for a new form of democratically focused system; a system that considers the facts produced by several ideological structures rather than a single dominant one.

With that said, from the Althusserean viewpoint, these pluralised ideologies would still consist of groups of apparatuses working together, after all, according to Althusser

"ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (40). However, instead of being used in the service of one ruling system of power, at the cost of others, these apparatuses would be charged by those who are subjected to them with preventing a single set of ideals dominating the minds of subjects across the American landscape. In his thesis, Althusser makes clear that "*no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses*" (20, italics in original). In Althusser's argument it is a given that the declarative act has already taken place. There is already a system of ordering, that of the class system, which places one group above all others. As a result, the ISAs must act in service to this group's singular set of ideals. During the time period in which *Mason & Dixon* takes place, it was the colonial forces which were trying to impose their own systems of order onto the American landscape, through continued endeavours to establish a declarative ownership of the space. However, if a space is subjunctive, the plurality of historical narratives and narratological elements that Adam Lifshey prioritises means that there is no singular system of ordering. Rather than operating as a single declarative ideological force which is controlled by a single group, a subjunctive America would consist of a collection of ideologies all existing alongside each other, as different but equally significant and powerful systems. There would no longer be a singular set of State apparatuses responsible for maintaining a single dominant ideology, but a plurality of ideologies, each with their own ideological apparatuses which would be devoid of the repressive elements that ISAs include in their own formation.

Dixon's reaction to arriving at the Lancaster massacre site suggests that he has a far greater consideration for the subjunctive than Mason. Although Dixon also expresses his distress at the actions of the Paxton Boys, he takes more time than Mason to consider the implications of this destruction for the Conestoga people. By extension, Dixon demonstrates a greater understanding of the subjunctive potential held by the American landscape, and the erasure of this potential which has taken place as a result of events like the Lancaster massacre. Whilst Dixon wonders "[w]hat in the Holy Names are these people about? Not even the Dutchman at the Cape behave'd this way" (*M&D* 347), he also reflects that "as the blood flew and the Children cried- that at the end no one understood what they said as they died" (347). Dixon's reaction is, like Mason's, focused on the horrors of the Paxton Boys' actions, which he feels are worse than the those he witnessed the Dutch colonists enact towards slaves on the Cape of Good Hope. However, he simultaneously contemplates the repercussions that this holds for the Conestoga culture that has been lost here too. The focus on children in Dixon's reflection emphasises the true extent of cultural loss created by this massacre. Framing these events from an Althusserean perspective, Althusser indicates that the ideology of a society or culture is produced by the subjects as well as being the means of production for these same subjects. However, if a particular ideology has no subjects left to be interpellated into its ideals, that ideology will be lost. Children are particularly important with regards to this interpellation because they are constantly being interpellated as subjects in the present but will also be the ones most responsible for interpellating other subjects in the future. When considered in light of Althusser's

ideas, Dixon's distress that the children of the Conestoga were lost takes on an added significance. With the loss of the Conestoga children, as well as the adults, there is nobody left to even understand the language that could have preserved this culture as a historical entity or use that language to interpellate others into the ideologies of the Conestoga people. Dixon's sorrow is not only representative of the disregard that the Paxton Boys have for the lives of the Native Americans that they have killed, but also for the real-world culture that will be forgotten as a result of these actions.

Dixon is also more obviously aware than Mason of his own role in the colonial society. Upon realising the extent of the tragedy that occurred at Lancaster, Dixon considers praying "respectfully, that this might be made right, that the Murderers meet appropriate Fates, that I be spar'd the awkwardness of seeking them out myself and slaying as many as I may" (*M&D* 347). Of course, there are several ways of interpreting the "awkwardness" that Dixon refers to. However, given the context of events, his own position as a colonist cannot be understated as a source for these feelings. Through a recognition of the apparent hypocrisy of his personally finding and killing the Paxton Boys himself, Dixon is already aware that the line he and Mason are charting across the continent will further exclude and reduce the Native population from the American landscape. Samuel Cohen notes that "the division of Indian from settler was enforced from the moment of settlement, a fact to which Mason and Dixon's visit to Lancaster alludes" ("Ampersand", 271). Cohen uses this Lancaster section to argue that the novel is demonstrating the ill-effects of colonial settlement before Mason and Dixon have even started to draw their line. He argues that that whilst Mason and Dixon's line is

certainly partially responsible for alienating the existing Native American societies from the landscape, it does not signify the genesis of this alienation. Whilst Cohen is certainly correct in his suggestion that Lancaster alludes to the divisions between the Native Americans and the Settlers, he fails to note Dixon's moment of recognition with regards to his own role in these colonial divisions. Despite feeling a great anger at what has occurred in Lancaster, the implied role that Dixon plays in erasing the Indigenous population through his own actions means that all he can do is pray that those responsible meet appropriate fates.

The Native Americans of the novel are all too aware of the colonial attitude towards them and the damaging encroachment of European ideological expansion. After being sent a delegation of Native Americans as escorts, Mason and Dixon are informed that, upon "reaching a certain Warrior Path, they will inform the Astronomers that their own Commissions from the Six Nations will allow them to go no further,– with its implied Corollary, that this Path is as far West as the Party, the Visto, and the Line, may proceed" (646). The appearance of these members of the Six Nations demonstrates that Mason and Dixon's line, and the borders that have been drawn by the colonists, are not the only forms of demarcation that are enforced upon the continent, even if the settlers themselves refuse to acknowledge the existence of land-borders different from their own. In terms of making claims to territory, David Schell posits that for the colonists in the novel "myths and stories seek to legitimize and root these claims as culturally unique and work to craft communal borders by championing certain cultural attitudes and making others taboo" (75). Schell's argument indicates the myths and

stories that form the basis of the discourse of the colonial expansion are what is used to justify the communal borders of these settler communities. Mason and Dixon's line acts as an indicator of the colonial myth-making that will allow them to lay claim to the landscape as their own. However, the collected representation of several Native American nations, in this episode, is a reminder to the the surveyors that America's Indigenous cultures have their own myths and stories which form the basis for their cultural borders. Their insistence that the Warrior Path is as far as the Line can proceed alludes to the notion that despite the colonial settlers' belief in their own superiority, there are alternative ideologies that still exist, all of which have their own cultural attitudes and taboos. The Native Americans allow the expansion of the Mason-Dixon line to continue, but also make sure that the taboo movements of this line are policed in a way that allows them to maintain the communal borders that have been legitimised in their own culture. Despite the aims of earlier Gothic texts to demonstrate that Native American societies are completely separate and therefore dangerous through the process of doubling, in this section *Mason & Dixon* explicitly uses doubling to present the aspects of shared cultural construction and ideological foundations that exist between these apparently opposing cultures.

The novel further questions the superiority of the colonial settlers in its presentation of how the representatives from the Six Nations react to the methods used to draw the Mason-Dixon line. Upon seeing a "Sector brought into the Meridian, the Indians explain, that for as long as anyone can remember, the Iroquois Nations as well, have observ'd Meridian Lines as Boundaries to separate them one from another" (*M&D*

648). The revelation of the Iroquois Nations' knowledge of Meridian lines endorses Pedro García-Caro's claim that *Mason & Dixon*'s "questing plot gives shape to the authorial preoccupation with the margins of society, through a trip that takes the characters into a reality which challenges their complacent, trite lives" (184). Although I am hesitant to agree with any suggestion of authorial preoccupation, García-Caro's assertion that the characters' complacency is challenged in the narrative is certainly clear in this scene. As the novel points out, in the case of Meridian Lines, the colonial settlers do not possess superior knowledge to Iroquois people and this exchange completely undermines Adam Ferguson's description of the Native American societies as rude nations. Furthermore, the suggestion that Iroquois groups have been using Meridian lines for as far back as anyone can remember hints at the possibility that they may have gained this knowledge even before the European colonists. By presenting Iroquois Nations as having knowledge of this seemingly European colonial advancement, *Mason & Dixon* seeks to undermine the basis of the colonial illusion of superiority that exists in the first place. The text demonstrates in this instance that Native Americans are just as capable of understanding and applying principles of rationality as the European colonisers influenced by the Enlightenment and may even be more advanced at doing so in some cases.

When Capt. Zhang, a Chinese feng shui expert who joins Mason and Dixon's travelling party, asks the Native Americans what the Jesuits[9] thought of their use of Meridian Lines, one of the Native Americans explains that it was the Jesuits who taught them, before another interjects that "[o]thers believe 'twas not the Jesuits, but powerful Strangers, much earlier" (*M&D* 649). The Native Americans have several narratives for how they came to develop this knowledge of Meridian Lines, none of which reflect the colonial Europeans' explanation for how these lines came into use.[10] The Jesuit explanation indicates that the Native Americans learned this information from previous colonists which implies that this could also be a part of the colonist history as well. However, because this information has been ignored by the European settlers' systems of signification in their construction of history, it is unknown by the future colonists. As for the powerful strangers explanation, this is also unknown to Mason and Dixon's party because it exists outside of the colonial historical context and is therefore not a point of consideration in the construction of their own facts. In her reading of literature directly produced by Native American writers, Betty Louis Bell asserts that "[o]ppositional narratives, Euroamerican or Indian, produced by the colonial or postcolonial subject can reify the racial and cultural binaries used to justify

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[1] The Jesuits first arrival in America was in the 1560s, roughly two hundred years before Mason and Dixon began work on their line.

[10] The use of Meridians can be traced back to ancient Greece, with Eratosthenes measurement of the Earth's circumference. See "Erastosthenes of Cyrene" in *The Oxford Dictionary of Scientists* (1999).

the displacement and elimination of Indigenous populations" (15). Bell goes on to argue that, in light of this reification of cultural binaries, Native American authors:

> have had to resist the demand to position, order and categorize experiences which, simply, confirm current social, political and literary hierarchies. Indigenous survival, as reflected in postcolonial cultures and literatures, has always depended on the ability to transform social ordering and its supporting binaries into sites of hybridity that resist categorization and, thereby, challenge systems of domination. (15).

For Bell, it is the aim of literature produced by Native American authors in the postcolonial landscape to subvert and hybridise the representations of Native American cultures in earlier works by both Euroamerican and Native American writers. These postcolonial texts wish to reclaim and legitimise Native American voices within the American context. It is in scenes like this where *Mason & Dixon* attempts to do the same thing with history and its contexts. Although the colonists in the novel do not possess the historical information to assess either of the Native Americans' explanations for how they reached the knowledge of meridian lines, this does not mean that these explanations are false. Instead, the novel provides an explanation of events that seeks to hybridise the histories of the American landscape. It presents explanations that, whilst not a part of the narratives of colonial historical discourse, still have a legitimate basis for historical fact in the historical discourses of the Native American cultures which also populate the landscape.

Mason & Dixon presents the contrasting viewpoints that Native American societies have over who has the right to disseminate the facts that have been produced through a system of signification when Mason and Dixon's party are led to a valley where "plants,– Vegetables,– grow big,– very big" (*M&D* 654). After entering this valley,

Mason asks the Native Americans tending these vegetables "[w]hy [they] keep it a Secret? Why not rather notify the *Pennsylvania Gazette*?"' (656, italics in original). The Native Americans respond that "[w]e but look after these, for Others who are absent, pending their Return" (656). Unlike Mason in the earlier section regarding the Penns land ownership, the Native Americans recognise that just because they live on the land and benefit from it, that does not make it their possession. For Mason this discovery should be immediately revealed to the wider world through the notification of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* because it constitutes a scientific discovery. However, for this group of Native Americans it is the right of those who initially cultivated these vegetables to decide whether to reveal their existence to the wider world, not those who discover said existence after the fact. Mason sees these vegetables as a means to profit personally from a discovery of information. He takes on the colonial view that this landscape is something to be exploited by those in the present for their benefit and anything that has gone before should be replaced with the present occupants' systems of control. Conversely, the Native Americans merely wish to guard this information until those who truly own it can claim it for themselves. Instead of taking possession of this land, these Native Americans believe that their actions should benefit the wider landscape and environment in terms of the past, present, and future.

Whereas the Native Americans tending the giant vegetables recognise that discovery does not mean ownership, the narrative states that were Mason and Dixon's "Visto to've crossed the Warrior Path and simply proceeded West, then upon that Cross cut and beaten into the Wilderness, would have sprung into being not only the

metaphysickal Encounter of Ancient Savagery with Modern Science, but withal a civic Entity" (*M&D*, 650). This passage indicates that if the various ideological cultures of the Native Americans were to meet with those of the European colonists, there would be a point at which issues of citizenship would have to be addressed in some way or another. Both of these separate societies would be forced to confront and engage with each other in a communal sense to decide how their differing ideas should be reconciled. Exactly how this civic entity would manifest itself is suggested in the novel's assertion that Western settlers would eventually begin "[s]etting up Businesses upon the approaches, for miles along each great Conduit, there would presently arrive waggon-smiths, stock auctioneers, gunmakers, feed and seed merchants" (650). In contrast to the group of Native Americans who are still able to profit from the giant vegetables without claiming ownership of them, the colonists, in their need to subjugate and control, would force their own structures of ideology onto the landscape in order to claim full ownership of it. In its anti-colonial stance, the novel indicates that as soon as the Native American ideologies meet those of the European settlers, the colonists will immediately try to re-order this space in the image of their own ideals. Once this re-ordering has been achieved, the colonists will begin setting up businesses to benefit the other settlers in a way that provides a source of both economic gain as well as reinforcing an ideological erasure of the Native American cultures that already exist there. Despite the Native Americans demonstrating that several ideologies can exist and thrive alongside, not only those around them, but in relation to the memory of the societies that have gone before them, the settlers need to have complete

ownership over the space in which they live means that this will never be an option for the colonial systems of power.

Although the Mason-Dixon line is, as David Cowart puts it, "emblematic of divisions the Christian West has always constructed as essential", he also notes that the novel indicates "[i]n human hands, however, boundaries become occasion for discord" (*The Dark Passages of History* 151). The novel illustrates that this discord does not simply exist between the European colonists and Native American cultures either. The Native Americans in the text are not the only characters who recognise the damage that these colonial boundaries will have on the American landscape. Whilst discussing their line with Mason and Dixon, Capt. Zhang, observes that "[e]v'rywhere else on earth, Boundaries follow Nature,– coast-lines, ridge-tops, river-banks,- so honouring the Dragon or *Shan* within, from which Land-Scape ever takes its form" (*M&D* 542). For Zhang, who's ideological subjectivity is based on East Asian ideals rather than European ones, Mason and Dixon's line is heretical and destructive. His beliefs that a Dragon or *Shan* are responsible for the form of the landscape is indicative of a higher power being responsible for the demarcation of territory, not those who live upon it. Zhang continues to posit that to "mark a right Line upon the Earth is to inflict upon the Dragon's very Flesh, a sword-slash, a long, perfect scar, impossible for any who live out here the year 'round to see as other than hateful Assault" (542). Zhang considers the drawing of Mason and Dixon's line to be a hateful assault on the landscape in a similar vein to the Paxton Boys' earlier massacre of the Conestoga people. Whilst it benefits of the colonists who have claimed ownership of the land to construct this line as part of

their own boundary demarcations, the landscape itself will, according to Zhang, be permanently damaged.

I realise that it could be argued that the aforementioned Native American groups have also committed a similar act of assault on the landscape by drawing their own boundaries. In fact, Jeremy Gatt posits that the Native Americans' knowledge of Meridian lines means that "[i]t becomes clear that the Native Americans must also use boundaries, not only to demarcate one tribe from another, but also to establish some conditioned peace" (47). Gatt uses this claim as evidence that "the boundaryless state projected into the future 'subjunctive', or imagined in the present, appears as an impossibility" (47). Gatt recognises that the use of boundaries by these Indigenous societies is indicative of the impossibility of a subjunctive space. However, unlike the colonists, the Native American boundaries are not drawn or made permanent. The need for a delegation of Native Americans from various nations to inform Mason and Dixon that a Warrior Path exists in the first place is indicative of the absence of maps or other indicators as to where this Path is located in the environment. The novel demonstrates that the Native American boundaries exist in memory and so can be re-shaped and recontextualised according to the needs of the time, thus the possibility of the subjunctive continues to exist. Furthermore, the need for a delegation from six separate nations of Native Americans also reveals the collective attempt on the part of these nations to retain this subjunctive existence. In contrast to the colonists' declarative methods, the Native Americans use of impermanent borders builds upon the historic border and foundations of the past as opposed to erasing them. It can of

course be argued that the Native Americans who are there to prevent the party crossing the Warrior Path give this boundary a greater sense of permanence. However, this permanence is only necessary after European encroachment. If the colonial forces had never entered onto the American space in the first place this impermanence would have continued in the same way it had for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Although Gatt is correct in stating that the boundaryless state projected into the future subjunctive is an impossibility, this only becomes the case after the colonial intrusion onto Native American land. Not only do the colonial ideological systems force a declarative approach to mapping onto the landscape, but they also force Native American ideologies to do the same when they would not otherwise, in order to protect their own ideals from these destructive declarations.

Whilst the assortment of Native American cultures is not completely lost by the novel's conclusion, there is still the suggestion that the colonial commitment to one authoritative set of ideals is detrimental to the overall progress that could be potentially achieved through the exploration of America. During their previously mentioned shared dream sequence, in which Mason and Dixon are led by a Native American to "a great Bridge, fashion'd of Iron, quite out of the reach of British or for that matter French Arts" (*M&D* 677), they are told they cannot cross this bridge. Dixon then asks why they are being shown it in the first place. The Native American tells them that if he did not, their "Great Road thro' the Trees would miss it" (677). He goes on to suggest that Mason and Dixon's group "move like wood-borers inside a Post in a great House, in the dark […] with no idea at all what else lies Without" (677). The novel is

directly addressing the ideas that Native Americans are underdeveloped and savage by suggesting that they are far more aware of the realities of the world around them than the colonial settlers will ever be. Mason and Dixon's line has become, in the eyes of the Native Americans, a physical manifestation of what Tore Rye Andersen calls "the narrowing of a historical field of many possibilities into a single beaten track" ("Mapping the World"). Mason and Dixon's line serves as a means of marking the geography of the American landscape but, as the novel makes clear, does not offer a full picture of what is encompassed in this environment. Mason and Dixon, and by extension the colonial society, have become so single-minded in their realisation of one specific possibility for the American landscape that they don't notice the multiple other occurrences and opportunities for knowledge that already exist at the same time and in the same place.

Whilst it does not take place during the America section of the novel, *Mason & Dixon* does include an example of the final destructive outcome that occurs when the European need to maintain its sense of intellectual superiority and direct control over an environment is fully realised. During an expedition that takes place after Mason and Dixon have finished drawing their line, Dixon is taken to a society in the centre of the Earth. After his visit, Dixon recounts to Mason how the members of the society's "local Academy of Science" (*M&D* 740) have informed him that "once the necessary Degrees are measur'd and the size and weight and shape of the Earth are calculated inescapably at last, all this will vanish" (741). By expanding the knowledge that their own society has attained, the novel suggests that men of science, such as Mason and Dixon, can

also diminish the number of alternative ideologies and societies in a very physical sense. By creating inescapable facts within the context of science, the speculative elements that were allowed to flourish within this realm of uncertainty will also vanish along with them. The knowledge of the size, weight, and shape of the Earth will benefit those ideologies which are intellectually influenced by the Enlightenment but be destructive to those which are not. The implication that Enlightenment processes can be destructive forces, as suggested by the dictatorial attitudes of "Royal Society Members and the French Encylopædists" (359), reaches its natural conclusion at this point. The community at the centre of the Earth will be lost through the establishment of a definitive answer to the question of the Earth's weight which will ultimately be constituted by linearities. Whilst the novel only hints at the means by which declarative systems of signification will erase subjunctive America, the society at the centre of the Earth has already reached this point of irreversible destruction.

The novel also warns of how the physical loss of these alternative societies will also result in the forfeiture of the knowledge that they could potentially offer to the Enlightenment-influenced cultures of Europe. During his conversation with fellows of the Local Academy of Science in the underground society, Dixon is told "[w]e have learn'd to use the Tellurick Forces, including Magnetism,– which you oddly seem to consider the only one" (740). When Dixon reveals this to Mason, Mason asks whether "[t]here are others?" (740). This exchange hints at the potential knowledge that can be gained from the society that Dixon visits and the knowledge that will be lost when this society vanishes from existence. Mason demonstrates that there are aspects of science

that the ideological structures that he and Dixon inhabit have no idea about, aspects that will continue to be unknown with the loss of this alternative culture. Critics such as Milan Zafirovski have argued that the Enlightenment "truly functions as the process of 'creative destruction' in culture and society in general" (158). For Zafirovski, the Enlightenment "rejects and exposes liberation via 'blissful ignorance', religious superstition or fanatical faith, and other forms of irrationalism as spurious 'liberation' and effective subjugation, within the pre-Enlightenment, including the medieval Christian world" (158). Zafirovski identifies the Enlightenment's acts of creative destruction as occurring within the medieval Christian societies that directly precede the society in which it was being developed. However, *Mason & Dixon* suggests that, although the Enlightenment sought to end the effective subjugation of those within its own ideological structures, in doing so it subjugated and destroyed the potential for other cultures to demonstrate their own discoveries and knowledge. In turn, the novel suggests that whilst the ability to gain certainty on a topic is often a cause for celebration, it can also eradicate the possibility of discovering of an alternative knowledge that may be of equal, or more use, than the discovery being made at the time.

The implications of the potential benefits that are lost with the culture at the centre of the Earth is indicative of the main criticism that the novel directs towards the colonial ideology. Through their insistence that they are a superior race, the colonial society forfeits the potential benefits that could be reaped from treating the various Native American civilisations as equals. This sense of superiority is most apparent in

Mason's own dismissal of Native American peoples during his conversation with Dr Johnson. When Dr Johnson asks about the "Savages of America" (*M&D* 746) and "what Powers do they possess, and how do they use them?" (746), Mason recalls "the giant Mounds that the Savages say they guard as Curators, for some more distant Race of Builders" (746). Rather than offering Dr Johnson an explanation of the Iroquois nations who knew how to use Meridian lines, Mason instead recounts the elements of other Native American cultures that emphasise their difference from settler societies. If Mason were to reveal his knowledge of the Native American use of Meridian lines, it would in no way compromise the principles of the Enlightenment mode. Mason has seen several Native American nations' use of land-boundaries in practice and can therefore convincingly believe in their application of Meridian lines. However, he instead reinforces the notion of Native Americans as "Savages" who believe in some more distant "Race of Builders". This allows the novel to demonstrate the ways in which the colonial historical narrative is a construct of its subjects. Mason's recollection of the Native Americans as savages is reminiscent of Brockden Brown's characterisation in *Edgar Huntly*. Despite knowing that existing Native American cultures have thought-processes and ideas that have the potential to be just as important for the discovery of knowledge as methodologies derived from the Enlightenment, Mason chooses to emphasise the parts that suggest a sense of European intellectual superiority in order to maintain the ideals of his own society.

Despite being able to argue to the contrary that Native Americans are not simply savages, Mason still conforms to the stereotype championed by his ideology. In this

sense, within the novel, Mason comes to represent what would later become the basis of Gothic representations of the various Indigenous cultures found on the American continent. The result being that Native American societies came to be viewed only in terms of hostility and otherness because the individuals who encountered these tribes only included those elements in the narratives of their personal experience. *Mason & Dixon* explicitly indicates that whilst the writers of the captivity narrative and Gothic novels I have mentioned in this section encouraged those reading their works to only consider Native American hostility, these incidents were not the only forms of encounter that took place between Native Americans and settlers. Pynchon's novel aims to redress the colonial narrative through its presentation of colonial hostility and Native American civility. There are no incidents of Native American aggression within the novel that rival the massacre at Lancaster committed by the colonist Paxton Boys. In fact, even before these events are addressed, Mason and Dixon's early encounter with George Washington sets out the concepts of colonial manipulation with regard to Native Americans and how these concepts were enacted for the benefit of European settlers. By undermining the dominant representation of Native American cultures, *Mason & Dixon* also undermines the authority of the narratives that have been built around these representations. The novel is able to suggest that the representations of Native American groups in the Gothic are false in their claims of savagery and archaic beliefs. The text demonstrates that, whilst they are alternative doubles to the European forces that wish to colonise the American landscape, this does not mean they are any less valuable. As a result, the colonial forces of the novel ultimately appear to

be far more savage and barbaric in their need for dominance. Rather than appearing as a superior and civilised society, colonial cultures are presented as ignorant and destructive forces that ultimately only considers their own progress as important, regardless of the detrimental effect this will have on other ideologies.

The following chapter will explore Pynchon's 2006 novel *Against the Day*. It will offer a reading of the double in which subjects, unlike Mason and Dixon, are attached to not one but two ideological spheres. In *Against the Day* the dominant ideology has been entirely enforced by the European settlers who have conquered North America and are now facing a challenge from several alternative ideological frameworks. Several of the characters in the novel are simultaneously subject to these frameworks as well as the ideologies of the dominant systems of power. *Against the Day* does not present the dominant Western ideals as the force destroying the ideologies that already exist in order to assert dominance. Instead, as this dominance has already been well-established at the time of the novel's setting, it examines the means by which these same colonial ideologies destroy those that wish to challenge this dominance, and more broadly, whether these alternative ideologies even wish to do so in the first place

Twice Upon A Time in the West: Doubles and the Traverse Family in *Against the Day*

A Fistful of Dynamite: Webb Traverse, Scarsdale Vibe, and the Construction of Doubling in *Against the Day*

As I have already noted in the previous exploration of *Mason & Dixon*, the construction of the double is, for the most part, predicated on two separate characters, objects, or elements that share characteristics. In his tracing of the double through Gothic Literature, Dale Townshend notes that the two central characters in William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, "like many pairs of later Gothic doubles" ("Doubles" 190), are "mutually locked into a complex dynamic of shifting power relations" ("Doubles" 190). Although Townshend specifically refers to *Caleb Williams* in this example, he also notes that the shifting power dynamic is common in many examples of Gothic doubling. These relations often take the form of contrasting ideas and ideals that continue to shift from dominance to submission throughout the course of a text. The shifting power relations that underpin Townshend's reading of the double also appear in several other Gothic works, notably Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Within Stevenson's text these tensions take the form of a physical manifestation of the shifting power relations between the two eponymous characters. Dr Jekyll becomes representative of the good, ideologically committed citizen whereas Mr Hyde is an evil, transgressive figure. Of course, what sets this text apart from *Caleb Williams*, is that both Jekyll and Hyde occupy the same body. As a result, the power divisions hinge upon which of these two personas are controlling the body at a given time. Rather than focusing on the divisions between two physical manifestations of a character, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is far more focused on the divided

character within a single individual. The tensions in this text stem not from the opposing ideas and motives of two separate individuals, but the contradictions that exist within a single identity. Jekyll finds himself in a situation in which he is both a subject to the dominant ideological structures as well as actively transgressing against them.

This divisions that the double represents in Gothic Literature, as well as in Sigmund Freud's assertion that the double is "a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self" (210), also plays a key role in much postmodern writing. As Robert G. Dunn describes it, "postmodernity is an often disjunctive and sometimes jarring experience of multiplicity and fluidity, disturbingly incongruous and disorienting yet full of exhilarating possibilities" (143). In terms of identity, this multiplicity and fluidity often results in the individual manifesting several different selves in order to suit the particular situation. In her own writing, Sezen Kayhan notes that "in contemporary society overriding importance is not given to a particular identity, like the political, but to plural identities which define humans in multiple ways" (39). This contemporary, or postmodern, society that Kayhan refers to is populated with individuals who, like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, have a plurality of identities which can be used to define the self in multiple ways. However, this multiplicity is no longer a cause for concern or terror in the individual, but a fact of life in the contemporary era. Within the postmodern space, it is no longer possible to maintain a fixed sense of self in postmodern culture and that which was once a source of terror is now a naturally occurring necessity if one wishes to function in contemporary society.

Furthermore, Jean-François Lyotard's argument that postmodernism represents an "incredulity towards metanarratives[1]" (xxiv, my footnote) sets this movement in conflict with the representations of social authority found in Gothic texts. According to Lyotard, in the postmodern world, it is no longer acceptable to subscribe to one authoritative narrative. Instead, the individual is encouraged to challenge this ideological authority through a plurality of subjective interpretations. In the Gothic text, these foundational metanarrative stems from the Enlightenment. The separation between good and evil centres on the characters' personal relationships to the Enlightenment-influenced society in which they live. The divisions of doubling are drawn along the lines of transgression and submission to the schematic world view of the systems which form the basis of social order. For example, in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Jekyll is a doctor and therefore associated with the scientific rationality of the Enlightenment, whereas Mr Hyde, through his impulsive and violent actions, is an irrational transgressor. However, in the postmodern text, a distrust towards metanarratives means that it is the dominant social systems which are often posited as the source of evil rather than those who transgress or challenge this schematic order. These rigid codes of conduct repress other views and narratives that, for postmodern

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[1] **Metanarrative**: 'a piece of narrative, esp. a classic text or other archetypal story, which provides a schematic world view upon which an individual's experiences and perceptions may be ordered.' (*OED Online* "metanarrative").

writers such as Pynchon, are just as important to other cultures and societies even if they are not the dominant ones.

It comes as no surprise then that Pynchon's *Against the Day* (2006) also looks to engage with this pluralised presentation of identity. Although in this text the dominant ideological systems are based around early capitalism rather than the Enlightenment, the double still features as a predominant aspect of the characters' subjectivity. In the novel, several characters possess qualities and character-traits that would have been the basis for a doubling relationship in earlier Gothic works but, as a work which can be situated within the realms of postmodern literature, these doubles never cause the terror that they typically would in the Gothic. Instead, the characters are able to reconcile their internal differences in order to manifest a more complete form of self. This plurality of identities within a single individual often also necessitates a plurality of potential doubles and doubling relationships with other characters. However, when these doubles do occur, true to the postmodern worldview, they invert the suggestion that those who oppose the governing social order are evil and reconstitutes them as heroic characters who oppose the authoritative and repressive structures that these systems of power wish to maintain. *Against the Day* shies away from presenting sympathetic characters who whole-heartedly subscribe to the ideals of a singular ideological structure, as is the case with the Enlightenment in earlier Gothic texts, as well as *Mason & Dixon* to a certain extent. Instead, the novel focuses on the characters who constantly wish to expose the capitalist ideologies that dominate their own society

as being part of the repressive and dictatorial systems that postmodernists, such as Lyotard, would argue they are.

One of *Against the Day*'s most significant characters with dual identities is Webb Traverse. Webb's initial appearance is through a meeting with Merle Rideout, where he introduces himself as a "[s]ort of mine engineer" (*AD* 85). Webb is initially attracted to Merle after noticing him working with dynamite. During this preliminary interaction with Webb, Merle is reminded that he has seen "enough back-country insanity by now to keep a piece of his eye on the shotgun under the table" (85). The sense of uncertainty surrounding Webb is expounded upon further as he and Merle's conversation continues. Merle begins to explain to Webb the properties of "silver fulminate […] which'll blow up if you touch it with a feather. Fulminating gold, too, if your tastes happen to be more expensive" (86). Webb reacts to this by asking "gold, silver, these shinin and wonderful metals, basis of all the world's economies, you go in a laboratory, fool with em a little, acid and so on, and you get a high explosive that all you got to do's sneeze at the wrong time and it's adios, muchachos?" (87). Gold and silver are presented here as being both constructive and destructive in terms of their uses to the individual. As Webb points out, they serve as the basis for the world's economies but can also bring about the destruction of the very structures and people that represent these same institutions. These elements have dual purposes that can, in theory, be used to cancel each other out. The text is already pointing towards the existence of doubles all around the characters, even before it has started to reveal these features in the characters themselves.

The close proximity between production and destruction is central to *Against the Day*'s presentation of the systems of power which dominate the ideologies of the novel. As I noted in the previous chapter on *Mason & Dixon*, Linda Hutcheon points out that "the meaning and shape are not *in the events,* but *in the systems* which make those past 'events' into present historical 'facts'". (89, italics in original). In Hutcheon's understanding of the postmodern approach to history in literature, the systems of power enact a process of editing events to best fit their own construction of these facts. However, in *Against the Day* this process begins before the events are even fully in the past. Although Merle possesses the knowledge that gold and silver can be used as a destructive force, Webb's seeming ignorance of this information demonstrates how the average person perceives these elements. The systems that are responsible for shaping events into historical facts, begin this process long before the events themselves are in the past. In spite of their ability to cause mass destruction, the wider systems of power rely on these metals as sources of wealth. It is in their best interest to prevent this destructive information being made widely available because it would undermine their authority. As a result, they keep this information hidden from the majority of subjects in the present. Furthermore, if this information remains hidden, it will not even be considered when constructing a historical narrative around the significance of gold and silver in the future. Not only are facts themselves created through specific ideological systems' manipulation of the past, but the significance of the objects and items that exist as evidence of these events are also defined and interpreted by these same systems in the present.

Another significant incident of duality in terms of objects, at least for Webb, is that of his encounter with dynamite itself. The dynamite of the novel "is both the miner's curse, the outward and audible sign of his enslavement to mineral extraction, and the American working man's equalizer, his agent of deliverance, if he would only dare use it…" *(AD* 97). The ability to lift this line wholesale to demonstrate an example of doubling demonstrates how significant this object is in the text. It directly supports Simon Malpas and Andrew Taylor's assertion that "the novel is dominated by references to, and variations on, doubling and mirroring, as if characters and objects are unable to exist singly and singularly in Pynchon's fictional world" (190). Dynamite here is presented as being both an object of repression and freedom, destruction and creation, enslavement and deliverance. The novel is directly addressing the importance of dynamite's dual purpose in the lives of those who utilise its properties. Like the precious metals that Merle points out have the power to be the basis for the destruction and creation of the economy, dynamite can be viewed in similar terms. However, it is also more freely available than the metals described earlier and therefore has greater importance to the American working man. Due to the ease with which it can be accessed, the dynamite can become a tool for men like Webb to directly instigate a greater autonomy from the ideologies that currently uses the same material as a means to continually subjugate and control their subjects.

It stands to reason then that if individuals have the power to re-shape how certain objects are viewed, they can also reconcile certain contradictions within their own identities. Returning to Webb Traverse, Merle's earlier suspicion that he may not quite

be the company man that his role as a mine engineer suggests is confirmed shortly after their meeting. The novel presents Webb, in the role of a "a true bomber" (*AD* 94), musing on the best way to target the mine owners. For Webb choosing targets is of great difficulty. He knows that attacking the mines themselves often results in "the folks most likely dying being miners" (94). This leaves Webb with "precious few targets except for the railroad" (94). The novel then goes on to list the people, such as farmers and Native Americans, who have all lost out to the railroad. Therefore, in the eyes of Webb, it is the railroad which is his most justifiable target. Robert McLaughlin has argued that the parallel tactics of destruction employed by anarchism and capitalism "sets something of a trap for readers, inviting us to sympathize with, even root for, acts of violence […] while we deplore the institutionalized violence directed from above. The novel explores the blurry boundary between 'good' and 'bad' terrorism, acceptable and unacceptable acts of violence" (292). McLaughlin's consideration of how the novel depicts violence further points towards the blurred distinction that doubling exhibits in the text. Webb condemns the actions of the mine owners in their destruction of Native American and farming land, whilst employing the same methods to destroy their infrastructures. Although McLaughlin argues that the reader can recognise the similarities between good and bad acts of violence, Webb cannot.

By paralleling the methods of violence that both capitalism and anarchism employ, the novel starts to force the question as to how separate these oppositional ideals really are. Webb's dual uses of dynamite can also be read through Althusser's theory of ideology as having a "material practice" (39). In both of the examples of Webb as a

mine engineer and as a true bomber, he uses the dynamite to "*act* according to his ideas" (Althusser 42, italics in original) and inscribes his "own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice" (42). Webb's musings upon who deserves to be blown up and who does not are indicative of his personal ideals influencing his material practice of attacking the railway lines. Through his actions as a true bomber, Webb is able to subject himself more definitively to an ideology that attacks the dominant systems of power. However, as a mine engineer, Webb also engages in practices that tie his subjectivity more closely to the systems he opposes in his true bomber role. The novel has already suggested that dynamite is a sign of enslavement to mineral extraction. By extension then, when he returns to work in the mines, Webb also reinforces his material connection to the dominant ideologies. The fact that dynamite can serve this dual role indicates that a doubling is not just taking place with regards to the object itself, but the two, seemingly oppositional, systems of thought that utilise this object in order to reinforce their ideological control over subjects through methods of material practice.

Althusser also specifies that "ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (40). Despite Webb's subjective belief that his material practice is an expression of his own free will, Althusser argues that all of these practices are actually always expressions of a larger ideology. From an Althusserean point of view, Webb's actions are always taking place within an ideological apparatus, more specifically as part of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) that I explored in the previous *Mason &*

Dixon section.[2] In this instance, with regards to Althusserean forms of ideology, Webb's actions as a true bomber take place within the political ISA. He freely acts out his political ideals through the use of dynamite in his targeting of the railroad. However, as it is a member of the trade union that first exposes Webb to the anarchist ideas that underpin this material practice (*AD* 96-97; 102-103), Webb's actions also take place within the trade union ISA. Initially, Webb's alignment with both anarchism and trade unionism would appear to be somewhat contradictory. In general, anarchism rejects the notion of a ruling class because as Mikhail Bakunin, one of the founding figures in anarchist thought, writes in *Statism and Anarchy* (1873): "If the proletariat is to be the ruling class, it may be asked, then whom will it rule? There must be yet another proletariat which will be subject to this new rule, this new state" (177). Bakunin asserts that "If there is a state, then necessarily there is domination and consequently slavery. A state without slavery, open or camouflaged, is inconceivable - that is why we are enemies of the state" (178). The creation of a new state, led by the working classes would, for Bakunin, lead to a new proletarian class developing and the cycle of a ruled and ruling class would simply repeat itself. As a result, any revolutionary achievement would ultimately fail. According to Bakunin if anarchism were to be truly successful in its aims, there would have to be no state and therefore no ISAs, including trade unions, either.

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[2] Please refer to pp. 105-108 for a fuller explanation of ISAs and complete list of Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses.

However, as anarchist thought developed, varying interpretations began to emerge as to what a successful form of anarchism would actually look like in practice. Bakunin, for example, is often associated with "collectivist anarchism" which Alan Antliff describes as a society where "[l]and, capital, factories, instruments of work, and raw material were to become the collective property of associations of workers and peasants" (5). Antliff adds that, under collectivist anarchism, society would be "organized 'from below upwards' into autonomous communities, federations of regional communities, and, ultimately, a single international fraternal organization" (5, quotation marks in original). In brief, Bakunin's concept of collectivist anarchism advocates for the destruction of the state in favour of a society which would be organised into autonomous communities. These communities would then take responsibility for the production of goods based on the needs and skills of those around them, whether that be on a local, regional, or international level. Contrary to Bakunin's theories of collectivist anarchism, Webb Traverse's beliefs are representative of another branch of anarchism called anarcho-syndicalism. For the anarcho-syndicalists, the trade union is the central organising force which will allow for the emergence of an anarchist revolution. Rudolf Rocker argues that anarcho-syndicalists are of the opinion that:

> trade union organization should be of such a character as to afford workers the possibility of achieving the utmost in their struggle against the employers, and at the same time provide them with a basis from which they will be able in a revolutionary situation to proceed with the re-shaping of economic and social life (93).

For those who subscribe to the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism, the trade union is the basis from which all revolutionary action can take place. As a result, the trade union will remain an important factor in the make-up of society even after an anarcho-syndicalist revolution. It is through this particular branch of anarchist thought that individuals like Webb are able to identify themselves as anarchists, whilst still maintaining a strong belief in the power of trade unions.

As I have noted above, the trade union is also an ISA and therefore, in Althusserean conceptions of ideology, the trade union that Webb belongs to would be viewed as a tool to be used by the ruling systems of power. In this sense, whilst anarchism more broadly, as result of its resistance to state structures and ruling classes, cannot necessarily be considered as being influenced by ISAs in the same way as other ideologies, anarcho-syndicalism can be approached in these terms due to the centrality of trade unions in its structure. In fact, Althusser makes clear that the concert of ISAs, as he calls them, "is dominated by a single score, occasionally disturbed by contradictions (those of the remnants of the former ruling class, those of the proletarians and their organizations)" (28). Althusser expressly refers to the ways in which "proletarians and their organizations" (28), such as trade unions, engage with the ideological apparatuses of the ruling systems of power, even when they appear in contradiction to other apparatuses within these systems. Regardless of the ideology that he performs within, and whether he is personally aware of it or not, from an Althusserean ideological perspective, Webb remains subject to the dominant systems of power. Although they are separate from the prevailing capitalist ideals, as a result of

their basis within trade unionist structures, anarcho-syndicalist ideologies can be understood as functioning in concert with the other ISAs that facilitate the authority of the dominant systems of power. This ultimately means that proletarian groups, such as anarcho-syndicalists, are still under the control of ruling ideologies. By extension, Althusserean principles of ideology and ideological state apparatuses would suggest that the degree to which anarcho-syndicalists can contradict and change the dominant ideological structures is still severely limited by the governing systems of power.

The power that the dominant systems of power have over the anarcho-syndicalist ideologies of *Against the Day* can be illustrated by making a brief sojourn away from Webb. During his investigation of anarchist activity, the Private Detective Lew Basnight notes "[t]he names of owners' operatives were also turning up among his files on the mine workers" (*AD* 198) some of whom are "wanted by authorities in distant states for crimes against owners […] even Anarchist bombers, yet here they were at the same time on the payroll of the Owner's Association" (198). Basnight's revelation confirms what the dual uses of dynamite hinted at in my previous paragraph. The capitalist and anarchist ideals of the novel are intrinsically linked. Even Webb, who actively bombs capitalist targets, has reached the position of mine engineer within the structures that these people control. Furthermore, Basnight's reflection in this section demonstrates how widespread these relationships to the dominant ideals really are in the novel. Webb's dual identities may at first appear to be a secret that he has agency over, but in reality, the dominant social structure is built on these relationships. It has reached the point where it is impossible to distinguish oneself from the dominant social mode, even

if you wish to destroy it, because the social systems of power have incorporated these individuals into their own structure. The incorporation of anarcho-syndicalists into their wider financial systems allows the Owner's Association to keep tabs on these potential threats to society, but without the public fallout of a mass insurrection. By ensuring that the financial capabilities of anarchist groups are controlled to a large extent by the systems of power, these ideological enforcers can effectively police how much influence and public visibility counter-ideological groups really have in society.

In her reading of the novel, Diana Benea asserts that "[t]he anarchists, foreign-born and Americans alike, emerge as the repositories of an alternative vision of America, premised upon notions of freedom and social justice" (140) which are in conflict with the dominant systems of power. However, as I have suggested, Webb is still using the same materials and methods that the current systems are using to maintain their vision of America. Whilst Webb as a character may even agree that his notion of America is "premised upon notions of freedom and social justice", the novel seems to be directing its own presentation of these "alternative visions" as closer to David Marriott's interpretation of "the Counterforce" in Pynchon's earlier novel *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973). Marriott describes the Counterforce as an ideological system that "began as a reaction to the strictures of orthodoxy" (72) before eventually coming "full circle and now proscribes the heterodoxy on its own non-conformists" (72). The Counterforce, in this example, starts as a reaction to the orthodoxy of the dominant systems of power. However, by the conclusion of *Gravity's Rainbow* it forces its own form of heterodoxy on to its subjects and becomes another form of the dictatorial ideals it was initially

reacting against. This can again be read alongside Althusser's definition of the Repressive State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatuses. Althusser argues "the 'ruling class' in principle holds State power […] and therefore has at its disposal the (Repressive) State Apparatus" (20) as well as stating that "*no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses*" (20, italics in original). The only means that the ruling class has to control the State are, according to Althusser, these two types of Apparatus. Therefore, if the Counterforce wishes to become the ruling system, it can only use the same methods as the systems of power it wishes to overthrow. Naturally, this would lead to the Counterforce itself become a repressive system of control, and thus embodying that which it once claimed to be fighting against through its own ideals.

Whilst Webb and the anarcho-syndicalists in *Against the Day* are not in the same position as the Counterforce in terms of their opposition to the ruling systems of power, *Against the Day*'s presentation of anarcho-syndicalism is similar to Marriott's reading of the Counterforce. During his bombing of the railroad, Webb postulates "Lord knew that owners and mine managers deserved to be blown up" (*AD* 94). These ideas are given added significance when Webb also recalls that "some of these explosions, the more deadly of them, in fact, were really set off to begin with not by Anarchists but by the owners themselves" (94). Webb's wish to blow up the mine owners and managers fits in with the anarcho-syndicalist belief that it is the role of the trade union to act as "the fighting organization of the workers against the employers to

enforce the demands of the workers for the safeguarding and raising of their standard of living" (Rocker 86). Webb, acting as a representative of the trade union, wishes to destroy the employers in order to continue safeguarding his fellow workers. The aim is to ensure the miners' safety in a physical sense, by destroying those who have in the past killed other miners, as well as in an ideological sense, by removing the subjects who wish to maintain the miners' subservient position in the current social system. When considered in conjunction with Althusser's ideas, Webb's material practice of blowing up mine owners interpellates him into the ideals of anarcho-syndicalist ideologies, just as subjects to the dominant capitalist ideologies in the novel interpellate themselves by enacting practices which reflect these ideals. Furthermore, from an Althusserean viewpoint, Webb also interpellates other subjects into the ideology of anarcho-syndicalism. Other individuals are able to recognise that Webb's practices take place within the apparatuses of anarcho-syndicalism and thus they are also interpellated as subjects by these apparatuses through their recognition of the role that anarcho-syndicalism plays in motivating Webb's actions.

A reading of this episode is also useful for demonstrating the ways in which anarcho-syndicalists like Webb utilise the same methods and practices as the ruling capitalist systems of power. Webb's noting that "some of these explosions, the more deadly of them, in fact, were really set off to begin with not by Anarchists but by the owners themselves" (94) indicates that, not only are the same physical tools, notably dynamite, being used by capitalists and anarcho-syndicalists, they are being used for the exact same material practices as well. Furthermore, Webb's own decision that one class of

people has greater value than others is suggestive of the shortcomings that Bakunin recognises in his critique of revolutionary state action. As Bakunin asserts "[i]f the proletariat is to be the ruling class, it may be asked, then whom will it rule? There must be yet another proletariat which will be subject to this new rule, this new state" (177). Webb's belief that the mine owners are of lesser value than the miners is suggestive of the larger reversal of roles between ruled and ruling that Bakunin points out in his writing. In Webb's ideal society, the current ruling group, the mine owners, will become the ruled group. The same structural divisions will be present, they will just be upheld by different rulers, the miners themselves. Webb is already starting to take on the characteristics of the ruling members of society by embodying the same mind-set as the mine managers and owners that he claims to stand in opposition to. These hints at anarcho-syndicalism's potential to adopt the same dictatorial and repressive structures of power as capitalism, contradicts Addison R. Wanner's claim that "what remains in *Against the Day* is a jubilant rebuke of authority and an embrace of anarchy and anarchists everywhere, whose dreams may no longer be quite so limited by the looming powers of capital and state as they were in *Gravity's Rainbow*" (69). For Wanner, the anarchism of *Against the Day* is very much free from the influence of capitalism. However, contrary to Wanner's assertion, these moments of contradiction within Webb's thought-processes point towards the ideological shortcomings of groups such as the anarcho-syndicalists. The anarcho-syndicalists may start out offering an alternative vision of society but, as a result of their need to function within and, as Althusser would argue, utilise the ISAs that are dominated by the ruling systems of

power, eventually these visions will become susceptible to the same contradictions and divisions that exist across the systems of control in the present.

The shared practices and apparatuses of capitalism and anarcho-syndicalism that an Althusserean reading of *Against the Day* reveals, also positions these two ideological systems as doubles within the novel. Seán Molloy asserts that "[d]espite his obviously sympathetic representation of Anarchist communities in Against the Day […] Pynchon's ultimate statement on the politics of resistance is one of rejection due to the futility of idealist schemes in relation to human realities" ("Escaping the Politics"). The futility that Molloy notes can be understood, in an Althusserean reading of *Against the Day*, as a direct result of capitalism and anarcho-syndicalism's shared reliance on the same ISAs to uphold their ideologies. Despite Webb's idealised views of anarcho-syndicalism, the reality is that it is essentially serving the same purpose as capitalism: maintain the authority of the dominant systems of power. Like the doubles that Freud describes, they share several of "the same features of character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names through several consecutive generations" (210). Although capitalism and anarcho-syndicalism are not characters in themselves, the shared traits that their subjects display, as demonstrated by Webb's disregard for certain types of people and his acknowledgement that capitalist subjects do the same for others, reveals their shared ideological foundations. In fact, Freud directly notes the shared crimes committed by doubles. In both cases, *Against the Day* presents capitalist and anarcho-syndicalist subjects who commit the crime of murder in order to reinforce their ideals. Those who are subject to these ideologies within the novel employ shared

methodologies in order to proliferate their beliefs. As a result, the shared material practices that emerge from these methodologies further strengthens the shared characteristics between capitalism and anarcho-syndicalism, and thus reinforces their doubled relationship.

The novel's mixed opinions on anarchism are something that Joanna Freer also recognises in her reading of *Against the Day*. She sets out the notion that "the novel makes itself home to myriad anarchist organisations representing the full spectrum of anarchism from the individualism of the old Wild West through to the anarcho-syndicalism of the miners" before making clear that "[n]ot all brands of anarchism are […] valued equally by Pynchon" (*Counterculture* 95). The novel does not, Freer indicates, ascribe equal approval to all of the anarchist ideologies that exist in its narrative. She specifically cites individualist anarchism which is defined by Peter Kropotkin as being concerned with "the full liberation of the individual from all social and moral bonds" (Kropotkin 293).[3] Freer suggests that this form of anarchism is "perhaps most responsible for the view of anarchism as claiming a licence for destructive unrestraint" (*Counterculture* 95). Although Freer argues that this form of anarchism is "treated with a certain nostalgia in the novel" (*Counterculture* 95) she ultimately concludes that:

> "[b]y and large, individualist anarchism represents for Pynchon nothing more nor less than a system in which there remain the spaces of freedom

[3] Kropotkin's own ideas are highly influenced by the work of the post-Hegelian Philosopher Max Stirner who is cited in his definition of individualist anarchism. See Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own* (1844).

> needed for the development of better social forms, spaces that […] the imposition of capitalist structures of control have virtually eliminated" (*Counterculture* 96).

According to Freer, the text's nostalgia for this form of anarchism does not stem from any approval of its methods, but from a recognition of the principles of personal autonomy that it promotes as an end goal.

Freer also reinforces *Against the Day*'s larger disapproval of anarchism "which employs terrorist tactics through the use of bombs" (*Counterculture* 96). Freer goes on to specifically cite Webb Traverse as a character who "is devoured by his own anger to the point where he alienates his family" (*Counterculture* 97)[4] as an example of the novel's suggestion that anger "can be valuable, yet it is unstable and it might be easily directed against the wrong people" (*Counterculture* 97). Freer indicates that Webb's anger is what leads to his alienation from his family. Furthermore, the use of bombing can also lead to the wrong people getting hurt or killed. Webb's actions, as I have suggested, are the direct result of his association with anarcho-syndicalism and, I would argue, the critique of those who employ bombs that Joanna Freer notes is part of a larger condemnation of this form of anarchism. Despite Webb's avoidance of factories and mines in his bombing campaign, largely as a result of "the folks most likely to end up dying would usually be miners, including children" (*AD* 94), there is no guarantee that innocents will avoid harm even when he avoids these particular targets.

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[4] My own exploration of the impact that the loss of family has on Webb can be found later in this section.

Whilst Webb claims that there are “precious few targets other than the railroad” (94), the trains that he targets may still be used by civilians travelling across the country, as well as the mine owners. Even the rail lines that served a principally industrial purpose still have to employ workers such as train drivers who will be harmed if they are caught in a bomb blast or a train derailment. Despite his earlier assertion that some of the deadliest explosions were the responsibility of “the mine owners themselves” (94), the novel also indicates that Webb’s violent practices can be just as dangerous for the workers that he wishes to protect.

This is not to say that the novel is anywhere near as critical of Webb as an individual, as it of larger capitalist and anarcho-syndicalist organisations. Whilst, as Freer indicates, Webb’s anger does eventually lead to his alienation from his family, he is also depicted as genuinely believing that he can make a difference against the systems of power that dominate his society. As a character, his thoughts can be understood as a reflection of Catherine Belsey’s reading of Althusserean ideology as “both a real and an imaginary relation to the world” (48). Webb’s understanding of anarchism, particularly anarcho-syndicalism, is real in the sense that his real conditions of existence are constructed in relation to the ideologies of anarcho-syndicalism and capitalism that form the basis of his subjectivity. However, his personal relationship to these conditions of existence is imaginary because the ideologies to which he is a subject discourage a full understanding of “the ways in which [he is] socially constituted within them” (48). As well as failing to understand that his material practices, with regards to anarcho-syndicalism, are the same as those used by capitalist subjects, Webb also fails

to recognise that, as functionaries within the same ideological apparatuses, anarcho-syndicalism and capitalism are essentially in service to the same systems of power. When examined through Althusserean ideas of ideology, this is not necessarily a particular fault on the part of Webb as an individual. Althusser would argue that Webb's inability to recognise that the seemingly contradictory elements of his identity actually function in service to the same systems of power are the result of capitalist and anarcho-syndicalist ideologies successfully interpellating him as a subject and preventing him from fully recognising the reality of his situation.

Not all critics have offered such a sympathetic reading of Webb. Through an analysis based on Christian P. Haines's assertion that the whole Traverse family are "not persons at all but rather recording-devices – channels for the various social, political, and economic forces that traverse the family" (407), Emaline Friedman and Hans Skott-Myhre have suggested that Pynchon does not even "offer Webb as a human character" (78), going on to state that "Webb in each of his iterations, fits the generic stereotype of the exploited miner, the distant father, the union member, the anarchist bomber, the rugged individual of the wild-west, the wily guerrilla fighter and the martyr" (78). Friedman and Skott-Myhre do note the contradictory nature of Webb's character here, but then dismiss him as series of stereotypes. In both of these cases, Friedman and Skott-Myhre, and Haines's reading of Webb and his family sells him a little short. To take, for example, the "distant father" that Friedman and Skott-Myhre list as one of Webb's iterations, there is evidence that Webb's relationship to this role is more complex than that of a simple stereotype. Webb makes a genuine effort to pass on to

his children "what he thought they should know, when he had a minute, though there was never the time" (*AD* 104). Despite there being an implication of absence in Webb's musing, he still recognises the need to impart some level of education upon his children. Webb even finds himself lamenting the "terrible real ballooning of emptiness at the core of his body" (107) at the thought of losing his children. He subverts the stereotype of other literary distant fathers such as Rabbit Angstrom or Jack Torrance, who are content just leaving their children to their own devices. The very notion that he has a flawed and incomplete relationship to this absent father role indicates that Webb is a more complicated and more realistically realised character than Friedman and Skott-Myhre assert is the case. Whilst he embodies some of the characteristics of this stereotype, the novel's presentation of Webb's complex relationship towards these stereotypes demonstrates a level of humanised self-awareness that a generic iteration would not have.

Friedman and Skott-Myhre's suggestion that Pynchon does not "offer Webb as a human character" (78) can more appropriately be levelled at individuals in his earlier novels such as Tyrone Slothrop in *Gravity's Rainbow*. However, I would argue that Webb is a far more complex and human creation than Slothrop. Throughout the course of *Gravity's Rainbow*, Slothrop's identity shifts several times. At different points within the novel, he goes from potentially being able to plot the impact of V-2 rockets via his sexual encounters; to becoming a cartoon type superhero known as Rocket-man; to being recast as a type of pig mascot during a celebration. However, unlike Webb, who is able to adopt the guise of miner or anarcho-syndicalist bomber at will, Slothrop is

unable to control the separate features of his identity. Slothrop himself acknowledges this lack of control when he realises that during his childhood "something was done to him, in a room, while he lay helpless" (*GR* 290). This sense of helplessness indicates Slothrop's feelings of insecurity with regards to his own identity and its construction in this text. In his exploration of Slothrop's character, Adrian S. Wisnicki indicates "the issue is never whether there is a Hidden Hand […] behind Slothrop's life" (56) but "the extent of power that this Hidden Hand wields" (56). In Wisnicki's argument, there is no question that there is a manipulative force behind Slothrop's life, the question is how much of an impact this force really has over him. In any case, it is not Slothrop who dictates his own identity. Unlike Webb, who is responsible for constructing the roles that constitute his sense of self from within the confines of the dominant systems of power, Slothrop has these identities projected upon and decided for him by these systems of power themselves.

This lack of control over his own identity actually makes Slothrop an interesting case study with regard to identity and the Gothic. In his reading of Gothic Literature, Fred Botting understands the Gothic's approach to identity as one in which the protagonist ends the novel with "with an elevated sense of identity" (*Gothic* 7). The protagonist of the Gothic, for Botting, always reaches the conclusion of the text with a greater sense of self-determination than at the beginning. In contrast to these Gothic protagonists, by the end of *Gravity's Rainbow*, Slothrop's identity has been manipulated and changed so much that it disappears altogether. During the closing pages of the novel, one of the characters, Pig Bodine, is described as "being one of the few who can still

see Slothrop as any sort of integral creature any more. Most of the others gave up long ago trying to hold him together, even as a concept" (*GR* 755). Slothrop is only able to exist when those around him recognise that he does. He has so little control over his own identity that once other people stop recognising its existence, he ceases to be altogether. Even Bodine is forced to confront the reality that "his own strength may someday soon not be enough either: that soon, like all the others, he'll *have* to let go" (755, italics in original). The fewer people who recognise Slothrop as a person, the more difficult it becomes for those who do to cling on to him. Rather than returning with an elevated sense of identity, as Botting would argue is typical of the Gothic, Slothrop is destroyed as a direct result of his being incapable of constructing an identity for himself in the first place.

The same accusation cannot be levelled at Webb. In fact, as I have previously stated, Webb occupies not one but two distinct, and at least partially self-defined, identities within the narrative of *Against the Day*. It is these two separate identities that form the basis for the most overt examples of doubling within Webb's character. Not only is Webb an anarcho-syndicalist bomber, but it is implied that he is "the notorious dynamiter of the San Juans known as the Kieselguhr Kid" (*AD* 191). The Kid is presented as not only a division within Webb's internal identity but as having a physically existence which enables Webb to commit acts of ideological and physical destruction against capitalism, without interfering with his other role as a subject to the capitalist ideals. As my Althusserean reading of anarcho-syndicalism's position in the dominant ISAs demonstrates, both of these identities are to some extent policed by the ruling

systems of the novel. However, rather than attempting to repress one element of Webb's identity in order to force him to conform to social norms, as is common in the Gothic texts that involve doubling, Webb is allowed to give equal significance to both. As ideology is, Althusser asserts, representative of "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (36), Webb imagines that he has these two distinct roles. The mine worker, who he believes is indicative of his position within the wider culture, and the Kieselguhr Kid, who allows him to transgress this conformist position. The Kid allows Webb to imagine that he is acting against the ideals of the governing forces of society. However, these same governing forces can use this belief to govern Webb's actions as a subject in order to maintain his real conditions of constant subjection, regardless of the identity he occupies at a given moment.

By introducing this separate identity for Webb, the novel creates a situation that also allows him to be considered along similar lines as the double described by Sigmund Freud. As I have earlier suggested, this characterisation of Webb's dual identities within the single individual suggests a distinctly different form of doubling from that which occurs between Mason and Dixon. Webb has far more in common with the Gothic doubles, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, than he does with Mason and Dixon. Sebastian Dieguez notes that not only are the two eponymous characters in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* "never directly confronted or copresent" (80) but they "do not even look alike and do not seem to share a strong psychological bond" (80). At first then, it would appear that other than the fact that they too cannot appear together at the same time, Webb and the Kieselguhr Kid have little in common with

Jekyll and Hyde. However, Jekyll and Hyde are still considered doubles because they spring from the same personality. As Lisa Butler points out, *Jekyll and Hyde* "stages the dangers inherent in leading the 'double' life" which was the result of "a late-Victorian moral climate that demands the repression of all desires deemed illicit or transgressive to the social order" ("that damned old business"). In the context of the society that Jekyll and Hyde exist within there is a need to repress the elements of oneself that could be damaging to the current systems of power and, therefore, a kind of splitting of the individual's personality takes place. The lack of a strong psychological bond between these two characters stems from the need to repress all illicit or transgressive desires. Jekyll cannot acknowledge that he has these illicit desires and so must therefore create a separate identity altogether in order to satisfy them.

The result of these repressed illicit desires within Stevenson's novel points to the notion that this text may not be as far from *Against the Day* as it may initially appear in terms of how these novels present dual identities. Benjamin D. O'Dell has noted that "Jekyll's downward spiral represents an aberration in the social order" (517). Ahmet Süner also posits that the evil in *Jekyll and Hyde* stems from "the citizen's private life, which was assuming an ever more isolated, secretive, indeed more 'private' form in the modern era. Insofar as it remained beyond public scrutiny, this private life posed a threat to the public order of late Victorian England" (219). In both of these instances, the tension between Jekyll and Hyde is said to stem from the tensions between their private and public relationships with society. In one particular episode Mr Hyde kills Sir Danvers Carew, a member of Parliament and representative of the systems of power

responsible for Jekyll's repression. Hyde's killing of a representative of the systems of power echoes Webb's actions as the Kieselguhr Kid. Webb's companion during his bombing, Veikko, explains that they attack the railroad because mine owners "can't be bothered to saddle up, they take trains wherever they go" (*AD* 94) and by extension if they blow up a train they will "maybe get a couple of them with it" (94). In *Jekyll and Hyde*, whilst he is not as conscious of his actions, Hyde attacks a member of Parliament because they are also a symbol of his repression. As is the case in *Against the Day*, *Jekyll and Hyde* indicates that the level of repression that is forced upon the individual will ultimately result in their turning on and attacking the systems that maintain this order, much like Webb believes he is doing by creating the Kieselguhr Kid in the later novel.

With that said, Webb has far greater control over his identities and when they act than Dr Jekyll. As I have already noted, Webb is highly aware of his role as a "a true bomber" (*AD* 94) in a way that completely contrasts the way Irving S. Saposnik posits Dr Jekyll is "so enmeshed in his self-woven net of duplicity that he cannot identify the two entities whose separation he hopes to achieve" (724). Saposnik's observation demonstrates the ways in which Jekyll attempts to distance himself from the shared experiences that Freud indicates are a key aspect of the double. Jekyll actively attempts to disassociate his role as a good doctor from the evil of Mr Hyde in order to maintain the sense that a bond does not exist between them. He refuses to acknowledge his own desire to subvert the dominant ideological structures through transgressive material practice. As Jekyll refuses to acknowledge these transgressive wishes, he is

also unable to take control of them. The result is that Hyde essentially develops a mind of his own and appears whenever he chooses, rather than when Jekyll requires him. Conversely, when acting as the Kid, "[t]he tricky patch, it had seemed to Webb for a while now, came in choosing the targets" (*AD*, 94). Webb's struggle to choose his targets as the Kid introduces the notion that he chooses when and where he adopts this identity. In stark contrast to the way Jay Bland argues Stevenson's novel presents Hyde as "the self that has been trying to get free of Jekyll [who] is the proto-human brute" (257), Webb consciously embraces the kid as an extension of his personality. Rather than inducing the levels of fear and denial that Mr Hyde does for Dr Jekyll, the Kieselguhr Kid offers Webb the *imagined* subjective freedom he needs to create a more complete version of himself.

In terms of the response to the wider social conventions within these two novels, *Jekyll and Hyde* shows the dangers of repressing the transgressive elements of one's personality in order to fit within wider social norms. However, the death of the protagonist as a direct result of this transgression ultimately follows Maggie Kilgour's characterisation of the Gothic as a genre that "delights in rebellion, while finally punishing it, often with death or damnation, and the reaffirmation of a system of moral and social order" (8). Kilgour's assertion is indicative of the ways in which the Gothic allows a space for transgression to take place but is careful to ensure that social order is restored by the end of the novel. In fact, so important is this restoration of order in *Jekyll and Hyde*, that when the corpse of Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde is discovered it is described as "the body of a self-destroyer" (Stevenson 84). Dr Jekyll is so desperate to restore

order to the society he threatens that he is willing to take his own life in order to preserve it. For the writers of the Gothic novel, it was crucial that transgressions of the systems of power were punished in order to strengthen the authority of the governing systems. The social order that exists within Gothic works may be threatened by an individual, but it is always restored by the novel's conclusion, with the implication that this is for the benefit of wider society. Whilst authors such as Stevenson may have wished to critique the methods of the dominant ideological structures, the systems of power that these structures serve are never truly under threat within Gothic texts. Dr Jekyll takes his own life not because the systems of power are failing, but the ideological structures that constitute him as a subject are. As a result, the only means he sees to restore the balance of society is to erase himself as a subject completely.

In contrast, *Against the Day* is far more directly critical of the systems of power that govern the society in which the novel takes place. Nowhere is this criticism of the dominant systems so prevalent as when Webb, when speaking to his children, lists three examples of the double talk used by plutocrats. He suggests that any mention of freedom and "the next thing you know the gates have slammed shut" (*AD* 104); reform is code for "[m]ore new snout at the trough" (104); and compassion "means the population of starving, homeless, and dead is about to take another jump" (104). In earlier work, such as *Jekyll and Hyde*, Webb would automatically be deemed evil because he appears to threaten the social conventions of society. However, rather than implying that it is the individual who is corrupted by these anti-capitalist sentiments, *Against the Day* indicates that it is the systems of power themselves that are corrupt.

Tiina Käkelä-Puumala asserts that within the novel "economy is not a field of human activity but the field in which human life is defined, for it permeates social relations and thinking" ("There is Money Everywhere" 147). The society of the novel has, in Käkelä-Puumala's argument, reached a point where the economy is no longer for the benefit of the individual's existence, but that the individual's existence is for the benefit of the economy. Webb's use of the phrase "double talk" indicates that even the meanings of words like freedom, reform, and compassion are open to interpretation. It is through this interpretation that these words can be corrupted by systems of power, but also re-defined by those who wish to resist these governing social structures. They have one meaning for the oppressed and another for the oppressor. Therefore, in terms of the novel, to question the language of the economic systems allows the oppressed to claim back the sense of independence that has been lost to the current systems of capitalist power.

In *Against the Day*, the way that the system exploits the subject is the true threat, rather than the individual's own actions against the system. By subverting the traditional conventions of the Gothic, *Against the Day* also repositions the sources of fear that derive from its narrative. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, the horror ultimately derives from the repressive ideological structures of the late-Victorian moral climate which forced people to hide their own transgressive urges in order to remain a part of the wider social structures. It is not the systems of power that are failing, but the ideologies which fail to adapt in its best interest. However, in *Against the Day* the terror stems directly from the level of control these systems have over all ideology.

Webb tells his children when citing his union card: “Labour produces all wealth. Wealth belongs to the producer thereof” (*AD* 104). This is what Webb calls “Straight Talk” (104) as opposed to the double talk of the plutocrats within the novel. Rather than encouraging his children to work hard to maintain the authority of the systems of power, Webb encourages them to do the opposite. However, from an Althusserean standpoint, the unions are still a part of the dominant systems of power. Even in his expression of anarcho-syndicalist sentiments through the encouragement of union activity, Webb does not realise that he is still conforming to the ISAs of the governing forces within the novel. This is what my reading of *Against the Day* alongside Althusser’s ideas indicates is most frightening. The subject is unable to transgress and subvert the ideals of the dominant systems even when they feel as though they are doing just that. It is no longer the conscious repression of the self that is the source of fear within *Against the Day*, but the subject’s inability to recognise that this repression is even taking place.

The level at which the economic structures in *Against the Day* have become all powerful is characterised by the introduction of Scarsdale Vibe, the main representative of capitalism in the novel and the closest thing to an antagonist within the text. Vibe’s ideals are made clear through his disgust at an idea of Nikola Tesla to provide “huge amounts of electrical power that anyone can tap into for free” (*AD* 37). For Vibe “[t]o put up money for research into a system of free power would be to throw it away, and violate–hell, betray–the essence of everything modern history is supposed to be” (37). In Vibe's mind, modern history should be of benefit to the

plutocratic systems that are represented by capitalism. Vibe's treatment of Tesla's suggestion is indicative of a variation on Francisco Collado-Rodríguez's claim that in *Against the Day* "electricity, light, and communication take readers to the historical stages where energy, manifested in new weaponry based on scientific manipulation, comes to its first big outburst in the First World War" (328). Whilst Collado-Rodríguez correctly identifies that energy is weaponised in *Against the Day*, he refers to it in a destructive sense. However, I would also add that it is weaponised as a tool of ideological power as well. Vibe sees electricity as a financial weapon to be used in order to further his own power, and to make it free would relinquish this weapon. It is this concept that terrifies Vibe, similar to the terrifying threat that Mr Hyde poses to Victorian society. In both cases, the actions of another individual have the potential to upset the balance of power within the social structures of their setting. It comes as no surprise then that, just as Dr Jekyll feels the need to take his own life in order to maintain the social norms of his society, Vibe feels he must erase even the potential of Tesla's proposal in order to maintain the dominant systems of power that exist in *Against the Day*.

Vibe's dismissal of Tesla's attempts to create a free electricity source indicates his affinity with Maggie Kilgour's description of Gothic literature. The text presents a moment of potential rebellion against the dominant capitalist ideals, but this plan is inevitably defeated through a reaffirmation of Vibe's system of moral and social order. Gary C. Hoppenstand asserts one of the primary conflicts in the Gothic is between "the individual and heaven" (43). Hoppenstand goes on to argue that in Horace Walpole's

The Castle of Otranto (1764), "Walpole places Manfred at the one end of this conflict, and arms him with craftiness and guile. At the other end assembled against Manfred are the forces of Heaven, representing themselves as supernatural powers" (43). As Manfred, who serves as the central antagonist in *The Castle of Otranto*, becomes progressively more evil, the castle that he occupies becomes seemingly more haunted. For Hoppenstand, these supernatural events are indicative of the role that heaven plays in restoring equilibrium within the text. It is only when Manfred realises the error of his actions and turns to religion that normality is restored to the castle. Just as the social norms are restored with the death of Jekyll and Hyde in Stevenson's novel, when Manfred returns to a religious system of order, a sense of moral equilibrium is restored in Walpole's text. Similarly, Vibe's attitude towards Tesla's attempt to offer free electricity is concurrent with the Gothic's attempts to maintain the current state of social power. If Tesla were to create a system of free electricity the power structures would be upset and so too would Vibe's position in society. In both of the above instances, the greatest importance is placed on maintaining the power systems, whether religious or economic, that benefit those who already control them.

As I explored in the *Mason & Dixon* chapter, perhaps the most overt example of a restorative Gothic can be found in Ann Radcliffe's novels. Radcliffe's works play with the suggestion of rebellion through the irrational actions and events. However, the presence of rational explanations removes even the suggestion that a supernatural occurrence could ever take place. This is in contrast to work like *The Castle of Otranto* where the haunting is never fully explained. In the case of Radcliffe, these transgressive

elements are ultimately revealed to be a product of the rational world that they initially seem to be acting against. E. J. Clery offers a useful reading of these explained supernatural occurrences in Radcliffe's work. She has argued that "[t]he bizarre coincidences that are produced to explain the supernatural are not just technical convenience […] but evidence of a higher supernaturalism that ensures every 'accident' has its rightful place in the schema of Divine Justice" (Clery 112). Clery indicates that whilst the supernatural occurrences that take place in Radcliffe's novels can be explained, this is the product of a divine ordering system that ensures everything remains as it should. Radcliffe's approach towards the supernatural is not dissimilar to the way anarchism is treated by the dominant sources of power in *Against the Day*. As Lew Basnight's files demonstrate, even anarchist bombers are on the owner's payroll. The anarchists are still tied to the governing systems of power, even though they at first appear to be separate forces outside of these structures. Just as Radcliffe's novels, in Clery's reading, incorporate the transgressive elements of the supernatural into the divine justice of larger social norms, the transgressive anarchism of *Against the Day* is revealed to be structurally influenced and ordered by the dominant capitalist systems within the narrative.

This suggests a point of common understanding between texts in the Gothic genre and *Against the Day*. In both examples, the transgressive elements of society stem from the same conformist elements that these initial transgressions appear to undermine. In Radcliffe's novels the rationalising of the seemingly supernatural forms the basis for the conformist society. Even those elements which seem to stand outside

of this conformity can be explained safely within the confines of the dominant ideological systems. To use an example from *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* there is an episode in which one of the characters seemingly disappears into thin air. Whilst this disappearance at first appears inexplicable and thus possibly supernatural, it is later revealed that he was kidnapped, by pirates no less, and led through a hidden passage within the castle. The novel indicates that it only appeared that he had vanished without explanation, but in reality, there was a rational justification for this disappearance, just as there was for the terror that Emily St. Aubert experiences in the example I used in comparison to *Mason & Dixon*. Just as with the *Mason & Dixon* example, it simply boils down to a lack of knowledge with regard to these events, rather than a truly incomprehensible occurrence taking place. The characters believed that a supernatural event had taken place because they were unaware of the secret passage within the castle. Through occurrences like this, the rational and supernatural can be seen as mirrors of each other within these works. They are often the result of the same events being interpreted in different ways and with different points of reference within these novels.

Against the Day works along similar lines to Radcliffe's text with regards to how different individuals interpret events based on their personal knowledge. Unlike in *Mason & Dixon*, where Pynchon's novel undermines Radcliffe's "explained supernatural" through episodes that challenge this style of Gothic writing, *Against the Day* utilises these methods more directly. Lew Basnight's casefiles are an extension of this principle. Unlike the uncertainty that Mason and Dixon experience during the

Collier Sailor episode that I discussed in the previous chapter of my thesis, Lew is highly aware and has concrete evidence that there are several anarchists under the employ of the mine owners. However, Webb too has greater certainty than Mason and Dixon in the earlier novel. Whilst the text demonstrates that the opposite is true, Webb thinks that his attachment to the union places him in direct opposition to the capitalist institutions within the novel and has no personal evidence to suggest otherwise, even though this is not actually the case. In Patrick O'Donnell's reading of Pynchon's earlier novel *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), he argues "we are driven to see the connections between the events of our own lives and the larger, external events of that unfolding story we call 'history'" (1). O'Donnell indicates that the individual tries to view their own life in the context of the history that has gone before them. However, in *Against the Day* the individual does the same thing in their interpretation of the present. Like the characters in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Webb and Lew are audience to similar events and individuals, but their own personal experiences and how they relate to what has gone before them, directly influences how they view and interpret their interactions with incidents and individuals in the present.

The true level of power that the early Capitalist structure allows the dominant systems to exert over even those who wish to destroy it, is characterised by Vibe's own attitude towards anarcho-syndicalists like Webb Traverse. During a conversation with Foley Walker, his closest confidant in the novel, Vibe reminds him that "[y]ou have been in the game long enough to appreciate how mighty are the wings we shelter beneath. How immune we are kept to the efforts of these muckracking Reds to soil our

names" (*AD* 374). Vibe is highly aware of the level of control he and his compatriots can exert over the wider society. He feels immune to the efforts of anarcho-syndicalism to displace him and, as I have argued through my reading of the novel in relation to Althusserean ideology, he is correct to do so. Even when Vibe is eventually murdered, as I will discuss in more detail shortly, this is carried out by his friend and confidant Foley Walker, rather than being the result of any anarcho-syndicalist action. In his work on doubling in the postmodern text, which it should be noted was published before *Mason & Dixon* and *Against the Day* were released, Gordon E. Slethaug suggests that "Pynchon employs elaborate doubles and doubling to explore the ways the individual fell victim to industrial and technological conglomerates and unholy political alliances during and following World War II" (*Postmodern American Fiction* 121). Slethaug is certainly correct in his assertion that doubling within Pynchon's novels displays the ways individuals became victims to industrial and technological conglomerates and political alliances. However, *Against the Day* demonstrates that the origins of this victimisation, and the forms of doubling that emerged as a result, can be found before the events of the Second World War. Vibe's confidence in his own ability to be unchallenged by the anarchist outsiders who threaten his position demonstrates how insignificant the threat of individuals like Webb Traverse are in his eyes. Whereas in the Gothic text, the threat of transgression was treated as having the potential to have great social consequences, in *Against the Day* it is dismissed as ultimately futile by those in power because, in terms of the ISAs that people like Vibe have a hegemony over, they are.

Of course, as a text that celebrates rather than chastises transgression, *Against the Day* treats Vibe's attempts to maintain the capitalist power structures with anguish rather than relief. Sean Carswell has noted that it is "odd that Pynchon, who demonstrates the complexity in every situation, who resists notions of purity at every chance, should write a character as purely antagonistic as Vibe" ("The New Alchemy" 421). Carswell's recognition of the novel's overtly antagonist depiction of Vibe demonstrates how capitalism itself is represented within the text. In *Against the Day*, it is the dominant capitalist ideal that is threatening to the wider society, rather than those who wish to undermine this dominance. Rather than presenting Vibe's attempt to maintain the social order as a heroic action, as is often the case in Gothic texts, *Against the Day* makes Vibe an overtly villainous character. Vibe wishes to actively prevent Tesla from following through on his idea because it goes against the capitalist ideals that he believes are of the greatest importance. In essence, he wishes to maintain the current moral and social order. Whilst this would be a cause for celebration in the Gothic novel, *Against the Day* presents him as an oppressive plutocrat. Just as Webb attempts to limit the power that capitalism has over the worker and mass population; Vibe is attempting to maintain the systems of power that allow individuals like him to exercise superiority over mass society. Whereas the Gothic text attempts to advocate for the maintenance of the dominant social order, *Against the Day* uses Vibe's characterisation to further undermine and challenge these systems of control.

It is with this in mind, that Webb, who is presented as a largely heroic figure in this novel, can be understood as a double for Vibe. Whilst referencing the German Romantic writer Jean Paul, Ernst Grabovszki offers a reading of doubling which posits "the mostly negative influence of the double on the original's social surroundings" (169). As I have argued throughout, in most cases the original is the character who best represents the conventions of the mass society, Dr Jekyll for example. The double is then cast as a threat to the social surroundings and norms of the original's reality, like Mr Hyde. In *Against the Day*, it is no longer useful to consider Vibe and Webb in these terms. Although they certainly share traits, they are both treated as separate characters in their own right. In the Gothic text, it would have traditionally been easy to suggest that Webb is the double because he acts as the greatest challenge to capitalist ideological conformity. However, *Against the Day* introduces him as a character completely separate from Vibe, rather than being a product of any transgressive urges that Vibe feels towards the capitalist ideological systems. As I have suggested, Webb is given his own backstory and life in a way that someone like Mr Hyde is not, because he has none. Rather than just presenting a character who is defined as a collection of binary oppositions to the original, *Against the Day* ensures that Webb is given the same level of importance and agency as a fully developed character, rather than the flat set of binaries that would traditionally define the double in a Gothic narrative.

It could be that *Against the Day* is reversing the doubling motif, so that it is Scarsdale Vibe who exists as merely a series of binaries for the heroic Webb. This

argument loses much traction though when considering the level of detail that the novel also affords Vibe's own backstory. Part of what makes the Gothic villain terrifying stems from what the horror author H.P. Lovecraft's asserts is "the oldest and strongest kind of fear […] fear of the unknown" (11). For Lovecraft, the lack of characterisation of doubles is what makes them more frightening. Their lack of history creates a sense of mystery that puts us on edge immediately. However, in *Against the Day*, Vibe has led a life completely of his own just as Webb has in the text. He has attended Yale University; he has three sons, just as Webb does; and has wife with whom he leads an "almost entirely unsynchronized [life], inhabiting each his and her own defective city" (*AD* 181). The later description of Vibe's separate life from his wife indicates an independent character with completely separate motivations from those around him. With that said, even though he is given more character development than the traditional Gothic antagonist, Vibe is still ultimately frightening. In spite of all of the aspects of his life that are similar to those of the more sympathetic characters in the text, he is still capable of acts of extreme evil. *Against the Day* uses this character development to make a point that, in the contemporary setting, the most terrifying individual is not the one who represents the unknown, but those who most aggressively enact and benefit from the systems that most obviously dominate and govern the lives of every subject.

It comes as little surprise, then, when Vibe orders Webb's murder in order to remove the threat he poses to the social equilibrium. During the same tirade against "muckracking Reds" that I noted earlier, Vibe asserts that "[t]he elder Traverse's sins

are documented–once they were brought to light, he was as good as lost. Should there be moral reservations, in a class war, about targeting one's enemies?" (*AD*, 374). Vibe believes he is engaged in a war to protect the moral and social order against those who threaten its integrity. He takes the motif of the double to its natural conclusion by ordering the removal of Webb's negative influence on his social surroundings in order to maintain what he feels is the natural order of society. His actions enact a tragic example of Jeffery Severs's claim that "[i]n Pynchon, opposites will always be subject to merger" (225). Webb maintains a division between his conformist and transgressive roles. However, Vibe's actions means that this merging will be completed. With his death, Webb's two separate identities will finally be able to merge in their total erasure. Both aspects of Webb will be lost, merging into the recesses of memory. As I will argue in the next section, those who knew Webb will no longer be able to differentiate between Webb as conformist and Webb as transgressive. Whilst it is true that within the novel, the dominant systems of power have the ability to control and merge themselves with anarcho-syndicalism on a grand scale, individuals are still able to divide themselves between these two forms of ideology. It is because of these divisions that there still comes a point where certain people, like Webb, must be forced into this merging of identities for the benefit of the governing ideals of society, even if this merging entails a total erasure of the individual themselves.

The exact point at which Webb becomes too much of an issue for these systems is significant in terms of the relationship between his two personal identities, both Webb and the Kieselguhr Kid. After Webb's wife, Mayva, leaves him, he is left with "no more

respectable family-man dodge to hide behind" (*AD* 216). As a result, Webb takes on the role of union man to the extent that the union itself is "alarmed at the vehemence of his need" (216). Such is the union's alarm that they shift him "over to Uncompahgre for a while, to the Torpedo workings" (216). In their reading of the text, Israa Ali Abd-Alredha and Tahseen Ali Mhobar assert that Webb is trapped in a vicious cycle in which he is "undecided between his direct responsibility to his family and his obligation to stay committed to his role as someone who is trying to find solutions for the bad conditions of families around the world" (2765). Although Abd-Alredha and Mhobar recognise Webb's dual identities, they also believe that Webb is trapped in this position. Whilst this may be true, when one of these identities is taken from him, Webb finds himself in a position of greater weakness in terms of his level of autonomy. By being stripped of one of his central identities, Webb is forced to occupy those that remain more aggressively in order to maintain the sense of self. He has essentially become the same as the doubles that have gone before him. His range of subjectivities have weakened as the result of a single ideological structure taking greater hold over his ideals to the extent where he can only measure himself in these singular terms.

This reduced sense of self also exposes Webb to the vulnerabilities that he was able to mask when he could hide behind the family man persona. One of the main reasons that anarchist bombers are on the Owner's payroll in the first place is because they still have to support their families. Once this need is lost, the systems of power lose a certain amount of control over that individual. As people like Webb pivot away from the façade of conformity, the level of threat they pose also increases for the dominate

social structures. The sense of uncertainty that even the union feels towards Webb's current state, is a red flag for those like Vibe who rely on the union as an ISA to prevent individuals straying too far against the dominant systems of power. In her reading of the Gothic genre, Ruth Bienstock Anolik describes the way in which "the restoration of the social order ensures that the patterns of oppression will begin again both in the world and in the Gothic cannon that endlessly replays the cycles of revolution and restoration" (*Property* 195). Anolik's reading of the Gothic's process of revolution and restoration is also applicable to Webb's course within the novel. He begins as a potential revolutionary operating within an anarchist ideology but is ultimately another source of restoration for the dominant capitalist ideals. Despite believing in the revolutionary powers of the union, when his approach become too radical, it becomes necessary for the union, in its role as ISA, to enact a kind of restorative function. This is a clear example of the means by which ISAs operate mainly through ideology, but also employ repressive tactics when necessary. By exiling Webb from his position at the mine, the union makes him vulnerable to the governing forces of social order, like Scarsdale Vibe, who wish him dead. The anarcho-syndicalist groups of *Against the Day* are sure of the opposition that they wish to mount against the dominant systems of power, but when an individual exceeds this level, they must be repressed and ultimately destroyed in order to restore the balance of resistance and restoration that benefits both sides.

With that said, it is not Vibe who actually kills Webb. Instead, the task is financed by Vibe and carried out by two agents of the mine owners, Deuce Kindred and his partner

Sloat Fresno. The initial introduction of Deuce is a direct result of Webb's loss of his family man persona. During his first encounter with Deuce, having "succeeded one way or another in driving away his whole family Webb [finds himself] joining the company of those, who with their judgement similarly impaired, had allowed themselves to be charmed by Deuce Kindred" (*AD* 217). The novel offers a specific indication that the impairment of losing his family is a central motive for Webb's quickness to find an affinity with Deuce. He essentially sees Deuce as a potential surrogate son. This plays into Joanna Freer's argument that men in *Against the Day* are "compelled to accept responsibility primarily to those they are immediately connected to- female partners and friends, but also male and female family members (especially children), and male friends and lovers" ("Gender and Relational Ethics" 101). In Freer's argument, the male's responsibility for those around them is a central aspect of characters like Webb. However, Webb's sudden attachment to Deuce demonstrates the potential dangers that this approach to others has for these characters. When Webb has his responsibility to his family taken from him, he actively seeks to replace these connections as quickly as possible. Of course, this leaves him more open to the manipulation of the dominate social systems, because these systems can influence and control where this projection of responsibility is directed by the individual. Webb is so desperate to restore the aspect of his identity he has lost that he essentially signs his own death warrant.

In yet another rejoinder to the Gothic text, in which the characters are pushed back towards the systems of power in order to benefit their own identity, *Against the Day* indicates that these systems can just as easily inhibit one's ability to make sound

judgement with regard to personal situations. In her consideration of the Gothic, Laura Westengard claims that "In its conservative mode, Gothicism exhibits a nostalgic drive to recreate idealized subjects and histories that offer a return to some idea of past wholeness" (4). Westengard's understanding of the Gothic is based on it being restorative genre which values the restoration of an idealised subject who exhibits a wholeness that existed in their past. To return to Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the main heroine ends the novel getting married and is therefore restored to the traditional role of a young woman at the time of the novel's setting. In Webb's case however, the possibility of restoring any past wholeness is lost. He no longer has the guise of father and husband to offer some semblance of social conformity to his life. In his desperation to restore this lost sense of self, Webb exposes himself to the manipulative social elements that will eventually result in his death. He possesses these feelings of an idealised self that Westengard argues is central to the Gothic, but it is this which leads to his total erasure, rather than a return to wholeness. The Gothic text views the systems of power's ability to influence and manipulate the actions and relationships of the individual to restore itself as a positive. However, *Against the Day* demonstrates that whilst in some situations, such as those often depicted in the Gothic, the restoration of social values is beneficial to the individual, the opposite is also the case in many instances.

To bring the comparison between the two characters full circle, Vibe, like Webb, is murdered by someone he believes that he can trust. Towards the end of the novel, Frank Traverse, one of Webb's sons, along with the anarchist Ewball Oust, makes an

attempt on Vibe's life but is beaten to it when Foley Walker proceeds pull out a Lugger and "empty all eight rounds into what, after the first was a done deal" (*AD* 1131). Frank wishes to take revenge for the death of his father, but it is Walker who is in a much more capable position to do so because he has the trust of Vibe, just as Deuce had the trust of Webb. In his reading of *Against the Day*, Phillip Grayson asserts that for the characters in the novel "personally and historically […] the call to violence is irresistible, the encounter with the other and with the reality of the outside world is inevitably met with violence and destruction (69). Grayson's argument is based around the idea that violence in the novel emerges from an encounter with the other. Whilst this certainty appears to be the case in the build-up to Vibe's murder, the novel actually subverts this claim by having Walker kill Vibe. Frank and Ewball, whose anarchism sets them in opposition to Vibe's capitalist ideals, clearly represent an otherness which operates outside of Vibe's world. However, as a close confidant of Vibe, Walker very much operates within the same world as Vibe. Like Webb, Vibe is manipulated into associating himself with someone who he believes shares the same ideals, before ultimately finding out that this is a fatal mistake on his part. Not only is Walker operating within the same worlds as Vibe, as opposed to being outside of them, but it is this position that actually allows Walker to commit this act of violence and destruction against Vibe in the first place.

When Frank and Ewball reach the two men, Walker reports, rather apologetically, "[h]ope you fellows don't mind, but it's payday today, and I've been in line years ahead of you" (*AD* 1131). There is a certain irony to Walker's suggestion that it's his payday

after killing Vibe, as for Walker this payment is not a financial transaction but a moral one. A few pages before the assassination, it is revealed that "Foley's a born-again Christer" (1128). This knowledge returns in a significant way when Walker proclaims, "Jesus is Lord" (1131) before he shoots Vibe. The source of the particular tensions between Vibe's economic ideals and Foley's newly discovered religious ones begins to appear far earlier in the text than Foley's killing of Vibe. During his speech addressing the capitalist group "L.A.H.D.I.D.A" (1124), Vibe proclaims that:

> we fishers of America will cast our nets of perfect ten-acre mesh, levelled and varmint-proofed, ready to build on. Where alien muckers and jackers went creeping after their miserable communistic dreams, the good lowland townsfolk will come up by the netful into these hills, clean, industrious, Christian (1125).

Vibe expressly associates those who conform to his idealised society as being both "industrious" and "Christian", whilst evoking the biblical imagery of fisherman. He is starting to blur the line between religion and industry in such a way that suggests the lowland townsfolk will worship both industry and those who represent it, such as himself, as well as God. It is interesting then that Kathryn Hume suggests that "[t]he Christianity that Pynchon promotes in this novel is, among other things, a form of opposition politics. Fairness to fellow humans demands that any true spirituality fight capitalist injustices" (182). Hume indicates that one of the ways Pynchon utilises Christianity is as an opposition to the capitalist system, which is certainly the case when Walker kills Vibe, but Vibe's utilisation of religion in his speech also indicates that this same Christianity can be used to reinforce capitalist injustices. Vibe's adoption of

religious language repurposes Christianity not as a separate form of ideology, but as a tool to be used within the larger economic ideological apparatuses of the novel.

Althusserean approaches to ideology can be used to offer some explanation for the adoption of religious language within an economic setting. In his original thesis, Althusser claims that in:

> the pre-capitalist historical period which I have examined extremely broadly, it is absolutely clear that *there was one dominant Ideological State Apparatus, the Church*, which concentrated within it not only religious functions, but also educational ones, and a large proportion of the function of communications and 'culture'. It is no accident that all ideological struggle, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, starting from the first shocks of the Reformation, was *concentrated* in an anti-clerical and anti-religious struggle; rather this is a function precisely of the dominant position of the religious State apparatus (25, italics in original).

Althusser then uses the French revolution as an example of this struggle against the religious ISA. He argues that one of the functions of the French revolution was "the creation of new ideological State apparatuses to replace the religious State apparatus in its dominant role" (26). Althusser claims that although there are several ISAs that all function together in order for systems of power to maintain their authority, in the pre-capitalist period the religious ISA was the dominant apparatus and had a strong influence on the others around it. Whilst the religious ISA functioned primarily through religion, it was, according to Althusser, also responsible in pre-capitalist society for aspects of ideology including education, communication, and culture. When it assumed the position of dominant ideological apparatus, the religious ISA also came under the most attack from other forms of ideology and other ISAs were established to usurp it. As a result of these struggles against the religious ISA, Althusser goes on to posit that

the dominant ISA "in mature capitalist social formations as a result of a violent political and ideological class struggle against the old dominant ideological State apparatus, is the *educational ideological apparatus*" (26, italics in original). For Althusser, the capitalist society is now dominated by the educational ISA after a violent conflict with the religious ISA. He argues that the educational ISA, as represented by the school, "takes children from every class at infant-school age" (29) and "drums into them, whether it uses new or old methods, a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology […] or simply the ruling ideology in its purest form" (29). This is the ISA that is now most responsible for shaping the individual into a subject, because it is the apparatus that they are most exposed to. For Althusser, the religious ISA has become subservient to the educational ISA in capitalist society. The educational ISA has taken on the responsibilities of exposing ideas of religion to children, through material practices such as religious education classes. These ideas are then reiterated when children attend a religious event such as a church service where the material practices they are exposed to at school, such as religious teachings, are repeated in the church setting.

However, during the twentieth century a new ideological state apparatus emerged: the corporation ISA. In his thesis, Althusser proposes "an empirical list" of ISAs that "will have to be examined in detail, tested, corrected and reorganized" (17). He also notes that his own list includes "a relatively large number of ideological State apparatuses" (24), but not that it is an exhaustive one. Whilst Althusser proposes an empirical list of ISAs, he does not suggest that his list is empirical. He leaves space within his larger thesis for others to correct, examine, and add to it if necessary. Ralph Clare does just

this in his book *Fictions Inc.: The Corporation in Postmodern Fiction, Film, and Popular Culture* (2014). During an analysis of *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), Clare introduces the corporation ISA. He argues that:

> the institutions (corporations) of "private enterprise" clearly have ideological effects and are intricately tied to the (Repressive) State Apparatus (RSA), much in the same ways as schools and churches are. Indeed, government policy sets (or does not set) boundaries for finance, banking, and general business practices. Even in a world where the question of the transcendence of the corporation over the discipline of the nation-state remains a real issue, corporations can be said to function as ISAs (38).

For Clare, the corporation is just as responsible for instilling and reinforcing certain ideals within a subject as the school or church is in Althusser's argument. In fact, Clare posits that "[i]n the era of late capital in America, this is more the case than ever" (38)[5]. He then sets out, through a reading of Althusser's division between the Repressive State Apparatus and the Ideological State Apparatuses, how:

> Althusser's concept rings true in that corporations often function and gain their acceptance through ideology, chiefly through advertising— from slogans, spokespeople, highly researched and expensive ads, and logos. Thus, the very 'attenuation' and 'concealedness', the 'symbolic' violence perpetrated by corporations, falls into line with the mundanity of the corporation itself. (38).

In Clare's argument, corporations utilise the same methods that previous ISAs have in Althusser's definition of these apparatuses. The slogans, logos and adverts of these corporations serve as tools for subjective interpellation, just as the qualities of the

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[5] The final section of my next chapter will explore Pynchon's own response to this in his 2013 novel *Bleeding Edge*.

school do in the educational ISA. Whilst the repression that corporations utilise remains largely symbolic, it is still essential for maintaining the interests of large corporate institutions.[6] These repressive acts reinforce the ideals of the larger systems of power by excluding other smaller business who may have the potential to challenge the current dominant corporate structures, but are never given the opportunity to do so. It is with these corporate methods of interpellation and repression in mind that Clare argues that corporations should be considered ISAs themselves. Like the earlier ISAs that Althusser lists, the corporation is responsible for presenting and reinforcing the ideals of the dominant systems of power, often as a result of their close economic proximity to these systems.

Against the Day also considers the role of the corporation in maintaining the dominant systems of power. In the Althusserean reading of the novel I am presenting, I believe that characters like Vibe foreground the corporation ISA's attempt to become the dominant ideological apparatus in twentieth century society. During a comparison of *Against the Day* and Mathew Josephson's non-fiction text *The Robber Barons* (1934), Frank Palmeri notes that Vibe "believes that his course of action has been laid down by the deity, like John D. Rockefeller, who declared 'God gave me my money' because he believed that 'the power to make money is a gift of God'" ("Plutocratic Dystopia"). As a

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[6]Although Clare does not list any of these acts of symbolic violence, examples could include: large corporations buying up or forcing smaller companies out of business; the use of legal ISAs to enforce non-disclosure agreements; and using the cultural ISA to withhold information from the wider public.

character then, Vibe, like the real-life figure John D. Rockefeller, is very much of the belief that God has given him the ability to make money. From an Althusserean perspective, Vibe's claim that those who conform to the dominant ideological structures are "clean, industrious, Christian[s]" (*AD* 1125) serves as means for him to strengthen the dominance of the early form of corporation ISA he represents, through an evocation of the religious ISA. He is one step away from Walter Benjamin's belief that "[a] religion may be discerned in capitalism–that is to say, capitalism serves essentially to allay the same anxieties, torments, and disturbances to which the so-called religion offered answers" (288). Benjamin asserts that capitalism provides a set of ideals that allay the fears of a subject, in the way Althusser claims religion once did in the pre-capitalist society. For Benjamin, capitalism is not a god-sanctioned means for those who best exploit it to gain power, it is a religion in itself. These men who at the novel's present believe themselves to be God gifted, will eventually see themselves as Gods in their own right. In an Althusserean reading of these events, when Vibe uses religious imagery to evoke the ties between Christianity and capitalism[7], Foley Walker is religiously motivated to murder him in recognition of the struggles for dominance between conflicting ISAs. From the Althusserean perspective, the violent end that Vibe meets, so shortly after his evocation of religion within the corporate apparatus of the

[7] This is something that Max Weber also considers in his 1904 book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The text lays out the ways in which the Protestant branch of Christianity essentially facilitated the rise of Capitalism beginning in the seventeenth century.

L.A.H.D.I.D.A.H. conference, is indicative of the larger violent struggles that must take place in order for the corporation ISA to fully establish itself as the dominant ideological apparatus in the twentieth century.

In fact, even the anarcho-syndicalists within the text are affected by "the intersection of politics, economics, and religion" (76) that Justin St. Clair notes is at the heart of Walker and Vibe's relationship. The union leader who first inspires Webb into the role of anarcho-syndicalist bomber is Rev. Moss Gatlin. Gatlin is positioned as both political rebel and, presumably, ordained member of the Christian church. In an Althusserean sense, this dichotomy demonstrates that whilst industrialists like Vibe, who represent early examples of the corporation ISA, use the Christian faith as a means of condemning anarcho-syndicalist ideals, these same anarcho-syndicalists, who are representative of the trade union ISA, are also evoking the religious ISA in order to further their own ends. In fact, Gatlin directly states that every time "a stick [of dynamite] goes off in service of the owners" (*AD* 97) there will "have to be a corresponding entry on the other side of God's ledger, convertible to human freedom no owner is willing to grant"" (97). In another example of the similarities between the capitalist and anarcho-syndicalist ideologies that claim to be in conflict with each other, Gatlin directly utilises the language of the religious ISA, just as Vibe does during his speech. Arguably, as a group that claims resist the dominant systems of power, Gatlin's use of Christianity is far more in-keeping with Kathryn Hume's point that Christianity becomes a form of oppositional politics in *Against the Day*, than Vibe's evocation of God. With that said, I do not believe that this is necessarily the novel's intention.

Instead, Gatlin's shared viewpoint on God's role in the destruction of capitalist infrastructure is indicative of Georgios Maragos' observation that "what is resistance wants to become power, and anarchism in *Against the Day* is no different" (13). In order to gain this power, any system of resistance must, at some point, adopt similar methodologies to those that already dominate society. In my Althusserean reading of *Against the Day*, Gatlin is not only indicative of the anarcho-syndicalists' recognition that if they wish to become the ruling system of power, they too must adopt the ISAs that allow groups to maintain this power, but his near sermonising indicates that this co-option of other ISAs has already started to take place.

These shared ideological methodologies between capitalism and anarcho-syndicalism are what ultimately differentiates *Against the Day* from the novels of Walpole, Radcliffe, and Stevenson. Whilst the Gothic texts of "Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe maintain the proprieties of a strict distinction between good and evil" (R. Hume, 285), *Against the Day* continues to blur the boundaries between transgression and conformity so that definite distinctions such as good and evil are impossible to make with any confidence. Even *Jekyll and Hyde*, which expressly states that "all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil" (Stevenson 114), offers a clear definition of what is meant by good and evil in the characterisations of the eponymous characters. Jekyll is deemed to be good because he conforms to society's order whereas Hyde is evil because he does not. However, in *Against the Day*, those who conform and those who do not are often guided by the same basic principles. An overtly plutocratic character like Vibe, who the novel presents as evil, is

fundamentally subjected to the same ideological systems of power as Webb, who wishes to transgress capitalist structures through ideologies such as anarcho-syndicalism and might, therefore, be considered good. *Against the Day* still maintains the ideas first raised in *Mason & Dixon*: different ideological structures should be considered equal. However, the reasoning surrounding this equality is eminently bleaker in *Against the Day*. In *Mason & Dixon* the European colonial systems were seeking to establish their authority over the American landscape. As long as this colonial authority was not totalised, there was still a possibility for a pluralistic set of ideological systems. *Mason & Dixon* uses this space of ideological plurality to posit that distinct ideologies are equally as important as each other. Even though the settlers in the narrative are trying to facilitate the eradication of Native American cultures, and have largely managed to do so in the real-world present, during the time period in which *Mason & Dixon* takes place this cultural erasure has not been fully realised. As a result, there is still the possibility, albeit an ever shrinking one, that the settler and Native American societies can live in harmony with each other without the need for colonial domination. However, in *Against the Day*, this erasure has already taken place. There are no longer any distinctly separate forms of ideology. The novel presents capitalism and anarcho-syndicalism as ideologies that only *appear* separate from each other. In reality, both forms of ideology stem from the same set of Ideological State Apparatuses within this novel and, as a result, are both acting in service to the systems that control these apparatuses. It is through the function of these ISAs, that the dominant systems of power are able to maintain a constant level of agency over all

subjects within the novel, even those who subject themselves to a seemingly transgressive ideological framework such as anarchism.

In the next section, the thesis will present a reading of two of Webb's sons, Reef and Frank Traverse, who are directly influenced by this blurring between conformity and opposition in terms of ideological position. Reef and Frank are influenced in their own subjectivity by their father's ideological position, but as Webb has no fixed identity within a single ideological structure, they too struggle to attach themselves to a single set of ideals. Reef and Frank struggle to find a permanent ideology for themselves, at least partially as result of their own interpretation of their father's subjective position, which means that they are also in a state of constantly shifting subjectivity. Furthermore, Reef and Frank share a similar relationship to Mason and Dixon in that they often change ideological position based on each other's subjective state at any given point. The major difference is that whilst Mason and Dixon's shifted positions are presented in terms of their interpretation of Enlightenment modes of thought within a shared ideological structure, Reef and Frank occupy separate ideologies throughout the narrative. When Reef occupies a subjectivity that conforms to the capitalist ideals of society, Frank is enmeshed in the anarchist ideologies of the text. In contrast, when Frank is operating as a capitalist subject, Reef is deeply entrenched in the anarchist ideological structures. However, unlike Webb and Vibe, they do not reach a point where, as doubles, one must destroy the other in order to restore a social balance. Instead, the two of them eventually abandon, to a small but significant extent, any form of large-scale ideology altogether. This allows them to use their doubled

relationship to mutually benefit each other on a far more personal scale than that of the previous characters I have already examined in Pynchon's work.

The Traverse Bunch: Paternal Emulation and Fraternal Doubling in *Against the Day*

Webb Traverse's doubled identity within *Against the Day* has a profound effect not only on his own sense of self, but other members of his family too, specifically his sons Reef and Frank. The two characters' personal understandings of who their father was, a hard-working miner or an anarchist bomber, plays a central role in the novel's portrayal of Reef and Frank as doubles. To return to Javier Saavedra Macías and Rafael Velez Núñez's argument that there are two forms of doubling, Webb more closely fits into the "split personality or dark half of a protagonist" (261). Reef and Frank Traverse, on the other hand, are more aligned with the "psychological double who steals the identity of the protagonist" (260) and "continuously threatens [their] social position" (260). As I indicated earlier, Macías and Nuñez's classification of the double stems directly from their reading of Gothic fiction. *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* certainly fits within split personality form of doubling, but several other texts more clearly utilise the psychological double. Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* (1817) and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Double* (1846) are two such examples. In *Frankenstein*, George Levine has noted that Victor Frankenstein and his monster "haunt and hunt each other through the novel, each evoking from us sympathy for their sufferings, revulsion from their cruelties" (15). Unlike in *Jekyll and Hyde*, in which Dr Jekyll never actually meets Mr Hyde, because he physically cannot, Victor Frankenstein creates a physical manifestation of his transgressive ideas and is forced to confront this creature throughout the text. The same is also true of the eponymous double in Dostoyevsky's work. Although the

protagonist, Golyadkin, does not create the double himself, he is still haunted by and hunted by this character as well as haunting and hunting him. In both cases, it is the original that is eventually destroyed, whilst the double's fate is left ambiguous. Unlike in the split personality double, the death of one of these characters does not necessarily entail the death of the other.

Whilst *Against the Day* utilises a similar framework to Shelly and Dostoyevsky's Gothic texts, the novel constructs and presents this doubling relationship in a highly subversive way. Rather than representing the characteristics of the double that Gordon E. Slethaug defines as "irreconcilable dualistic oppositions: for instance, light and dark, creation and destruction, morality and immorality" ("Doubles" 102), Reef and Frank are used to demonstrate the means by which these dualistic oppositions can be reconciled through a doubling relationship. Like their father, at certain points in the narrative both characters are subject to ideologies which conform to the capitalist systems of power within the text, whilst at other points they are interpellated into ideologies which transgress the prevailing capitalist power structures. However, neither brother does so at the same time as the other. When one of them shifts towards a subjectivity which conforms to the capitalist ideals presented in the novel, the other turns towards a more transgressive form of ideology and vice versa. In spite of their ever-changing ideological subjections, at no point are they presented as being antagonistic to each other. Instead, they serve as a balancing force where one brother fills the voids in identity the other leaves behind when vacating a conformist or transgressive position. Rather than having a narrative where at least one character in the doubled relationship

has to be destroyed in order to maintain social stability, as is the case in Shelly and Dostoyevsky's texts, by the conclusion of *Against the Day*, Reef and Frank are both still very much alive. Additionally, the brothers have constructed a space where they can co-exist and support each other, whilst still remaining functional members of their larger society.

The death of Webb, should it have occurred in the typical Gothic narrative, would usually signify the erasure of the threat to the dominant social mode of the novel. However, *Against the Day* offers a reprieve for Webb's death which actually increases the number of subjects who have the potential to threaten the dominant systems of power. Upon hearing of their father's death, Reef, Frank, and Webb's youngest son Kit, all seek revenge for his murder. Rather than redressing the equilibrium of the society that the novel presents, Webb's death creates a situation in which the threat to the dominant social order is at least tripled. After the retrieval of his father's body, Reef vows to his sister, Lake Traverse, that "me and Frank will what Joe Hill calls organize" (*AD* 243), which leads them, as Lake puts it, "off into that old world o' family vengeance" (244). By having Webb killed, Vibe has now incited the potential vengeance of those who are related to Webb, his sons, and finds himself with an increased number of enemies, rather than a return to safety that might occur in a Gothic text. Those who might potentially have remained ignorant to the machinations of Vibe's systems of power are now not only more aware of it but actively reacting against it. In *Against the Day*, the removal of the potential threat to society only creates more threats to the systems of power, rather than stifling them permanently.

Despite Reef's vow to organize and avenge him, such is the shared dominance between the two facets of Webb's subjectivity, miner and anarcho-syndicalist bomber, that even his own children develop varying ideas as to the true identity of their father. Frank sees him as "an honest, dedicated miner, exploited to the last" (*AD* 104), whilst Reef views him taking "to the trails, grim and focused, to do the people's work, if not God's" (105). In the eyes of his sons, Webb is just as much an enigma as he is to Merle Rideout during their first meeting. In his review of the novel, Bernard Duyfhuizen, refers to the through line between characters in *Against the Day* and *Vineland* (1990) and notes "[t]he genealogical connections track not only family DNA, but the transformation of Webb's anarchistic spirit through generations of decline to Frenesi's role as a government snitch" ("Fictitiousness"). Duyfhuizen recognises that as time and generations pass there is an erosion of Webb's ideals to the point that Frenesi Gates, a character in Pynchon's *Vineland* and Webb's great great-granddaughter, becomes a government informant. However, the beginnings of the transformations that occur in Webb's anarchist spirit appear far earlier in the family lineage than Duyfhuizen indicates in his reading of the Traverses. Reef and Frank's contrasting view of their father already dilutes certain aspects of his true identity, if such a thing exists, and as result, it becomes difficult to maintain any semblance of what exactly he stood for in life.

As such, Reef and Frank are left to make their own decisions about who their father truly was. It is from this ambiguity that, as Christian P. Haines points out, "the sons of the Traverse family repeat the life of Webb Traverse, not imitating his life but rather

rearticulating the differences- the singularities- that composed it, making new relations out of the father's remains" (423). In Haines's explanation, not only do Webb's sons have differing views on who their father is, but these views directly affect which elements of their father's personality they take on when constructing their own identities. Frank decides to put himself through "mine school" (*AD* 224), thus adopting his father's role as a worker and, potentially a trade union member, but has no interest in continuing Webb's bombing campaign. Reef, on the other hand, decides that "[i]f Webb had always been the Kieselguhr Kid, well shouldn't somebody ought to carry on the family business–you might say, become the Kid" (240), but displays little interest in joining the trade union responsible for subjecting Webb to the anarcho-syndicalist beliefs that motivate his destructive practices. In fact, during his funeral, Webb's wife Mayva mentions that she "[t]hought the Union would have sent flowers at least" to which Reef replies, "[n]ot them" before reflecting that it is "just the meanest kind of disrespect […] and fuck all these people" (243). Not only does Reef not display any sympathy for the union in this scene, he demonstrates open disgust towards it. In this sense, neither brother fully embraces the aspects of Webb's personality that align him with anarcho-syndicalism. Through these distinct characterisations, both Reef and Frank certainly share the Freudian double's same knowledge, feelings and experiences with Webb, which as his sons has occurred to some extent through inherited "mental processes leaping from one of these characters to another" (Freud 210), but the elements that they share with Webb, are not the same elements they share with each other.

In its presentation of Reef and Frank's relationships with Webb, *Against the Day* exhibits examples of doubling that are concurrent with Marina Warner's concept of the motif. Warner describes the double as "a second existence, usually coexisting in time, but sometimes sequentially as in soul migration plots" (163). Both of the methods of doubling that Warner describes are present in *Against the Day*'s characterisation of the Traverse siblings. Frank adheres far more closely to the second existence that coexists in time. He decides to put himself through mine school whilst Webb is still alive with the intention of following in Webb's footsteps. On first appearance, this may appear to imply that Frank is not a double of Webb, but merely emulating and copying his father. However, if Frank were to try and take on the multitudes of his father's identities, for example, becoming a miner and, from an Althusserean perspective, continuing to interpellate himself and others into anarcho-syndicalist forms of ideology, it would be far easier to suggest that he was consciously trying to copy his version of Webb. The novel's decision to specifically have Frank follow a single line of identity complicates this reading. It is never explicit whether Frank makes his decision based on his own view of his father as a miner or because Frank is already pre-disposed to this identity and therefore latches onto it in his father as well. It becomes impossible to tell exactly why Frank makes this decision and the lines between copying and doubling become blurred as a result of this ambiguity. Through this uncertainty, *Against the Day* indicates that often what is understood to be an act of doubling can also be read as a form of copying and emulation between two individuals. Frank may well be a double of Webb, but he may also be emulating his father as a result of his being born as a subject

to the same ideological structures as Webb. This subjection is then reinforced by those around Frank, such as Webb, and he thus consciously emulates Webb in order to demonstrate his own adherence to these shared ideological beliefs.

Reef is more closely aligned with Warner's second example of doubling, in which the double appears as sequential. Warner ties this form of sequential doubling to the soul of a person. The soul is passed from one person to another and thus the double continues to exist. Initially, Reef and Webb's relationship as doubles appears just as ambiguous as that of Frank and his father. Just as Frank wishes to follow his father into the mining industry, Reef concludes that he should continue Webb's bombing campaign. With that said, the lack of affinity that Reef shows towards the anarcho-syndicalism, despite suggesting that somebody ought to carry on the family business, initially implies that Reef is continuing Webb's bombing campaign because it was something that his father did before him. The lack of shared psychological or moral motivation between Reef and Webb's bombing activities initially implies that there is a chance Reef is merely attempting to copy his father, just as there is a chance that Frank is doing a similar thing. However, after making this decision, Reef begins "to feel some new presence inside him, growing, inflating–gravid with what it seemed he must become" (*AD* 241). The feeling of a new presence within himself indicates that a soul migration may be taking place in this moment. The placement of these two events so closely together allows *Against the Day* to again create further ambiguity between copy and double. The text refuses to confirm whether Reef feels this new presence because of the decision he has made, or if it is an early indication of soul migration

taking place. Again, the novel confuses the concept of doubling with the suggestion that this may well just be Reef attempting to emulate Webb, albeit in a far more transgressive way than Frank, but never overtly makes it clear whether this is the case.

It is important, then, to understand how a double and a copy can be differentiated in examples of these motifs within earlier Gothic texts. A text that presents the repetition of doubling between two independent characters, just as Reef and Frank exist independently of Webb, is Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Double*. Dostoyevsky's novel concerns a character named Golyadkin who encounters an exact double of himself and is eventually driven mad with the idea that this man is trying to replace him. Neither of these characters has met before their introduction in the novel and yet they both "possesses knowledge, feelings and experience in common with the other" (210) as well as displaying a "repetition of the same character-traits or vicissitudes" (210) which Freud claims is central to the doubling motif. It is from this discovery that Golyadkin's central fear of his double stems. The idea that there is a person who shares the same characteristics and knowledge as Golyadkin, whilst existing independently of him until the point of meeting, undermines the stability of his identity. It suggests that his own personality may not be an exclusive and autonomous expression of self. A copy on the other hand, can also be understood as possessing the same character-traits as another, but on a far more deliberate level. One character copying another character necessitates the studying of the original and then emulating this person in their own life. A previous relationship must exist between these two individuals in order for a copying to take place. This is the central differentiation between the double and the

copy. A doubling occurs between two independent personalities who unintentionally share the same character-traits and vicissitudes, a copy is created when one character makes a deliberate effort to emulate the same characteristics of another as a facet of their own identity. The two Golyadkins are doubles because neither has met before or made a deliberate effort to emulate each other.

With that said, it is important to consider the narrative structure and presentation of Dostoyevsky's text, and how this affects the doubling between the two Golyadkins. On a base level reading of the text, it appears that the original Golyadkin's decent into insanity is the fault of his double. However, as Marina Grishakova asserts is typical of Dostoyevsky's writing, *The Double* presents "a subjectively colored discourse as a seemingly objective report" (94). Dostoyevsky's novel, according to Grishakova, presents the experience of a single individual as an objective record of what is going on in the text. Despite the original Golyadkin's claim that his double has a "strange, ludicrous, and altogether impossible desire to seem to be [his] twin" (Dostoyevsky 232), Elena Dryzhakova notes that at no point does Golyadkin junior "actually [try] to displace Goliadkin socially, that is to say occupy his place at work or in society" (68). According to Dryzhakova, Golyadkin believes that someone is attempting to replace him, but there is no objective evidence to support this belief. Because this is a subjective account, the text itself also leaves open the possibility that Golyadkin seeing his double may be a symptom of an existing mental instability that is established at the outset of the novel. The text cannot confirm or deny the true nature of Golyadkin's double because a perspective from this character is never presented. Whilst the

original Golyadkin's inner thoughts and motivations are constantly being recorded, the same opportunity is not given to his double. The original and doubling relationship is firmly established in the text, but the true motivations of the double character are never given equal weight with those of the original.

It is through a subversion of this method of doubling that *Against the Day* establishes ambiguity in the relationships between its characters. Dostoyevsky offers no insight into the feelings of the double, despite the questionable narrative reliability of the original Golyadkin. However, Krzystof Piekarski, Martin Kevorkian, and Elisabeth McKetta argue that in *Against the Day* "any character can indeed become a protagonist, a foregrounded consciousness through whom the narrative is focalized and who is not ultimately subordinated with respect to the centrality of another character" (56). *Against the Day* foregrounds the thoughts and feelings of several characters, including Reef and Frank, in a way that runs counter to *The Double*'s focalisation of a single character's experience. As a result, the double becomes re-contextualised in Pynchon's text. In his study of the double in German literature, Andrew J. Webber categorises the double as "above all a figure of visual compulsion" (3). Webber views the double as visual occurrence. He argues that "it seems that the subject may not so much have as actually *be* the Doppelgänger by seeing itself. This visual double-bind provides the model for the general divisive objectification of the subject in the case of the Doppelgänger" (3, italics in original). For Webber, the double is an objectification of the self which exists as a visual reflection of the original. It represents a physical example of division within an identity. This certainly exemplifies

Golyadkin's approach to his double. He sees him not as a person but an object. However, *Against the Day* allows both the original and the double a level of subjectivity that undermines this traditional approach to the trope. The ideas and motivations of Reef and Frank are given equal weight to Webb's, something that would usually be absent in other examples of doubling. *Against the Day* offers an insight into the double that reveals their motivations as being directly inspired by the original. It is through this revelation that the novel calls into question the idea that those who would once have been considered doubles can even be regarded as such in this text.

In my reading of *Against the Day*, Althusser's principles of material practices also play a significant role in confusing whether Reef and Frank are Webb's doubles. As I have noted, Frank views his father as a dedicated miner, but also vows "to do better, maybe someday get licenced as an engineer" (*AD* 104). Throughout the course of their childhood, Webb's children have only known him as a miner. Mining is representative of a conformist material practice because it reinforces Webb's imagined relationship to the systems of power as one of service. As a working man he continues to allow himself to be exploited by the ruling systems of power, in order to provide for his wife and children within the confines of the family ISA, which Althusser argues is the true purpose of ideology. Furthermore, Frank, having witnessed these practices within the family ISA, recognises that, in order to become a concrete subject within the same ideology as Webb, he too must emulate these material practices in his own life. He conforms to Althusser's argument that there is "no ideology except for concrete subjects, and this destination for ideology is only made possible by the subject" (44).

Webb's position as a miner, signals that he is a concrete subject within a specific ideology. It also makes Frank into a subject who wishes to better his own position within the same ideology, through the family ISA. Frank, in turn, recognises that he must engage in the same material practices, and others besides, in order to achieve this improved subjective position. Frank's practices will then continue to the interpellation of others into the same ideology, more than likely through his own family ISA, just as he was interpellated by Webb.

Reef on the other hand, despite existing within the same family ISA as Frank, makes the decision to emulate the transgressive aspect of his father's identity based on his own ideals. He wishes for the "ability to destroy, purely through the force of his desire, to point or stare furiously enough at any of these owners' creatures to make them go up in bright, preferably loud, bursts of flame" (*AD* 104). Reef very quickly reveals his own attraction to the material practices that Webb performs in his alternative identity as an anarcho-syndicalist bomber. Therefore, as a witness to these material practices in Webb, Reef immediately feels he should emulate the same practices if he also wishes to attack the mine owners and subject himself to a transgressive form of ideology. The novel indicates that for Frank, seeing his father act as an honest miner was instrumental in his own decision making. However, *Against the Day* instils Reef with aspects of his father's own personality even without his bearing witness to a physical reinforcement of Webb's transgressive ideals. Although Reef's disapproval of the trade union indicates that he does not share Webb's anarcho-syndicalist ideas explicitly, he does share the desire to target the capitalist systems of the text and transgress the

dominant ideological structures in some way. In an Althusserean sense, Reef's personal desire to target the "owner's creatures" is evidence that he was already subject to a transgressive form of ideology, before his decision to emulate Webb. However, like Frank, the only examples of material practice that Reef has from other subjects are those within the family ISA. Reef's only experiences of ideologically transgressive thought come from Webb himself, with Webb's listing of three examples of the double talk used by plutocrats (*AD* 104) being a clear example . As a result, when it comes to Reef enacting his own forms of material practice it is Webb who exercises the greatest influence, even if he is not directly responsible for Reef's transgressive leanings in the first place.

When analysed in conjunction with Althusser's ideas on ideology, Reef's pre-determined affinity with a socially transgressive form of ideology can be read as symptomatic of Althusser's assertion that "ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects" (49-50). In this case Reef, as well as Frank, have always been subjects to a specific ideology. By examining both characters through the lens of Althusserean ideology, it becomes difficult, in terms of doubling, to suggest that Reef and Frank are deliberately copying their father because they have always-already been interpellated as subjects by the ideologies themselves. In David Hawkes's definition of Althusser's ideology, he claims that "[w]hen the concrete individual comes along, ideology has 'always already' determined a specific set of roles, into which the individual will be slotted" (119). In Hawkes reading of ideology, the

ideology has a pre-determined role for the concrete individual, and they will be interpellated into this role. It is certainly true that part of their interpellation into these roles stems from the ISAs and the other individuals who are also subject to these same apparatuses, after all "there is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects" (Althusser 44), but it is impossible to tell how significant these individuals have been in influencing Reef and Frank's subjectivity. After all, if Reef and Frank's roles were already determined by the ideological structures to which they are subject, they would act in a similar way regardless of who their father is. However, because the novel does present the similarities between Reef and Frank, and Webb, it continues to cast doubt on what is the most defining aspect of subjectivity for these two characters. In other words, the novel is never explicit as to whether Reef and Frank are subjects to an ideology as the result of a wish to emulate their father, or whether they emulate their father as a result of their continued interpellation into a specific ideology.

In any case, the difficulty in identifying whether Reef and Frank are Webb's doubles certainly challenges the traditional understanding of the motif. In their reading of the double as an evil child, Daniel Sullivan and Jeff Greenberg argue that "Gothic characters like Victor Frankenstein and Henry Jekyll reject domesticity and instead strive creatively to overcome death by 'birthing' fiendish Doubles characterized to varying degrees as 'children' of their creators" (59). Sullivan and Greenberg consider doubles as children of their creators; children who allow them to reject the norms of society and will continue to do so independently of themselves. Part of the terror that emerges from the double is that it literally doubles the transgressions of the original. However, Frank

still exhibits shared aspects of his father's identity and shares experiences with him but, because he does not threaten the equilibrium of society, this makes it more difficult to establish whether he is truly a double. In contrast, Reef clearly emulates the transgressive aspects of his father. As a result, it is difficult to assert that Reef is not a double because he exhibits a "repetition of the same character-traits" as Webb, along with a desire to commit "the same crimes" (Freud 210). Despite both displaying the same qualities, and both being Webb's children, only Reef fits into the idea of the double being a fiendish child of his creator. Frank, on the other hand, can traditionally be categorised as a normal child, despite exhibiting may of the same qualities as Reef. By presenting these shared characteristics between Reef and Frank, but altering the ideological contexts in which these characteristics manifest themselves, the novel draws attention to how artificial the concept of the double as evil truly is. Both brothers exhibit the same qualities that Freud would use to define the double, but by the standards of the Gothic, only one would be considered evil.

Perhaps inevitably, Reef and Frank's differing interpretations of their father's personality, and emulation of the opposing elements within Webb's identity, the conformist and transgressive subject, necessitate a doubling taking place between the two brothers themselves. The novel makes clear that both children "grew up seeing Webb thrown out of places, more and more as time went on, often being right there with him" (*AD* 103). Reef and Frank share similar pasts and are motivated by these events in much the same way that earlier doubles, such as Jekyll and Hyde, also share aspects of identity. They resemble Brian DeMars's description of doubles which are

formed when "two objects that one would expect to differ are consistently bound by at least one strong similarity" (9). As subjects to oppositional ideologies, it would be expected that Reef and Frank would be at odds with each other. However, their strong similarity to Webb, albeit different aspects of him, means that they are never fully in opposition. Despite their contrasting ideals and subjections, *Against the Day* never makes Reef and Frank antagonistic to each other. It demonstrates that just because these characters are doubles, that does not mean they will destroy each other. In fact, as Reef's proclamation that he and Frank will organise after Webb's death demonstrates, when the similarity that they do share is destroyed, the two brothers are more than willing to assist each other in order to achieve retribution. Whilst their subjective positions may be in opposition to each other, *Against the Day*'s presentation of Reef and Frank demonstrates that this does not have to mean that the characters themselves have to be.

This is not to say that Reef and Frank remain fixed in a particular position with regard to their relationship with the dominant systems of power throughout the text. In a similar manner to Webb, Reef and Frank's identities make several shifts of their own throughout the course of the novel. Often these shifts are predicated on each other's prevailing role at the time. Early in the novel, Webb is told "[y]ou live any kind of covert life at all, and they are going to come after you" (*AD* 102). Instead, he must "belong to this everyday world–be in it, be of it" (102). Reef is forced into a similar shift in identity as a result of the continuation of his father's bombing. During one of his excursions, Reef is caught in a man-made Avalanche which he hopes will lead to the

assumption “as far as the Owners Association knew (who else could it’ve been?)” that he is “dead and gone, and therefore born again” (412). Reef’s certainty that it was the Owners Association that tried to kill him, forces him to be born again as a respectable member of society in order to save his own life. Reef is forced to construct a role where conformity becomes the defining feature of his identity. Prior to this event, Reef’s identity is constructed in a way that only places importance on one relationship to the dominant power structures, the transgressive aspect. However, Reef is now meeting the same problems that were meted out to his father, notably that it is impossible to function as simply an antagonist to the dominant systems of power. Like Webb, if he wishes to live long enough so that he can assist in the destruction of the dominant capitalist systems of power, Reef must start to develop a capitalist conforming identity that allows him to function in the everyday world.

However, the role that Reef adopts is a far more extreme example of capitalist conformity than his father’s miner identity. He assumes the guise of Thrapston Cheesely III. In order to characterise this persona, Reef begins “learning to look sicker than he was, to dress like a dude who couldn’t sit a horse on a merry-go-round” (*AD* 413) as well as “using cologne and the same brand of hair pomade as Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany” (413-414). He even keeps his “dynamite, detonator caps, and miscellaneous exploder gear all in a matched and monogramed set of alligator-hide luggage” (414). The elements of his life as an anti-mine owner bomber are literally sealed away in matched and monogramed luggage. Despite Reef’s need to re-invent himself in order to escape the threat of death, the decision to make himself a gentleman indicates a

deliberate shift in his subjective and moral values. In his reading of the Becker-Traverse family[1] in *Vineland*, Sean Austin Grattan describes a family reunion as "a celebration not only of the family, but also the practice of resistance in the United States" (86-87). Grattan goes on to quote a description of the Becker-Traverses from *Vineland* which refers to them as "old, proud and strong union people, surviving in one of the world's worst antiunion environments" (*VL* 320). According to Grattan's reading, the Traverses are an example of resistance to the dominant ideals, in an environment that makes it very difficult for this kind of defiance to take place. However, Reef's shift towards conformity, as well as his earlier dismissal of the union, indicates that he is not as independent from the dominant systems of power as the narrative voice in *Vineland* might suggest in its narrative. Even those who appear most at odds with the ideology can be corrupted by it when their own life is at risk. After seeing what simply conforming does to Webb, Reef takes this conformity to the next extreme in order to save himself. Not only does Reef disguise himself within these ruling systems of power's ideological structures; he becomes a physical representation of these systems.

Reef is now far more aligned with the protagonists of the doubling narratives that have gone before him. Esther Saxey specifically describes how within the doubling trope "[o]ne aspect of the hero remains socially acceptable [whilst] the other commits (or urges) terrible acts" (67). Like Golyadkin, who is a bureaucratic representation of

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[1] The Traverse side of these two families are directly descended from Webb. In fact, the patriarch of the group is Jesse Traverse, Reef's son.

conformity to the forces which maintain the governing social mode, in *Against the Day* Reef adopts a persona that represents the social elite within the text. However, contrary to his predecessors, Reef has transformed from transgressor into conformist. The conclusion of his identity shift is the same as the beginnings of that of Golyadkin. Golyadkin begins as a bureaucratic conformist before a meeting of his double leads to an insanity which excludes him from this social conformity. Reef, on the other hand, begins *Against the Day* with an attraction to and enactment of transgressive bombing before taking on a role of total conformity. This is reflective of *Against the Day*'s own approach to the politics of conformity. Whereas in the earlier texts, the double of the self is a manifestation of the transgressive aspects of the individual's identity, the text's presentation of Reef is of someone indulging the conformist elements of his identity. Through this presentation of doubling, the novel is drawing attention to its own assertion that the suppression of the transgressive element of the self is far more tragic than challenging the conformist aspect. Contrary to Saxey's definition, one aspect of Reef does remain socially *un*acceptable: he keeps his dynamite. However, the concealment of the dynamite within monogrammed cases indicates that these transgressive urges are still overpowered by a need to appear within a socially acceptable persona. The novel is indicating then that the terror in this example stems not from a character being overpowered by transgressive urges, but Reef's allowing of the conformist part of himself to take on the dominant role in his identity.

Frank's course within the novel takes a far more traditional direction in terms of the doubling trope. Whilst he initially starts out looking for mining opportunities,

specifically work in zinc, he eventually ends up imprisoned in Mexico with the two anarchist-sympathisers Ewball Oust and Dwayne Provecho. Provecho offers Frank "some contract employment" based on the belief that he is "none other than the Kieselguhr Kid of Wild West legend" (431). Despite his not being the Kid, Provecho still beseeches Frank to break out of the prison, based on the fact that "some local bad-ass who thinks you are [the Kieselguhr Kid] will be unable to resist plugin his *cuchillo* into your heart" (*AD* 432, italics in original). Frank has lost the ability to maintain his preferred form of ideological subjection, conformity, because the subjects who surround him have forced a transgressive identity upon him, which in turn, has immediately become his defining form of subjectivity. Those who believe him to be the Kieselguhr Kid force that symbolic identity onto Frank, despite Frank's own reluctance to fully embrace the anarcho-syndicalist values which originally served as a basis for the Kid's existence. From a narrative perspective, Frank's fate is a mirrored reversal of Reef's. Reef begins by assuming the role of the Kid, devoid of the anarcho-syndicalist beliefs from which this guise initially emerged, and only embraces conformity as a last resort. Frank, in turn, initially occupies a conformist identity before reluctantly assuming the transgressive role that his brother has vacated, again devoid of the ideological framework that Webb initially uses to justify the emergence of the Kieselguhr Kid persona. Frank genuinely wishes to return to a position of conformity, unlike the doubles of the past who are eventually destroyed by their refusal to conform, but is not given the opportunity to do so. Although Frank's identity is now defined by being antagonistic towards the dominant ideological structures, this shift is

forced upon him by society itself, rather than being an element of his own identity that genuinely wishes to transgress the capitalist ideologies of the text.

Despite Frank's initial desire to not be defined as a subject associated with transgressive ideologies, when this does occur, it is by no means a source of fear or terror for him. In fact, if he is believed to be the Kieselguhr Kid, conformist society itself becomes a greater source of terror than anarchist-sympathisers like Ewball Oust and Dwayne Provecho. Consequently, when read in an Althusserean context, the Kid persona serves as means of self-preservation within the apparatuses associated with ideologies that transgress the dominant social structures. Rather than the double being, as Linda Dryden describes it, "*a threat to the integrity of the self,* and frequently evidence of a Gothic, supernatural force at large that brings with it death and destruction (38, italics in original), Frank's transition from conformist to transgressive is far more banal in the text. During his prison stay, Frank finds that "as time passed, this Mexican hoosegow would turn out to be not nearly the hellhole of bordertown legend but a flexible and now and then even friendly arrangement" (*AD* 428). His new identity as an anarchist-sympathiser is not presented as a threat to the integrity of his self at all. In fact, Frank's shift into a transgressive subjectivity is facilitated by a relatively enjoyable stay within the Mexican prison. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the only reason Frank even escapes this prison in the first place is because others believe him to be the Kieselguhr Kid. He experiences a reversal of Reef's fortunes. Reef abandons his transgressive identity in order to save his own life and actually finds more personal pleasure in conformity. Frank is forced to assume a transgressive persona in order to

do the same for himself and finds that this too is more idyllic than the ideological apparatuses of social conformity that previously defined him as a subject.

With that said, Reef is given slightly more autonomy than Frank when it comes to this subjective alteration. As my reading of the text in relation to Althusser's thesis suggests, neither Reef nor Frank can truly escape the dominant systems of power, after all "ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects" (Althusser 49) to these dominant systems. In spite of this, Reef is at least given a choice as to how he constructs his imagined relationship to these dominant systems of power. After he is "born again" (*AD* 412) in the aftermath of the avalanche, Reef is given the ability to shift his subjectivity towards an ideology which conforms to the capitalist systems of power or continue subjecting himself to an ideology which transgresses them, even if choosing a transgressive identity will result in his death. For Frank, this decision is made by those around him. Daphna Oyserman, Kristen Elmore, and George Smith posit that "self and identity are social products in at least three ways" (76). One of the ways that they claim self and identity are social products is through the assertion that "being a self requires others who endorse and reinforce one's selfhood" (76). For Oyserman, Elmore, and Smith selfhood is, at least in part, reinforced by others acknowledging that it exists in the first place or, as Althusser would argue, a subject interpellates and is interpellated by other subjects into specific ideologies. However, if these ideologies do not provide a means of interpellation, more specifically other subjects who share the same ideological views, then this subjection cannot exist regardless of the individual's own desires. This is exactly the case for Frank. Provecho even tells him that "everybody

here thinks you're the Kieselguhr Kid and they're expectin a breakout" (*AD* 432). Not only is he abandoned by those who can continue to interpellate him into his old subjection, but the individuals that Frank does come into contact with and who could continue to interpellate him as a conformist subject, the prisoners, prison guards, and other locals, only regard him as a transgressive subject. For Webb and Reef, it is easy to shift between anarcho-syndicalist, in the case of Webb, or, for Reef, anarchist-influenced, and capitalist ideals because there are groups of other subjects who can continue to interpellate them into both of these ideological structures. Frank is not afforded the same acknowledgement by those around him. The only form of subjection that remains for him is to the transgressive form of ideology which is associated with the Kieselguhr Kid. Despite Frank's desire to re-subject himself to a conformist form of ideology, this is no longer possible because the other subjects that Frank come into contact with prevent it from occurring to him.

This is the separating factor between the character in earlier Gothic texts and Frank in *Against the Day*. Whereas Jekyll literally engineers the scenario in which the transgressive aspects of his personality are allowed to manifest themselves, Frank's transgressions occur because he has no other choice but to indulge them. In Stevenson's novel, Jekyll recognises his "natural body for the mere aura and effulgence of certain of the powers" (Stevenson 110) that make up his spirit. But when he manages to "compound a drug by which these powers should be dethroned from their supremacy" (Stevenson 110), he finds that "the temptation of a discovery so profound, at last overcame the suggestions of alarm" (Stevenson 111). Stephen Arata

characterises Jekyll's actions "[b]y means of Mr Hyde" (193) as a method for sloughing off the "burdens of respectability, reticence, decorum, self-censorship–of gentlemanliness" (193). Despite presenting the dangers of self-repression in order to conform to social norms, *Jekyll and Hyde* ultimately lays blame with the conscious actions of the individual. Jekyll is highly aware of the dangers that his experiment has the potential to realise but, as Arata notes, he still continues his work in order to unburden himself from gentlemanly repressions. However, Frank is not given such options. As it is the society that he inhabits that marks him as transgressive, rather than personal action, he is forced into his transgressive role. *Against the Day* again takes the opposite approach to subjectivity and ideology through Frank's characterisation. Whereas in earlier Gothic texts, the subject is responsible for their own expulsion from a particular ideological structure, Frank is never given this opportunity. Instead, he is outcast by the conformist ideological structures before he even has the possibility to consider personally indulging in social transgression.

The point in *Against the Day* when Reef and Frank experience their subjective shifts is also significant in terms of how the novel presents doubling. Frank's joining up with the anarchist-sympathisers, even if he doesn't quite share their world view, happens in the chapter directly after Reef's own moves towards joining the high society of the capitalist social structure. In both instances, the brothers are forced into adoptive embraces of their opposing roles. Frank joins the anarchist-sympathisers' group in order to escape prison just as Reef creates his new identity to escape retribution from the Owners Association, with the result being that they end up taking up a position that

the other once occupied. Even though Frank is not mixing with high society, or anything close to the company that Reef starts to keep, he is the brother who initially appears most likely to adopt a position within the socially conformist ideological structures. Reef, in contrast, is presented from the novel's outset as wishing to subject himself to an ideology which transgresses social convention. The placement of the brothers' sudden shifts in ideological position so closely together, literally back-to-back in terms of the configuration of the novel, demonstrates how intrinsically linked they are. As soon as Reef begins making inroads into capitalist society, Frank starts to turn away from it. Their relationship begins to mirror that of Mason and Dixon in the earlier novel. Just as Mason and Dixon shift roles depending on the position that the other occupies at the specific moment, so do Reef and Frank. However, Reef and Frank go a step further than Mason and Dixon. Mason and Dixon are in each other's company when these shifts begin to take place, whereas Reef and Frank are completely separate and unaware of the other's movements at a given moment. Instead, they seem to subconsciously shift their positions in order to fill that vacated by their brother within the larger systems of power.

Reef and Frank's fraternal relationship demonstrates that, throughout the course of the text, these two characters are in an ever-shifting movement towards and away from specific forms of ideology. However, for Reef and Frank, these shifts are essential in order for them to continue to exist as concrete individuals. In his review of *Against the Day*, Michiko Kakutani described "the people in 'Against the Day' [as] little more than stick figure cartoons" ("A Pynchonesque Turn"). However, Reef and Frank's

abilities to change and develop their identities to fit a particular situation indicates that there is a greater level of complexity in their identities than Kakutani credits to the novel. Their shifting subjectivities allows them to develop a greater, more complex personal identity as the text goes on. Take, for example, the section of the narrative in which Webb's wife and children leave him, thus removing his family-man persona. Webb immediately tries to re-gain some semblance of this role by treating Deuce Kindred as a surrogate son. He lacks the ability to completely abandon this facet of himself and tries to restore it, in order to achieve a renewed sense of balance within his identity. However, when Reef recognises that he has lost the ability to continue targeting mine owners, he simply locks that aspect of his identity away and reinforces the void left by adopting a new persona altogether, rather than trying to restore that which he once had. The same is also true of Frank. Although he does not wish to lose his subjectivity to the capitalist ideological structures of the text, when he does, he simply embraces the subjection that is available to him. Instead of desperately trying to restore his old identity, he simply adopts a new one. Reef and Frank's ability to make these subjective adjustments indicates that they are far-more than stick figures or cartoons. Rather than occupying the same role throughout the text and allowing the events to take place around them, both Reef and Frank are presented as being able to adjust their own identities in order to best deal with each event on a moment-by-moment basis.

The level of depth that *Against the Day* affords Reef and Frank is what allows the text to complicate the Gothic double. Whilst the Gothic uses the double to create

binary oppositions between two characters, *Against the Day* uses doubling to undermine the authority of these binary divisions. According to Sara Wasson, "a double can be read as embodying repressed psychological desires not admitted to the daylight of consciousness, or a mind fracturing under modernity's pressures" (74). Wasson presents the double as the manifestation of the elements of the self that cannot be revealed publicly. Therefore, the double becomes a manifestation of the repressed psychological desires that the original has but cannot reveal to the world from their position within the governing institutions of society. However, in *Against the Day*, the characters' positions with the governing systems of power are constantly being shifted and changed and, consequentially, so are the aspects of self which much be repressed in order to occupy these specific subjectivities. The seemingly transgressive anarchist ideologies are given just as much influence as the conformist ones associated with capitalism. As a result, it becomes impossible to define characters like Reef and Frank through binary opposites in terms of their relationship to each other. Neither of them fits into these clear-cut modes of conformist and transgressive thought. The text removes the concept of a dominant ideological structure that rules the subject's entire life, and instead uses Reef and Frank to demonstrate that an ideology can really only dominate a specific aspect or moment in a character's life. The argument can be made that Reef is a transgressive character who indulges a repressed desire to conform to the governing ideals just as easily as one could argue that Frank attempts to remain within the conforming mode but ends up indulging his own repressed transgressive desires. Neither character is ever represented as intrinsically good or evil, instead they

assume roles that best allow for their own subjectivity to continue, as well as the subjectivity of their fraternal double.

Of course, as is often the case in Pynchon's novels, Reef and Frank are not the only pair of doubles in this situation. In fact, there is just as strong an argument that Reef and Frank are doubles of the two men who murdered their father: Deuce Kindred and Sloat Fresno. To begin with Reef and Deuce, both of these characters have a paternal relationship with Webb. After losing his real family, Webb imagines he's found "a replacement son" (*AD* 219) in Deuce, and "Deuce [does] nothing to tell him any different" (219). Webb uses Deuce to fill a role once occupied by Reef, which gives them equal importance within Webb's psyche. By extension, like the doubling between Reef and Frank, the genesis for the doubled relationship between Reef and Deuce stems from the actions of Webb. They do not take on a doubled relationship after a meeting with each other, but after the meeting of a shared father-figure. Whilst writing about *Frankenstein* and the double, Sabindra Raj Bhandari claims that the double "incorporates the multiple shades of interpretations related to psychic projection" (104). Bhandari's assertion that the double is a psychic projection is applicable in this instance from *Against the Day*, but with a key difference in where this projection stems from. Rather than Reef being responsible for the creation of his own double, it is Webb's feelings that cast him and Deuce as doubles. Webb feels that he and Deuce might literally be kindred spirits, just as the text demonstrates the same is the case for Reef and his father. Rather than sharing a psychological link with each other, Reef and Deuce share a psychological link with Webb. In turn, this results in their doubling being

not a self-motivated psychic projection, but the psychic projection of another character altogether.

In fact, Reef and Deuce never meet. When the opportunity arises for Reef to pursue Deuce and Sloat he decides against it. In hindsight Reef wonders "if he hadn't just been trying to avoid an encounter with the killers, whether he hadn't gotten cowardice mixed in with honoring his father" (*AD*, 239). Reef's questioning himself as to whether he had been deliberately trying to avoid a meeting with Deuce further plays into the conventions of doubling. When Reef is offered the opportunity to directly confront his double, he makes the decision not to do so, at least partly out of fear. Just as the confrontation with double is a source of fear in texts like *The Double* or *Jekyll and Hyde*, Reef acknowledges that it was cowardice that played a role in his not pursuing Deuce. It is as a result of Reef's admission, that Deuce fits into Paul Coates's assertion that fear of the double stems from the discovery that there is "a real person existing outside of the [original's] selfhood and its projections" (3). The similarities that these two characters share means that "the Double is the emissary of death" (3) for the original because they are forced to confront the notion that they do not exist as a whole self any longer. By avoiding a confrontation with Deuce, not only can Reef avoid the threat of death in a physical sense, but he can also avoid the confrontation with the double that may cause a questioning of his own selfhood. Whilst Deuce poses a serious physical risk to those who he comes into contact with, for Reef his threat is intensified as a direct result of the doubling between these two characters. Deuce represents the potential psychological danger that may lead to Reef's own loss of identity. In this

sense, it is Deuce who actually best represents a traditional form of doubling in the Gothic use of the motif. For Reef, he is the harbinger of death and destruction both for Reef himself and those that he cares about.

Against the Day does, however, subvert the sense of closure that the death of a double usually achieves at the end of a Gothic narrative. If Deuce is Reef's double, or the closest to a double in terms of Deuce and Sloat, then it would stand to reason that Sloat and Frank are also doubles. They are both brought into the situation involving Webb's death by their counterparts; they initially attempt to distance themselves from Webb's killing before eventually being drawn back into the aftermath by their meeting each other; and both characters enter into a relationship with their counterpart's spouse[2]. Upon stumbling across Sloat in a small-town bar, Frank only has time to begin "firing cold, no chance to rouse up any of those family emotions" (*AD* 446) before he kills Sloat. In the traditional trope of doubling, killing Sloat would offer Frank a feeling of vindication. He has erased his evil double, and this should serve as a means of restoring a sense of personal peace. Instead, Frank soon begins to understand that, in the wake of this killing, his emotions are "well before he [has] the godforsaken little town at his back, turning, to regret" (446). In his commentary of the event, Sean Carswell asserts that Sloat's killing serves to demonstrate "the pointlessness of this act

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[2] Both Sloat and Deuce enter into a sexual relationship with Webb's daughter, Lake (see *AD* 303-305). Frank begins a romantic relationship with Reef's ex-partner, Estrella Briggs, which I will explore in more detail later in this section.

of vengeance" (*Occupy* 101). Carswell goes on to note that even Frank's mother, after learning of the act, recognises "that nothing has changed in the world now that Sloat has gone" (*Occupy* 101). The sense of pointlessness that Carswell notes is what ultimately undermines the doubling trope as it might appear in the Gothic text. Killing the double that has disrupted his life does not give Frank any sense of tranquillity. Instead, the novel indicates that the killing is ultimately a hollow victory and serves no purpose in restoring the imbalance that has been caused in the first place. It merely adds to the list of regrets that Frank has in his own life.

After the killing of Sloat, Frank begins to consider his position more explicitly in light of Reef. During a discussion with Moss Gatlin, Frank confesses that "I feel funny about Sloat. It should've been the other one, 'cause Pa was nothin Sloat would've gone out and done on his own" (*AD*, 524). Frank's reflection here serves a doubly, no pun intended, significant moment within the character's construction in the text. First of all, the claim that Sloat's killing of Webb was nothing he "would've gone out and done on his own" is also reflective of Frank's own position in seeking revenge for his father's killing. As I have already indicated, it is Reef who tells his sister that he and Frank will pursue their father's killers out of revenge. Reef, like Deuce, is the party advocating for action. Initially, Frank only becomes involved in this revenge plot because of his relationship with Reef. However, now that Frank has erased his own double within the partnership that led to his father's death, he now feels a responsibility to complete Reef's job too. He is starting to resemble the double that is more familiar to the Gothic traditions of the trope. Earlier in the text, as I have argued, Frank has no desire to

assume similar roles to Reef of his own accord, instead he finds himself forced into these positions. Here though, Frank expresses an explicit desire to fill Reef's role and replace him in this particular duty. Like the double that Golyadkin faces in Dostoyevsky's text, Frank is now displaying qualities that suggest he could replace his brother's identity with his own.

The sense that Frank wishes to explicitly replace Reef is made clearer in the relationship he develops with Reef's ex-partner, and mother of his son, Estrella, or Stray, Briggs. In his explanation of the doubling trope, Otto Rank states that "[t]he most prominent symptom of the forms which the double takes is a powerful consciousness of guilt which forces the hero no longer to accept the responsibility for certain actions of his ego, but to place it upon another ego, a double" (126). In terms of the Traverse siblings, Reef's consciousness of guilt is expressed during one of his "long desultory conversations with his penis" (*AD* 414-415). He expressly states that "there wasn't much point missing Stray too much right now, was there, as it would only blunt the edge of desire" (415). Conversely, after the killing of Sloat, Frank is "visited each night […] by a string of peculiarly clear-edged dreams about Estrella Briggs" (517) before eventually meeting up with Stray and Jesse, Reef's son, in the immediate days before the 1914 Ludlow Massacre. It is after the three characters have escaped the massacre that that Frank and Stray find themselves looking at each other "both too tired to pretend it wasn't desire, even here in the middle of hell" (1142). Eventually, Frank and Stray are revealed to have entered into a relationship, with Frank acting as surrogate father for Jesse. The brothers' shared relation to Stray reasserts their own positions as

doubles of each other. Reef's initial sense of guilt at abandoning Stray is countered by Frank's move towards developing his own relationship with her in the absence of his brother. Frank becomes indicative of the responsibility that Reef's ego is no longer able to accept. Although the ego that Rank refers to relates to the transgressive elements within the hero, *Against the Day* reverses this relationship. Rather than becoming a manifestation of Reef's darker desires, by hoping to restore familial security to those that Reef has abandoned, Frank becomes a conforming ego in the light of Reef's own transgressive abandonment of his wife and son.

In fact, by the end of the novel, as well as Frank and Stray becoming romantically engaged with each other, Reef has established a new family unit for himself. Upon meeting up with Frank and Stray, Reef asks if he and his new family can join up with them and they are quick to welcome him. After their reunion, both Stray and Reef's wife, Yashmeen Halfcourt, begin "watching the brothers day to day, alert to buried anger, understanding after a while that they'd been collaborating to the same end" (*AD* 1209). Both women are highly aware of the tension that may exist between their two partners before eventually realising that this tension does not exist. The novel ultimately offers an optimistic take towards the doubled relationship that Reef and Frank share with each other. Sean Carswell notes that "[t]he family rejects neoconservative notions of family values that insist on heterosexuality and recognize the patriarchal nuclear family as the only option" (*Occupy* 118), adding that they "operate as a community of mutual economic and emotional support, all working in common for mutual benefits" (*Occupy* 118). Carswell's observation here demonstrates

the means by which these characters are able to subvert the traditional social norms of society and form their own approach to community. From an Althusserean ideological perspective, Reef and Frank are able to subvert these social norms by establishing their own form of family ISA, which is at least partially, although never entirely, separate from that of the dominant systems of power. They are no longer bound to the dominant structures of this particular apparatus and are therefore able to truly establish an ideological apparatus which exists in opposition to the family ISA. Although, as I will go on to argue shortly, they are still bound to the other ISAs, Reef and Frank's ability to create this alternative family unit still represents a more genuine form of ideological resistance than the false oppositions between anarchism and capitalism which are exposed in the text. Their conscious decision to reject the dominant conventions with regards to the family ISA, means Reef and Frank are able to finally reach a point of ideological subversion, at least on a small scale, in a way that large organisations, such as anarchism, fail to achieve in the text.

By extension, Reef and Frank also reject the typical notion of the double as threatening to the social structure of the dominant society. Because the group are able to privately separate themselves from the structure of the wider social and moral conventions of their culture, the doubles that exist within this private sphere are allowed to mutually benefit each other. In his list of the five features that commonly characterise Romantic Doppelgänger narratives, Amit Marcus posits that "[h]arsh rivalry typically develops between the 'original' and his double, which gives rise to complex relations of domination and counter-domination" (192). According to Marcus,

in the Romantic text, the genre from which the Gothic stems, doubling is presented through tensions between the original and the double. However, Reef and Frank completely subvert this trope. Despite Stray and Yashmeen's fear that some "buried anger" (*AD* 1209) will manifest between the two, this never happens between Reef and Frank. *Against the Day* calls into question ideas of doubling as a means of self-destruction and fragmentation. Rather than destroying the double, or casting one of them as evil, the novel offers a scenario in which these doubles can live harmoniously and complimentarily outside of the harsh rivalry which Marcus argues exists within Doppelgänger narratives. As a result, the novel also questions the rigidity of the conventions that underline the doubling trope. Marcus is literally able to create a list of five characteristics that most texts dealing with doubling can fit into. By subverting these trends, *Against the Day* challenges the ideas which have become so ingrained in the construction of doubling in these texts. Just as Reef and Frank's alternative community questions the singular approach to society, the novel questions the legitimacy of a singular approach to specific tropes within narrative construction.

Against the Day's presentation of this alternative community serves as a concluding position to the novel's attempt to undermine the idea that a double has to be drawn along the lines of conflict and division. The novel certainly presents the male-male relationship that George E. Haggarty claims manifests in the Gothic text as "[t]wo men locked in a physical and psychological bond- in the form of friendship or rivalry- that they are spiritually a single being" (226) going on to add that the works he will discuss in his reading of the Gothic "use male-male relations to explore questions about

identity and dissolution" (226) . Although *Against the Day* certainly uses the double to explore questions of identity, in its presentation of Reef and Frank the novel refuses to conform to the notion that doubling will lead to dissolution. Instead, as the closing of Reef's and Frank's narrative demonstrates, the novel demonstrates how doubles can exist as complimentary elements within each other's lives and identities. The text offers an alternative to the "battle of wits between the antithetical double" which John T. Irwin argues "typically results in self-defeat, if not self-destruction" (213). Not only are Reef and Frank complementary as opposed to antithetical to each other, but their relationship results in both characters' gaining the ability to marginally transcend the social order. It may well be the case that the alternative family unit that they build for themselves is considered transgressive by the dominating society of the novel, but this is now irrelevant to these characters. By having Reef and Frank refuse to engage with these systems any longer, or at least limit their interactions to the bare minimum, the novel reduces the importance of their doubling relationship to a level of near insignificance. The double is presented as being only as meaningful as the character's relationship with the society in which this doubling takes place. By presenting Reef and Frank as ultimately unconcerned with maintaining a fixed relationship with the dominant social order of the text, it becomes easy for them to abandon the rigidity of these systems and replace them, where possible, with an alternative mode of existence whenever it becomes necessary.

Reef and Frank's relationship represents a progression from the doubling taking place in the novel's construction of their father. Whilst Webb is able to reconcile his

own divided identity in a way that ultimately allows him to strengthen his sense of self, he is still presented as having several antagonistic doubles in the form of other characters within the text. Webb's relationship with Vibe in particular, is indicative of the complex rivalry of domination and counter-domination that Amit Marcus asserts is typical of the doubling relationship. Vibe even states as much in his reflection on how "immune we are kept to the efforts of these muckracking Reds to soil our names" (*AD* 374). He recognises the domination that his own position allows him to assert over workers like Webb. However, Reef and Frank's doubling is left devoid of this antagonistic relationship and replaced by a collective support of each other's views and identity. They are far more concerned with forging and supporting identities for themselves, than the destructive potential that each possess to the other. *Against the Day* is not concerned with the divisions that can be created within one's own identity and the identities of those who might be considered doubles. Even when these relationships do occur, those who would traditionally have been treated as heroes in the Gothic novel for attempting to maintain the socially dominant structures, such as Scarsdale Vibe, are made overtly villainous. Instead, the text presents a situation in which a collective relationship between the doubled characters is something to be celebrated. The novel exposes the systems that encourage the traditionally divisive ideals within subjects. It presents the doubling motif not as a destructive force within the individual's psyche, but as means of affirmation which forces the subject to remain focused on reconciling their own inner turmoil, whilst avoiding and subverting the larger governing systems' hypocritical methods of control.

Perhaps inevitably, Reef and Frank are still unable to completely remove themselves from the dominant ideological structures within the text. Although their alternative family unit is able to upset the traditions of the family ISA that Althusser lists as one of the key Ideological State Apparatuses, they are still forced to engage with other ISAs used by the dominant systems of power. After they establish their alternative family unit, for a while the group live "up in the redwoods, and then for a little longer in a town on the Kitsap Peninsula" (*AD* 1210). The family are still surrounded by and must engage with other subjects that will continue to interpellate them, more or less, into the dominant ideologies. At one point, Jesse brings home an "assignment from school 'write an essay on What It Means To Be An American'" (1210). Although Jesse offers a somewhat tongue-in-cheek response with the single sentence: "*It means do what they tell you and take what they give you and don't go on strike or their soldiers will shoot you down*" (1210, italics in original), his attendance at an institution of the educational ISA demonstrates that the family are still largely enmeshed in the dominant ideological apparatuses on a larger scale. Even if their own small community does not conform wholly to one specific form of ideological apparatus, they are still unable to truly free themselves from the dominant systems of power. Furthermore, the assignment itself is an example of the means by which Althusser argues the educational ISA drums "a certain amount of 'know-how' wrapped in the ruling ideology […] or simply the ruling ideology in its purest form" (29) into children. Despite his response, the idea of considering what it means to be American encourages Jesse, and those around him, to consider the "know-how" and pure ideology that has been instilled in them. Jesse is

still engaged in a kind of self-interpellation through the material practice of writing this essay within the educational ISA, even if his family ISA offers him some glimpse at an alternative form of subjectivity outside of these dominant ideological structures.

In many ways, Reef and Frank succeed where Webb fails. Webb is unable to reach this point of true ideological balance and is ultimately destroyed as a result. Reef and Frank manage to recognise that neither the capitalist or anarchist modes of thought which influence the dominant systems of power, and their ideological structures, can provide true subjective certainty. It is through this recognition that they begin to partially distance themselves from these governing systems. However, they are also self-aware enough to understand that this level of independence cannot be achieved on a large scale. When the suggestion is raised by Yashmeen that the family "should start our own little republic" (*AD* 1210), Stray sighs and concedes that "em things never work out. Fine idea while the opium supply lasts, but sooner or later plain old personal meanness gets in the way" (1210). Stray acknowledges that whilst the group can enact these small personal rebellions against the dominant systems of power, they will never escape its influence entirely. Even if they were to begin their own republic, Stary realises that this state would eventually be corrupted by the same shortcomings as the system in which they already exist. They inhabit the ideals of rebellion that the novel wishes to present as most achievable for the individual. Although they cannot fully remove themselves from the dominant systems of power, Reef and Frank's alternative family can enact small transgressions against it. This ultimately provide them with some level of personal fulfilment in a way that total conformity cannot. *Against the*

Day makes it clear, through its positioning of capitalist and anarchist ideologies, that individuals cannot reach a point of total independence from the dominant systems of power; but with the realisation of this fact, it is possible for the characters to find small pockets of personal freedom from specific aspects of these systems.

Contrary to *Mason & Dixon*'s conclusion that western ideologies will ultimately dominate and destroy any other set of ideals that do not conform to their own, *Against the Day* appears far more hopeful in its presentation of Reef and Frank's quasi-ideological independence. The text, as is the case in *Mason & Dixon*, uses the double to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the two characters. Unlike Mason and Dixon though, Reef and Frank do not achieve a greater level of subjection to the dominant ideological systems through this relationship. Instead, they are able to find a means to achieve a small sense of freedom from these structures. This is what sets Reef and Frank apart from their father. Webb never accepts that he cannot fully defeat the dominant systems of power, even when he remains dependent on their apparatuses, and as a result is completely erased as a subject. Reef and Frank, on the other hand, are presented as possessing an understand that they are unable to truly relinquish the influence of the novel's dominant ideologies altogether. However, through this realisation, *Against the Day* uses Reef and Frank's unconventional family unit to demonstrate that it is possible to find a space in which transgressive ideological practices can be enacted on a small scale, whilst still being aware that they are surrounded by the institutions that ensure the dominant systems of power can always assert their larger authority over them.

In the following chapter, focused on *Bleeding Edge* (2013), the space to manifest new forms of ideology is also presented within the narrative. The central character, Maxine Tarnow, is granted access to an entirely new digital environment and she must create her own digital double in order to enter and interact with this space. It is in this virtual reality that the novel suggests an entirely new ideology has the potential to occur and flourish. However, unlike Reef and Frank's new ideological space, the digital environment that offers this promise is quickly co-opted by the dominant social systems. The double is still a key facet of identity for the characters in this text, but not as a means to resist the dominant social ideals. Instead, it becomes an essential aspect of the characters' subjection to the governing ideological structures and apparatuses. *Mason & Dixon* and *Against the Day* present dominant ideologies where the ultimate goal is to destroy or control the ideologies and subjects which challenge the ideals of the governing forces of power. Conversely, in *Bleeding Edge*, these alternative ideologies are completely absent altogether. Whilst the digital landscape begins as a point of potential subjunction, just as the American continent does in *Mason & Dixon*, this subjunction is quickly assimilated into the authoritative rule of the larger ideologies within the text. With that said, the dominant systems of power are able to maintain the illusion of subjunction within this digital space. However, even this subjunction is closely controlled by those that represent the dominant systems of power. As a result, individuals feel as if they are free to use this space to act out their personal desires but, in reality, continue to subject themselves to the ideological structures and apparatuses of the larger systems of control which dictate the exact nature of these subjects' ideals.

Enter the Deep Web: Twenty-First-Century Doubling in *Bleeding Edge*

Techno-Gothic Concerns, Digital Doubles, and The Virtual World in *Bleeding Edge*

The digital space is central to the experiences of the characters in Thomas Pynchon's *Bleeding Edge* (2013). The novel takes place at the beginning of the twenty-first century, around the eve of and immediately following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It is important then to consider the shape of the virtual world and the internet in this time period. The text takes place in the aftermath of the "Dotcom Bubble" which occurred from 1995 to 2000. The bubble can be understood as a moment in financial history when new technology companies saw huge growth in investment interest and overall value. This level of investment can, according to William Quinn and John D. Turner, be attributed to "compelling 'new era' narratives about the transformative power of the Internet" (163). Quinn and Turner go on to posit that "these narratives consisted of two arguments: first, that the Internet was an incredibly significant and world-changing technology; second, that this made traditional metrics for valuing stocks irrelevant" (163). The rise of the internet then offered new opportunities for investors and a re-consideration of how stocks could be valued. In a sense, these new companies represented bleeding edge opportunities within the investment space. Whilst the "Dotcom Bubble" eventually crashed, with huge losses as a result, several companies that emerged from this bubble, such as Microsoft and Amazon, thrive today as some of the most significant and powerful institutions in global society. Although *Bleeding Edge* is set after this crash, within the novel's narrative, those companies and individuals

that survived these events are shown to be central to the development of the virtual space as it is today.

Bleeding Edge carefully considers the wider cultural concerns that the rise of the internet presented for individuals at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In his text on the twenty-first-century novel, Peter Boxall indicates that:

> the new century has witnessed a collective failure of our temporal and spatial sense, a confusion about where and when we are that makes Crusoes of us all once more. The increasingly frictionless synchronisation of global culture, rather than delivering an increasingly secure sense of location, of homeliness in our space and in our time, has delivered us to a condition in which the time, as in Hamlet's Denmark, is out of joint (21).

Boxall's assertion that global culture has failed to deliver a secure sense of location and the sense that "time is out of joint" can certainly be attributed, at least in part, to the predominance of the internet in contemporary life. The rise of new digital culture and its global reach has made it far more difficult for people to establish themselves in a specific place and within a specific time period. This loss of temporal or spatial certainty occurs several times in *Bleeding Edge*. Characters are forced to occupy both the digital and physical space on such a regular basis that there ceases to be a set of defined boundaries between these two locales. This is made all the more confusing by the existence of a digital environment called DeepArcher. DeepArcher is a virtual space in which users can access and navigate the Deep Web through the use of 3-D models. It allows the user to expand their occupancy of the labyrinthine cyberspace beyond the access that they have on the surface web. The result is a new environment in which large groups of people can construct their own desired interpretations of physical

reality within a virtual setting. This, in turn, leads to a plurality of truths and an ambiguity with regards to what can even be considered a true reality in the first place.

In order to inhabit this digital world, individuals are required to create digital doubles of themselves in the form of avatars which allow them to interact with the environment itself as well as others in it. Of course, the doubling that takes place between the individual and their avatar in the digital and physical environment naturally suggests an affinity with the Gothic genre. In their definition of doubling with regards to Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936), Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik note "the way in which we are invited to read its protagonists as aspects of each other" (84) calling Barnes's narrative "a strategy of doubling which emphasises the instability of the boundaries of the self" (84). Horner and Zlosnik's suggestion that a double emphasises unstable boundaries within an individual, is extrapolated in *Bleeding Edge* to include two separate social environments. The narrative itself follows Maxine Tarnow, a de-certified fraud investigator, as she investigates the activities of a tech billionaire named Gabriel Ice. During this investigation Maxine becomes entrenched in the digital culture that is emerging in New York around 2001. She spends more and more time online using the DeepArcher programme and, as a result, she enters into a dual subjectivity between the physical world and the digital one. However, these dual identities run contrary to those of Webb Traverse in *Against the Day*. Webb is able to divide his two subjectivities clearly within his own identity, whereas Maxine finds it increasingly difficult to differentiate between the two worlds she occupies, and they often blur into each other. As a result, the stability between her dual subjectivities and

the identity they are responsible for maintaining, is called into question on a constant basis. As the narrative goes on Maxine finds it more and more difficult to distinguish which environment she is occupying, and by extension, which form of subjectivity she is currently being interpellated in to, the digital or the physical. Throughout *Bleeding Edge*, Maxine not only confronts the insecurities that surround her own identity, but also the constant sense of uncertainty she feels towards the social environment in which she is supposed to construct this identity.

As a novel that takes place within these new digital landscapes of the twenty-first century, *Bleeding Edge* also engages with the cyber-Gothic subgenre. The cyber-Gothic can be defined in relation to cyberpunk literature and the works of writers like William Gibson, whose *Sprawl* trilogy (1984-1988) is, as Allan Llyod Smith asserts, "driven by a disturbing new integration, no longer neurosis or religious hysteria but instead a terrifying interspace where the imaginary and the 'real' change places" (10). The cyber-Gothic is focused not on the religious or social transgressions that occur in earlier Gothic works, but the loss of definition between the virtual or imaginary and the real. It showcases digital space's ability to create interactive manifestations of the things that were once only possible to imagine, and the fear that exists when it becomes impossible to differentiate between the real and imagined as a result. Several other cyberpunk works such as Bruce Sterling's *Schismatrix* (1985), Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* (1992), and Charles Stross's *The Atrocity Archives* (2004) can be read in conjunction with the cyber-Gothic genre. In each of these texts, the protagonist is confronted with certain Gothic elements that manifest themselves within a

technological space. The narratives are populated with digital ghosts; Frankenstein's monster-like individuals who combine the organic with the technological; and uncanny environments that are designed to unsettle the reader. The aim of the cyber-Gothic, like the earlier Gothic texts that have gone before it, is to reveal to the reader the potential dangers that exist when otherness is allowed to encroach into the dominant social order. However, whereas in the past the Gothic would have re-affirmed the social status quo by destroying the threat, cyber-Gothic narrative reveals the dangers that occur when these othered elements are accepted and assimilated into the societies that would once have rejected them.

Bleeding Edge incorporates these digital environments into its plot very early on. It demonstrates how cyberspace can be used to create new realities and reconstitute those that already exist within the physical world. During an early scene, Maxine walks into the bedroom of her two children, Otis and Ziggy, and finds them and their friend Fiona playing "a first-person shooter, with a generous range of weaponry in a cityscape that looks a lot like New York" (*BE* 33). Her initial response is to react in a motherly fashion, asking the kids "[w]hat have I been saying about violence?" (33). The children reply that they have "disabled the splatter options" (33) and, after a brief demonstration of this non-splatter option, declare that there is "[n]o blood, virtually nonviolent" (34). The children's justification for the video game is indicative of Matt Foley, Neil McRobert, and Aspasia Stephanou's argument that to "breach the limits of the acceptable is to simultaneously define them, and as those limits expand to encompass that which once contravened them, so are the limits of transgression

temporarily affirmed" (xi-xii). For Foley, McRobert, and Stephanou, transgression is measured on an expanding scale. When that which was once transgressive becomes socially acceptable, a new limit of transgression is also affirmed simultaneously. In this episode from *Bleeding Edge*, transgression is expanded to the point where the violence of the game is acceptable because no blood is physically spilled. Not only does this game allow the player to indulge their more violent tendencies, but also to do so in a way that suits the user's specific requirements. The game's setting within a cityscape that is based upon New York suggests that this video game allows the player to indulge the taboo aspects of their personality, within a recognisable environment, but without the potential punishment for transgression that this action would entail in the physical world.

With that said, it is quickly revealed to Maxine that the apparent freedoms that the kids are allowed to indulge are actually being heavily policed and controlled by the creator of the game itself. After asking Fiona's mother, Vyrva McElmo, whether she approves of the children playing these games, she replies "it's bloodless, like Lucas didn't even write in a splatter option? They think they're disabling it, but it's not even there?" (*BE* 35).[1] *Bleeding Edge*'s presentation of the children's relationship with the game is analogous with Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall's reading of Gothic literature.

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[1] The Lucas that Vyrva refers to is the business partner of her husband, Justin McElmo. Justin and Lucas have "a little start-up that somehow managed to glide through the dotcom disaster" (*BE* 4). They are also responsible for creating the DeepArcher programme.

They state that whilst "Gothic Criticism wishes such novels to be excitingly subversive or, failing that, to be scandalously reactionary, the sad truth is that they are tamely humanitarian" (285). Baldick and Mighall go on to stress that the genre encourages "respect for women's property rights, and they imply that rape, arbitrary imprisonment, and torture are, on the whole, a bad thing" (285). As Baldick and Mighall recognise, whilst the Gothic often presents acts of transgression, it makes sure to condemn those who succumb to them. The villain of the text is always defeated, and the conventional order is restored by the heroine. Whilst the genre may appear to encourage the indulgence of taboo actions, in reality, it is careful to ensure that these actions occur in a space that allows for a maintenance of the conventional ideals of the dominant social systems. Just as the Gothic novel offers the promise of transgression from the social order before restoring this order by the end of its narrative, the game the children are playing also offers them an illusion of transgression that does not truly exist. It suggests that even in these new spaces, in 2001 terms anyway, the individual is given the illusion of freedom and choice without actually having these options available to them in the first place. Whilst the children may think they can set the parameters by which they experience the game, in reality, this decision has already been pre-determined for them.

The children's experience is also strikingly similar to Althusser's explanation of ideology. They have an imagined sense of freedom to decide the means by which they engage with the video game, but in reality, this engagement has already been determined by forces beyond their knowledge. In her reading of Althusser in a twenty-

first-century context, Caren Irr notes that the "drama of interpellation narrates an involuntary and reactive formation of a subject in response to institutional authority" (33) going on to add that this:

> dramatization has inspired some important work. In the 1980s and 1990s, it played a pivotal role in debates in cinema and media studies, gender theory, accounts of citizenship, critical race studies, and narratology. Often these analyses stressed the means by which a particular apparatus contains a presumably mobile individual (the polymorphous infant, the on-screen female body), restricting its movement and diminishing its multiplicities through internalized controls — essentially establishing a system in which the subject performs the system's work without coercion by policing itself (33)

In Irr's argument, the subject becomes self-policing in their adherence to the ideologies of the dominant systems of power. When presented with, for example, an image of a female body on a screen, the subject will already have in mind some idea of how they are supposed to react to this image based upon the ideology to which they are a subject. Simply by reacting to the image based on these ideals, the subject is automatically interpellating themselves back into the dominant structures of ideology. By simply having this reaction, the subject ensures that they remain ideologically interpellated without the need for other subjects to be surrounding them. They, under the influence of the ideology, involuntarily recognises the acceptable response to the image they are presented with and acts accordingly without the need for any outside prompt or coercion to do so. Therefore, the subject is given the illusion that they are free to relate to a stimulus in a specific way but, in reality, this reaction has always-already been cultivated by the ideals of the dominant systems of power.

Bleeding Edge places this self-policing within the early twenty-first-century context of the video game. The children are enacting a kind of self-policing through their belief that they have turned off the splatter option, even though it never existed in the first place. Furthermore, they make clear there are "[n]o homeless people on the target list" (*BE* 34) adding that "kids, babies, dogs, old people–never. We're out after yup, basically" (34). The game dictates to the children who is and is not a target. A larger force is influencing and shaping the level of misbehaviour that the children are allowed to exercise by continuing to limit who they can attack and the level of violence that will result from this attack. The video game appears to give the player more agency to explore the taboos of society than reading a novel, but actually just reinforces the ideals of the systems in which it was created. Lucas has a dislike for yuppies and so they are on the killing list. In fact, it becomes arguably a more effective means of systemic reinforcement than the Gothic novel. Not only does the player experience the narrative, but they also have an active role in shaping it to some extent. It is the player who decides who the character will engage with and how this engagement will take place. However, because the game itself is a reinforcement of the ideals of a larger system of power, all the game really does is offer several different ways for the player to reinforce these ideals within themselves. Like the images on the screen in Irr's example, the video game allows the children to interpellate themselves as subjects to Lucas's ideals, without Lucas actually having to take an active role in this interpellation. The children are given the illusion of freedom whilst actually subjecting themselves more firmly to the ideological structures that Lucas wishes to present to them.

One of the few spaces that *Bleeding Edge* suggests has the potential to offer an individual a true sense of freedom is the Deep Web. The Deep Web is used to describe areas of the internet that have not been indexed by, and therefore cannot be accessed by, standard search engines such as Google. This is in contrast to the surface Web, which is what is accessible through these search engines. As Gemma Davies points out "the IP addresses of the servers that run these sites [on the Deep Web] remain hidden so that the authorities cannot easily identify who is using them, even if they manage to identify an illegal website and place it under surveillance" (408). Davies notes the entities that enforce the powers of the dominant social systems are relatively powerless within the Deep Web. They cannot trace the individuals responsible for the transgressions that take place within this space, and thus those individuals go unpunished. The lack of systemic authority that can be enforced within this space creates an ideal setting for the Gothic genre. The digital landscape is free from the control and influence of the larger systems of power and therefore transgression can finally be fully realised. Whereas the Gothic space allows for the exploration of taboos within a restorative social framework, in this new digital Gothic space, at least at the time of the novel's setting, the influence of these authoritative entities is removed. As a result, for better or worse, the Deep Web allows for a counter-cultural experience that the Gothic novel often only pretends to offer to the reader.

Bleeding Edge's depiction of this new technology's potential to escape the authority of the dominant systems of power is also indicative of the techno-Gothic concerns in relation to otherness. The techno-Gothic invokes the Gothic tropes of otherness found

in earlier texts, such as doubles, spectres, and monstrous figures, but transplants and reconstitutes them into the technologically advanced settings of the present and near-future. These texts are still concerned with the threat that otherness poses to society, but often this other is no longer a product of supernatural or fantastical elements that exist outside of scientific explanation. Instead, these terrors are often the results of science itself. In his reading of techno-Gothic texts, Justin D. Edwards points out that "[i]f Gothic is the dark side of Enlightenment rationalism, then it can also digress from the modern technological course of an imagined sense of progress" (1). Edwards notes that this new form of technologically focused Gothic centres on the fear that technology will digress from its original purpose and become a threat, rather than an assistant, to humanity. If technology is to be of use to humanity, Edwards argues that it "must remain passive and conquered for us to rule" (2). Whilst the technology remains in passive service to the dominant systems of power, it is a useful tool for reinforcing the social status quo, as demonstrated by the game that Otis and Ziggy play in *Bleeding Edge*. However, if this technology begins to usurp the authority that these systems have over it, it becomes just as threatening as the supernatural terrors that populate earlier examples of Gothic writing.

Whilst human beings maintain a control over technology, it can be harnessed to improve their own lives. However, as Justin D. Edwards also points out:

> technology usurps and empowers simultaneously. It might empower through the relief of suffering or increased quality of life. Yet it also usurps authority at precisely the moment of empowerment, and this paradoxical effect means that it challenges boundaries, crosses borders and confounds categories (3).

Edwards recognises that technology's ability to improve lives is the very thing that simultaneously instils it with terrifying potential. There is always a threat that technology will usurp the authority of the culture in which it was created. Examples of this exist in techno-Gothic texts such as Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982). In the film, replicants, cyborgs created for work on other planets, are used to complete tasks deemed too dangerous for human beings. However, this technology has become so developed that replicants are able to mimic and infiltrate society in a way that threatens the defined order of this culture. The replicants in *Blade Runner* exist in opposition to the wider society, by virtue of the fact that they are machines. They represent a technological example of Freud's definition of the double in which "the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is" (210). Within the narrative of the film, the protagonist Rick Deckard finds himself questioning the identities of those around him. He is no longer able to differentiate clear lines between the technologically manufactured replicants and human beings. In fact, this inability to differentiate between human and machine has led to debates as to whether Deckard himself is a replicant.[2] Whereas in the Gothic texts of the past, the double was presented as an irrational creature of supernatural origins, in

[2] Debate around this topic is so fierce that around the release of the film's sequel *Blade Runner 2049* in 2017, thirty-five years after the original film, several well-established magazines including *Esquire* ran articles which considered this question. See Miller, "Will *Blade Runner 2049* Solve the Most Heated Debate in Sci-Fi?"

contemporary Gothic plots, the mechanised and technological representations of otherness are now portrayed as the greatest threat to society.

In terms of *Bleeding Edge's* engagement with the techno-Gothic genre, the narrative's technology's challenge to conventional boundaries emerges from the characters' engagement with the virtual reality space. The Deep Web appears to be a place where characters can engage the Mr Hyde-like aspects of their personality, without facing the ideologically sanctioned justice that befalls Dr Jekyll for indulging these transgressions. In her article on the cyber-Gothic[3] , Isabella van Elferen argues that "cyberspace in the Gothic space *par excellence*" ("Dances with Spectres" 102). She goes on to posit that cyberspace allows the user to "experiment with binaries such as body/disembodiment, past/present, reality/fantasy etc- binaries that are all traditional topoi in Gothic hauntology" ("Dances with Spectres" 103). [4] Van Elferen's recognition of cyberspace as a gothic environment demonstrates the permeation of technology and virtual reality within the Gothic mode. Throughout these texts, characters find themselves being more and more drawn into the virtual space. Cyberspace becomes just as significant a part of life for the users as the physical world. For the majority of

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[3] I would argue that cyber-Gothic is a genre within the techno-Gothic. The cyber-Gothic places the concerns of the techno-Gothic within the specific geography of cyberspace and the technology of virtual reality.

[4] Hauntology is a term coined by Jacques Derrida to suggest that the present is haunted by the metaphorical ghosts of a lost future. In terms of the Gothic, this lost future would indicate a world in which the irrational or other can exist within the dominant social framework. The Gothic text appears to mourn the loss of these irrational elements within a post-Enlightenment society. For a more in-depth explanation of the term, see Fisher 16-24.

these users, the binary oppositions between real and virtual cease to exist. It becomes a manifestation of the experimentation that van Elferen states is central to the cyber-Gothic genre. Earlier Gothic novels such as *Jekyll and Hyde* blur the binaries between good and evil, conformist and transgressor, through the manifestation of these binaries within a single identity. However, in the Cyber-Gothic, cyberspace challenges binaries on a far more physical level. The individual's identity within the virtual world is just as significant as that in the physical space. Rather than focusing on binaries between humanity and the machines who mimic it in order to force a questioning of the self within its characters, the Cyber-Gothic focuses on individuals who use technology as a means to achieve a more fully-realised version of cohesive identity.

The doubling of the number of spaces in which individuals can exist within a social setting, naturally leads to a doubling of the ideologies which constitute individuals as subjects within these environments. In Pynchon's previous works, the doubling of ideologies takes place within the same geographical space, whether that be the Counterforce and the dominant systems in *Gravity's Rainbow*; the Native American and colonial ideologies in *Mason & Dixon*; the capitalist or anarchist ideologies of *Against the Day*; or the opposing postal systems in *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966).[5] However, in *Bleeding Edge* this doubling takes place not only across separate ideologies, but also separate modes of existence. The cyberspace environment is representative of an

[5] A closer examination of the relationship between *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Bleeding Edge* can be found later in this section.

entirely new geography that a user must access in order to engage with the ideologies that exist there. As I have already indicated, the majority of Maxine's engagement with this virtual space occurs within the DeepArcher Programme. Like the hidden doors and rooms often associated with the Gothic castle, DeepArcher opens up the spaces that would otherwise be concealed to the protagonist within this digital environment. Joseph Darlington describes DeepArcher as a space in which "Pynchon posits the existence of an Internet 'still pure'—free from post 9/11 government surveillance and corporate data harvesting, and, even worse, the plebeian late adopters" (248). In Darlington's description, DeepArcher serves as a space to indulge one's own transgressive tendencies without having to suffer the consequences of the physical world, in much the same way that Maxine's children believe video games allow them to do the same thing. No longer are those who consider themselves other forced to operate within the confines of the oppressive ideological environment of the past, in *Bleeding Edge* they are given an environment of their own to enact a resistance to the social norms.

With that said, from the outset there is a suggestion that the Deep Web is already approaching a point where it will become a tool for the dominant systems of power. The early adopters of the Deep Web feel threatened by the encroachment of large corporations into this space, just as the Native Americans in *Mason & Dixon* fear the expansion of the colonial societies. However, the Native Americans in *Mason & Dixon* already have their own, separately established, systems of ideology and subjection, whereas, like anarchism in *Against the Day*, the Deep Web is a product of individuals

who are already subject to the dominant systems of power. When Maxine asks Eric Outfield, a computer hacker she befriends, about advertising in the Deep Web, he replies "[r]ight now it's weapons, drugs, sex, Knicks tickets" (*BE* 241) but she is assured that "the colonizers are coming. The suits and tenderfeet" (241). In fact, when Maxine asks about adverts on the Deep Web, Eric characterises himself as being part of the "Deep Web advertising wave of the future" (*BE* 241). The significance of advertising as a tool of the dominant systems of power has already been noted from an Althusserean standpoint by Ralph Clare in his framing of the corporation ISA. Althusser himself also notes the significance of the "press, radio and television" (17), all of which serve as advertising spaces, within the communications ISA in his original list of Ideological State Apparatuses. In terms of my own reading of *Bleeding Edge*, Eric Outfield's belief that he is part of the new wave of digital advertising suggests that, in the early twenty-first century of the novel, the communications ISA has also penetrated the digital space. Not only will the "suits and tenderfeet" (241) of the corporation ISA soon arrive to colonise the Deep Web with as a visual presence, but the existence of the communications ISA within this space suggests that the dominant systems of power are already able to exert an ideological influence. In the Althusserean sense, despite positioning himself in opposition to the corporate interests that he fears will ruin his experience of the Deep Web, by engaging with the same ISAs, Eric is just as much a subject to the ideological apparatuses of the dominant systems of power as they are.

In spite, or perhaps as a result, of Eric Outfield and other users' failure to acknowledge the pre-existing influence that the dominant systems of power exert over

this space, DeepArcher is imagined by its creators, Justin McElmo and his business partner Lucas, as being a "virtual sanctuary to escape from the many varieties of real-world discomfort. A grand-scale motel for the afflicted, a destination reachable by virtual midnight express from anyplace with a keyboard" (*BE* 74). Justin and Lucas's wish is that DeepArcher can be a kind space in which users can escape into a fantasy environment free from the realities of "real life." Its description as a sanctuary for its users echoes Mary Ellen Snodgrass's reading of the escapism found in Gothic literature which "lightens the cares and trials of fictional characters, authors and readers" (104). Snodgrass goes on to refer to the beliefs of writers such as H.P. Lovecraft, Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Conner, and Edith Wharton, all of whom "valued Gothic fiction as an emotional release from ill health" (104). The emotional release that Snodgrass believes Gothic writers thought their works could provide, is shared by the characters who create DeepArcher in Pynchon's novel. Justin and Lucas hope that the programme can provide some reprieve from the fears and stresses that living in the real-world entails for its users. DeepArcher enacts a reconstitution of the Gothic landscape in which the user can allow their own imagination to thrive and be unrestricted by the limits of the physical world. It becomes its own physical manifestation, in the sense that it is physically visible, of the psychological release that previous writers viewed as a key purpose of the Gothic novel in the past.

Of course, a significant difference in terms of how this process of escapism is constructed is the self-leading nature of the digital form. Rather than presenting a specific narrative that the reader is forced to follow by the author, there is no set way

in which to use DeepArcher. Users are encouraged to get "constructively lost" (*BE* 76) within this environment. Upon entering, Maxine finds herself "wandering around clicking on everything, faces, litter on the floor, labels on bottles behind the bar, after a while interested not so much in where she might get to than the texture of the search itself" (76). Maxine is not being constrained by the narrative restrictions that come with reading a novel. Instead her experience is led by her own investigation of this setting. DeepArcher becomes not only a parallel to, but acts as a continuation of, the game that her own children were playing earlier on in the novel. Whilst the children were given a certain active role to play within the game, they were still set a specific narrative task to complete through their actions. In DeepArcher, however, this narrative guidance is completely removed. The novel presents a digital environment where the user is able to dictate how they wish to engage with the space, even if that does not lead to any sort of narrative progress within the workings of the programme. It was once the case that the writer or creator was responsible for shaping the exact parameters of the escapism that the Gothic novel provided. The reader was forced to experience the environment second-hand through a constructed character. However, the DeepArcher programme in *Bleeding Edge* removes this second-hand element from the experience and encourages the user to personally engage with the environment in a way that suits their own wishes and desires.

It is a direct result of this user-influenced and constructed aspect of the programme that DeepArcher also fits the description of a "heterotopia." Heterotopia is a term that was first coined by Michel Foucault to describe "a kind of effectively enacted utopia in

which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (24). One of the defining principles of these heterotopic places is that they are "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place, several spaces that are themselves incompatible" (Foucault 25). Foucault goes on to cite the theatre which presents on "the rectangle of the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are foreign to one another" (25). Whilst existing within a technological environment, DeepArcher itself is also a single space in which several contrasting spaces can be presented simultaneously. In fact, the initial idea for DeepArcher is described as being an amalgamation of "a California that had never existed, safe, sunny all the time,[6] where in fact the sun never set unless somebody wanted to see a romantic sunset" (*BE* 74, my footnote) and "someplace, you could say, a little darker, where it rains a lot and great silences sweep like wind, holding inside them forces of destruction" (74). DeepArcher is a place in which it can be both "sunny all of the time" and raining a lot; a space where the individual can feel both safe and sense the "forces of destruction." However, as the user influence become more pronounced, even these initial aims are usurped by the wishes of the larger collective. The initial binaries that are wedded together through Lucas and Justin's separate visions become just one aspect of the DeepArcher space. The merging of all of these contrasting ideas indicates that, within the text, DeepArcher represents a space where

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[6] Pynchon himself attempted to imagine this mythical California in his previous novel *Inherent Vice* (2009).

the influence of every member of the culture is able to make some contribution to creating this heterotopic landscape.

Through this engagement with principles of a digital heterotopia, the novel starts to utilise aspects of what Isabella van Elferen has termed "Cloud Gothic." She goes on to describe this "Cloud Gothic" as being set within "a technologically created heterotopia" ("Techno-Gothics" 144) where the "artificial ontology of these realities becomes progressively undetectable for narrative personae and audience alike" ("Techno-Gothics" 144). The digital heterotopias within these Cloud Gothics appear less and less artificial as the narrative itself progresses. This inability to differentiate between the real and virtual is central to the Digital Gothic mode as well. In his analysis of the genre, David Langdon indicates that in:

> the digital form, the gothic mode is free to operate not only at a textual level, but on a behavioural level. It is therefore able to transgress the boundaries of the text and appear to take effect in reality—thus creating a heightened sense of the fantastic as a slippage occurs between the virtual and the real (982).

Langdon's definition of the digital Gothic's appearance in a virtual space, as well as van Elferen's Cloud Gothic, focuses on the concerns and fears that the user experiences through their inability to differentiate between the real and the digital. Not only do these genres of Gothic invoke the user's imagination to cause a sense of fear, but they also force the user to engage on a physical level with these terrifying manifestations. In Gothic novels the reader can separate themselves from the events through the medium of text because the narrative is re-counted as somebody else's experiences. However, the digital Gothic is a far more terrifying proposition because the experiences become far more tailored to the users and, as a result, they personally become the protagonist

around which events take place. The user struggles to differentiate between the fantastic in the virtual and physical space because engaging with both of these environments requires active participation from the individual. Whereas once the boundaries between fantasy and reality could easily be delineated by their appearance in the imagined and physical world respectively, the visual nature of the digital environment removes these clear-cut boundaries between the real and imagined Gothic occurrences that appear in this space.

The actual means by which users are able to engage with DeepArcher in the first place, is in the use of a digital avatar. As Lucas explains to Maxine, an avatar is "a 3-D image you use to represent yourself" (*BE* 69) in virtual reality. Maxine also points out that "in the Hindu religion avatar means an incarnation. So I keep wondering–when you pass from this side of the screen over into virtual reality, is that like dying and being reincarnated, see what I'm saying?" (70). It is through these avatars that *Bleeding Edge* modifies what it means to have a double. In his definition of the trope in relation Freud's definition of doubling, Xavier Mendik defines the double as "a literal duplicate of the individual, or a separate character who shares all of the subject's attributes" (127). In Mendik's definition of the trope the double is still a separate character. Even if they are just seen as a duplication of someone else, there is still some distinction between the double and the original, whether that be psychological or physical. However, in *Bleeding Edge*, the avatar does not have a psychological divide from the original. Maxine creates her avatar on her own terms and occupies it as vehicle for her thoughts within the virtual environment. This results in the individual being able to

maintain a solid sense of subjectivity through their double, instead of losing any sense of self. Rather than being unaware of the double's motives, the original is now personally responsible for instilling motives into the double themselves. The digital double becomes not a division of the self, but an extension of the individual's identity within the cyber-landscape.

Several critics have noted the freedoms that these self-composed doubles allow the user within the digital space. In her reading of the individual's engagement with the digital world, Lynn Hershman Leeson indicates that "[p]lugging into cyberspace requires the creation of a personal mask" (85). She goes on to claim that "[m]asks camouflage the body and in doing so liberate and give voice to virtual selves" (85). In essence, the masks that the user presents in cyberspace allow them to freely engage with this environment. These digital masks occupy a similar role to the double in earlier Gothic texts. They are manifested out of the individual's wish to satisfy their, often concealed, desires. In fact, Hershman Leeson goes a step further, arguing that by creating these virtual representations of self, "you also define your audience, space and territory" (85). Rather than producing a double that exists outside of certain defined social constructs, the digital doubling that these masks facilitate also become the source of a new social construct as well. The computer-mediated identity allows the individual not only to produce their own sense of self, devoid of age or gender limitations or insecurities, but a new space in which to explore these new modes of being. As result, the double that is manifested through these digital masks, the avatar in *Bleeding Edge* being an example, is not a threat to the individual's own sense of self,

but a more authentic presentation of this self within the virtual space. Not only does this form of doubling allow the user to dictate the actions and psychologies of their doubles, but it also offers the opportunity to define the space in which this double appears and with whom the individual wishes to engage when occupying this doubled state.

A key example of a character using these digital avatars as an extension of self in *Bleeding Edge* is the previously mentioned Eric Outfield. Whilst speaking in the physical space, Eric is referred to by his given name, but as soon as they move into the digital environment, he is called "Promoman" (*BE* 240), his online username. When he is first introduced, Eric is wearing "cargo pants in a camo print whose colour scheme is intended for some combat zone very remote, if not off-planet" (222) and a t-shirt that reads " REAL GEEEKS USE COMMAND PROMPTS " (222). Later, the Promoman avatar is described as "an amiable geek in square-rim glasses wearing a pair of old-school sandwich boards that carry his name" (240). The novel describes Outfield's avatar in the same detail as it does the character in the real world. By mentioning that this character is amiable, he is given at least the semblance of personality. Promoman is still a double of Eric, but he also exists as a separate entity in a visual sense. Promoman is a visible representation of the form of doubling that Pynchon earlier utilises in his characterisation of Webb Traverse in *Against the Day*. In the earlier text, Webb's doubling occurs exclusively in an internal sense. He is both aligned with the capitalist system through his family man persona and acting against it in his anarchist guise, the Kieselguhr Kid. Whilst Webb occupies these separate personas in a

psychological sense, his personal appearance remains the same. Webb and The Kid are the same person both physically and psychologically. However, *Bleeding Edge* extends these principles into the visible world. Eric occupies one manifestation of his personality in the physical world and another in the digital space, both of which are signified through separate visible manifestations.

The plurality of identities that a single individual must occupy in the contemporary culture is indicative of Scott Bukatman's definition of what he calls "*terminal identity*" (9, italics in original). Bukatman goes on to define this terminal identity as "an unmistakably doubled articulation in which we find both the end of the subject and a new subjectivity constructed at the computer station or television screen" (9). Bukatman recognises that as society moves into the technological age, the physical subject is doubled by a digital identity within cyberspace. *Bleeding Edge* has already echoed this belief through Maxine's questioning whether "when you pass from this side of the screen over into virtual reality, is that like dying and being reincarnated" (*BE* 70). In order to thrive in the digital world, individuals are forced to engage with a new form of ideology, and as such must also construct a new subject with which to achieve this aim. The individual has now reached a point of dual subjectivity. *Bleeding Edge*'s use of the original and the avatar in its narrative articulates a literal example of this *terminal identity*. Eric is referred to by his given name until he enters into the digital landscape, at which point this is replaced by the name of his avatar. Promoman is just as significant a subject as Eric himself, the only difference is the environments in which

these subjects appear.[7] The novel goes a step further than *Against the Day*, in which two separate modes of subjectivity co-exist within a single identity. Instead, the opposite has occurred. In *Bleeding Edge*, if a character wishes to engage with DeepArcher, they are forced to produce two separate forms of identity, both of which have their own specific subjectivity and relationship to the ideologies of the space in which the exist.

These two separate forms of subjectivity are portrayed as being so independent from each other that, when one is destroyed, the other is still able to function within its own reality. Characters who have been killed in the physical world, appear alive and well in the digital landscape of DeepArcher. Despite, its creators claiming DeepArcher does not "Do Metaphysical" (*BE* 427), Maxine stumbles across the avatar of Lester Traipse whilst using the programme. This meeting is highly unusual and unexpected considering that, after being discovered stealing money from the novel's main antagonist, Gabriel Ice, Lester has been murdered in the real world over 200 pages earlier. However, instead of assuming that Lester's digital avatar is an "impersonator with an agenda, or a bot preprogrammed with dialogue for all occasions, she sees no harm in treating him like a departed soul" (*BE* 427). Maxine immediately treats this digital manifestation of Lester as a new form of ghost. Unlike Emily St. Aubert in *The*

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[7] This idea is also explored in the cyberpunk staple text *The Matrix* (1999) which was released around the time *Bleeding Edge* is set. Characters exist as subjects both in the real world of the film and also within the digital environment of "the Matrix."

Mysteries of Udolpho, Maxine displays not fear, but curiosity towards this occurrence. She asks Lester questions about his murder and death, to which Lester's avatar replies, "I'm not dead, I'm a refugee from life" (427). Lester's avatar refuses to acknowledge his death because the avatar itself still exists within the DeepArcher world. Despite his loss of subjectivity in the real world, the digital space allows Lester to continue to exist in another form. The people in the digital world cannot be considered as fully dead because their existence has not been entirely erased from cyberspace. As a result of this divided subjectivity, the individual must be fully erased from both the physical and digital space in order to be considered absolutely dead.[8]

A subject's ability to continue to exist and communicate outside of the physical space enacts a continuation of Tiina Käkelä's argument that "[t]he coexistence of the living and the dead in Pynchon 's fiction can also be seen to represent a critical stance toward the social exile of the dead in modern culture" ("Death and Afterlife" 268). Käkelä goes on to point out that "[i]n premodern societies the dead –the ancestors – had an important part in social and religious rituals. In modernity, the dead and the dying have ceased to matter socially, and are therefore consigned to hospitals, graveyards, and historical documents" (Death and Afterlife" 268). According to Käkelä,

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[8] The concepts that *Bleeding Edge* presents here have actually been attempted in the real world. A service called Eterni.me was started in 2014 at MIT. Although relatively dormant as of 2023, according to Davide Sisto, it aims to "generate a *living*, digital copy of subjective identity" (46) which is able to maintain "the functionality of all the qualities and abilities that characterized individual users during their lifetimes, even after death" (47).

Pynchon's novels are often focused on the way in which the dead are treated as absent and therefore consigned to irrelevance. In order to react against this, the texts themselves present individuals who can communicate with the world of the living in order to demonstrate the ways in which death does not necessarily mean that the subject is no longer contributing within society. However, in these previous works there is no space within the constructs of the dominant ideological systems in which the living and dead can communicate with each other. Whilst Pynchon's novels themselves do not treat those who communicate with the dead as lesser or fringe elements, the dominant culture usually does so. An obvious example being the section of *Mason & Dixon* discussed in chapter one, where Mason is unable to communicate with Rebekah's ghost once he returns to London from the Cape of Good Hope. What sets *Bleeding Edge* apart from these earlier novels is this communication between the living and the, apparently, dead is taking place within a space that is at least partially sanctioned by the dominating systems of power.

Of course, even those who are not deceased within the real world can use DeepArcher to recapture and double those aspects of their own lives which are lost in the physical space. During one sequence taking place in the DeepArcher space, Maxine comes across "a version of NYC as it was before 11 September 2001 […] reformatted now as the personal city of Zigotisopolis" (*BE* 428). This virtual city has been created by Maxine's two sons, Otis and Ziggy, as both a representation of New York and a new city in itself. The novel's inclusion of this specific locale within the DeepArcher programme is demonstrative of the extent to which this space has fully materialised into a

heterotopia. Zigotisopolis contains "[t]he Old Hayden Planetarium, the pre-Trump Commodore Hotel, upper Broadway cafeterias that have not existed for years" (428) as well as "arcades like Fascination, pinball machines so classic now that only overly compensated yups can afford them, and recording booths where half a dozen of you can jam inside" (429). The boys have created a pastiche of New York, that they are actually able to occupy through cyberspace. In fact, Zigotisopolis is a collection of architectural pastiches that have been combined to create an entirely new landscape. One that resembles New York city but is not actually the city itself. In other words, a double. DeepArcher has provided the ability for the creation of not only doubles of individuals, but of entire cities. New York City itself and Zigotisopolis share the aspects with each other that make them both recognisable to Maxine as representative of the same thing. Zigotisopolis is recognisably New York, and certain historical aspects of New York are recognisable as being a part of Zigotisopolis.

That is not to say that *Bleeding Edge* is entirely convinced by the prospect of these digital doubles as sources of positive expansion for the self and one's personal desires. Maxine's initial fear that these avatars represent a form of death for the individual indicates the larger scepticism that the text has towards the digital environment. This scepticism starts to become clearer even during Maxine's first exposure to the DeepArcher programme. She finds a directory of train schedules and "clicks on 'Midnight Cannonball'" (*BE* 76) at which point she is transported to a train platform where the "instant she steps on board […] the train accelerates insanely, zero to warp speed in a tenth of a second" (76). The novel here is subtly blending the actions of

digital interaction with physical movement. The passage begins with Maxine clicking on an object, very much maintaining a separation between the digital space and the physical world through the language of computer technology but ends with this distance fading away as Maxine "steps on board a train." There is no longer a language of separation being used to describe Maxine's actions within DeepArcher. Rather than stating that she motioned her avatar forward onto the train, Maxine herself is described as completing this action. The shifting between the forms of these two modes of interaction, passive and active, indicates that even after a short amount of time within this environment, it is becoming difficult to differentiate between the real and digital world. Whereas the heterotopia of the theatre, cited by Foucault in his original definition, maintains a divide between the viewer and the space itself, the digital landscape removes this point of mediation. It is now possible to not only recognise a heterotopic space within a larger environment, but actually construct a heterotopic space which becomes the larger environment itself.

This lack of mediation between the user and the heterotopic space has a clear effect on Maxine's uneasiness within DeepArcher. Even during her initial introduction to it, Maxine feels lost and confused. She notices that there is "no map" (*BE* 77) and goes on to realise that "[s]erendipities here are unlikely to be in the cards, only a feeling she recognizes from dreams, a sense of something not necessarily pleasant just about to happen" (77). The dream space is often a place of meeting between reality and fantasy, where it is difficult to tell the difference between the two. As a space in which the same feelings are evoked, the text is already hinting that Maxine is beginning to lose

her ability to differentiate between the physical and digital space. Maxine senses that something bad is about to happen, but that is all. These feelings of dread would normally be reserved for the Gothic heroine within an old crumbling castle, where there is a palpable sense of history and fantasy combining in the physical space. However, as this is the digital environment, Maxine's feelings of uncertainty are slightly more inexplicable. In reality, she is sat at a computer terminal within a modern, safe space. It is only the digital landscape that is threatening to her. This is despite the fact that she could log-off at any time and escape her fear immediately, something the Gothic heroine of the past could not have done. Maxine feels lost in the space, even though escape is literally a button press away. Although Maxine has not quite reached the point where she is fully unable to differentiate between the physical and digital space, the fact that she does not even consider the quick escape route she has, indicates that DeepArcher is already starting to transform into a space where fantastical slippages can occur for her as a user.

The slippages Maxine experiences between the physical and digital environment become more frequent the more she accesses DeepArcher. During one such episode, Maxine enters the programme with Eric Outfield, and they are described as "slowly descending from wee-hours Manhattan into teeming darkness, leaving the surface-Net crawlers busy overhead slithering link to link" (*BE* 240) into the Deep Web where "they can begin cruising among co-opted blocks of address space" (240). There is no longer even the pretence that Maxine is still using a mouse and keyboard to access this space. Instead, she and other users are described as "descending", "slithering" and "cruising"

through this digital landscape. In the earlier section, Maxine was clicking on icons and objects, now users are described as actively moving themselves around the space, rather than using an avatar. The novel's lack of definition between Maxine's physical and digital self is indicative of what Julie Clarke calls "the present milieu" (46), where human bodies are "carved up, fragmented and reassembled in seemingly less sinister ways […] through media interventions in which body images are digitally manipulated" (46). The digital media landscape allows for the body to be re-shaped and re-defined through virtual intervention. Clarke's recognition that human bodies can be fragmented and reassembled in this virtual space is echoed in Maxine's earlier suggestion that the avatar is a form of digital rebirth. However, in *Bleeding Edge*, the loss of defined boundaries between physical and virtual, suggests that not only has the physical body been reassembled in digital space, but so has the psychological self. Not only is Maxine able to use her avatar to present a virtual representation of her outward features onto a digital plane, but she has also reached a point where she can no longer differentiate between her physical actions in the real world and the actions of her avatar in cyberspace.

Maxine's prolonged exposure to this new digital plane not only affects her ability to perceive her own actions, but also bleeds into her conception of the physical world around her. After she enters the previously discussed Zigotisopolis, Maxine starts to notice that "[i]ncreasingly she's finding it harder to tell 'real' NYC from translations like Zigotisopolis. . . as if she keeps getting caught in a vortex taking her father each time into the virtual world" (*BE* 429). Maxine is starting to experience a reversal of her

previous interactions with the digital space. Previously, the novel only had her lose her ability to differentiate between action in a physical and virtual sense when she was inside DeepArcher. However, she is now starting to experience these occurrences in the physical world as well. *Bleeding Edge* adheres to van Elferen's principle that, in Cloud Gothic, the "artificial ontology of these realities becomes progressively undetectable for narrative personae and audience alike" ("Techno-Gothics" 144). The digital ontology is becoming just as real and influential on Maxine, as the physical space that she actually occupies. In terms of the double, it is becoming more and more difficult to establish what is the original and what is the copy. In texts like *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Blade Runner*, and Pynchon's own *Mason & Dixon*, there is always a separation between the two doubles. Even when presenting the double identity that exists within the single personality of Webb Traverse, *Against the Day* always makes clear which aspect of self is influencing Webb's actions most obviously throughout the narrative. However, at this point, the digital and physical are starting to blur into a single whole, rather than being two separate entities that stem from the same set of principles. In a text like Dostoyevsky's *The Double*, the focus is on a single individual losing their sense of self, whereas *Bleeding Edge* suggests that with the growing influence of the digital sphere it is not only the individual's grasp of themselves that is at risk, but their grasp over what constitutes their entire reality.

Maxine's relationship with DeepArcher at this point is indicative of what Brigitte Jordan describes as a "hybrid world" (181) where "the boundaries between what is physical (or actual) and what is digital (or electronic) begins to fade" (181). The

individual is no longer able to define the separation between the physical and virtual environment. Both are equally as real and equally as significant. These blurring incidents take place on several occasions during the course of the narrative cumulating to a point where Maxine feels that "there arises now a possibility that DeepArcher is about to overflow out into the perilous gulf between screen and face" (*BE* 429). The novel is no longer even hinting that these feelings of confusion are occurring on a subconscious level for Maxine. She expressly recognises the disruptive effect that DeepArcher is having on her own life. In an episode directly following this realisation, Maxine notices an aluminium can rolling "*on its edge*, an edge thin as a predawn dream, keeps trying to fall over but the airflow or something–unless it's some nerd at a keyboard" (430, italics in original). After another incident in which an acquaintance she assists earlier in the novel offers her an invisibility ring and promptly disappears after trying it on himself, Maxine finds "the day somehow blighted by this what-is-reality issue" (431). She is unable to be truly sure if the events she witnesses occur in the physical or digital world. Maxine is truly beginning to experience, and be unsettled by, the fading of boundaries between the digital and physical world that Jordan notes is a key aspect of hybrid society.

Arthur and Marilouise Kroker offer a similar approach to Brigitte Jordan in their argument that these new digitally hybridised realities entail the creation of a technological autobiography. They posit that "[u]nlike in previous eras in which we could maintain a safe distance from the question concerning technology with some authenticity, we all now have a *technological autobiography*" (11, italics in original).

The Krokers recognise the need "to find the words by which to make familiar to our senses the new home of digital technology within which we have staked our identities, personally and collectively" (12). The digital environment has become so ingrained within contemporary culture that it is no longer possible to exist isolated from technology. Instead, the Krokers assert that the individual is forced to consider themselves in terms of the natural and the technological within contemporary society. The fears that Eric Outfield displays in his warning that the dominant systems of power would eventually hijack the digital space have been fully realised. Not only have these systems exerted an influence on the virtual world, but they have also incorporated it as a tool of interpellation within their own ideological apparatuses. This was made all the more apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic, in which several ISAs utilised the digital space as a means of continued interpellation. For example, school lessons, university lectures, Church services, and cultural events such as theatre were provided over video communication platforms such as Zoom and Teams. In the years following *Bleeding Edge*'s setting aspects of the communications ISA, such as television programming and radio broadcasts, have also moved more visibly onto digital platforms. Whereas in the early twenty-first century of *Bleeding Edge*, a small group of users are shifting their subjectivities into the online space, in the contemporary world it is impossible to even function within society without some form of digital subjectivity.

Both Brigitte Jordan's definition of the hybrid world and the Krokers recognition of the necessity of a technological autobiography are somewhat matter of fact in their purpose. They all argue that this is just a part of how reality is shaped in the

contemporary space. However, Maxine's experience is closer to Freud's characterisation of the double. The two identities she is occupying, the physical and the digital, certainly possess "knowledge, feelings and experience in common with the other" (210). Although this cross-platform identity does align with Jordan's reading of hybrid worlds, Maxine also experiences the sense of fear that Freud recognises is a central facet of doubling. As these lapses and blurring between the physical and digital suggest, her double now poses a threat to Maxine's individual identity as she understands it. She is genuinely concerned by the lack of defined boundaries that exist between the physical and digital space. Furthermore, she refuses to fully embrace the technological autobiography that the Krokers suggest will make this state of being more familiar to her. Through Maxine's doubts about what is truly "real", *Bleeding Edge* approaches these hybrid worlds and technological autobiographies as something not to be accepted and embraced by the individual, but as a threat to the sense of self in the same vein as the double in earlier Gothic works. These hybrid worlds do not become the cause for celebration that a new or alternative system might be in *Mason & Dixon* or *Against the Day*, but a source of fear and uncertainty for characters like Maxine. Jordan's acceptance of these hybrid worlds as essential and the Krokers stressing of the need for technological autobiographies encourage the individual to assimilate with these new digital structures. *Bleeding Edge*, on the other hand, adheres far more closely to the Gothic conception of these hybrid worlds presented by Isabella van Elferen and David Langdon. Just as is the case in Cloud and Digital Gothic

narratives, *Bleeding Edge* demonstrates that there is something genuinely terrifying about the inability to differentiate between physical and virtual states of being.

Maxine's experience runs counter to the principles that Fred Botting argues for in his examination of monstrosity in twentieth-century horror. Botting argues that "[t]he future, plotted in the past as a Gothic story or scientific romance, collapses on the present as a common, thoroughly familiar condition. Monstrosity slips into the fabric of an everyday existence indifferent to horror" (*Limits of Horror* 158). He goes on to stipulate that this has occurred because "[p]osthumanity erases all human distinctions and differences, differences sustained precisely in relation to monstrosity" (*Limits of Horror* 158).[9] Botting evokes the principles of posthumanism to demonstrate that our lack of a concrete definition for humanity in contemporary culture also makes it far more difficult to define what is monstrous and what is not. The defined lines between cultural transgression and cultural conformity are erased within the contemporary space, so that they are no longer the defining features of ideology. To take the example of Frankenstein's monster, in Botting's reading of contemporary horror, it would be difficult to prove that the creature was not a human, as opposed to monstrous, because he possesses so many of the qualities that might traditionally be defined as

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[9] Whilst Botting's argument is certainly applicable to the digital space of *Bleeding Edge*, I find it difficult to fully endorse his ideas here. Recent works within the horror film genre such as *The Babadook* (2014), *The Evil Within* (2017) and *Possum* (2018) demonstrate that the genre may have adapted into new forms, but monsters and monstrosity still have the propensity to terrify the reader or, in these cases, the viewer.

human. Monstrosity becomes normalised as another means of existence within the posthuman cultural space, rather than the threat to the security of this culture that it would have been in earlier Gothic novels. What was once monstrous is now viewed as simply another means for the individual to express their subjectivity. Through this expansion of the limits of transgression, as well as horror, what was once monstrous in earlier Gothic texts has now been assimilated into the ideological structures of the contemporary systems of power and therefore no longer poses any threat to their authority. Whereas they would previously have appeared as a monstrous challenge to self-definition, these hybrid identities have been normalised in posthuman culture. By fearing the hybrid identities within the digital space, it is Maxine who appears to be transgressive, not the hybrid identities themselves.

Maxine's ability to occupy, and inability to differentiate, between two environments within an ideology engages with Botting's argument surrounding monstrosity in the twentieth century in spatial terms. In the past, as expressed in texts like *Mason & Dixon* or *Against the Day,* to occupy a geographic space outside the influence of a specific ideology would have been seen as a transgression of this ideology. In *Mason & Dixon* for example, there are geographically-defined ideological boundaries for the characters. The Native Americans set up their own geographic boundaries in order to preserve their own subjectivity and ideologies. However, in the contemporary society of *Bleeding Edge*, these boundaries no longer exist. In his work on the topic, Mark B.N. Hansen indicates that "virtual reality from its proto-origin" (4) has been characterised as wishing to become "the representationalist fantasy par excellence: namely, a desire

for complete convergence with natural perception" (4). Just as Botting believes that in posthuman culture monstrosity has reached a point where there is no longer a true point of transgression between human and monster, the virtual space has entered into a similar position with the physical world. As Brigitte Jordan has suggested, there is no longer a defined otherness between the virtual and the physical space because both environments have become acceptable within the ideology. It is no longer a terrifying prospect to have a double in the digital space because it has now been defined as an act of conformity within the ideological framework of contemporary culture.

As I have previously noted, Maxine feels ill-at-ease with the level of influence the programme seems to be having over her own life, especially in terms of the metaphysical breaches that occur within her own perception of reality. However, as DeepArcher starts to become a representative of the social order, the unease that Maxine feels towards the digital world places her in a position of ideological transgression. *Bleeding Edge* is enacting an ironic reconstitution of the Gothic, in which a seemingly othered space is deemed acceptable by the social norms and Maxine's resistance to and fear of it is not. Avril Horner characterises the Gothic heroine in the twentieth century as possessing "desires that challenge traditional roles; they also embody, quite literally, the unruly and even the abject" ("Women"). Horner's argument is tied to the idea that Gothic writing in the twentieth century challenges the passive, even tragic, Gothic heroine. She argues that more contemporary examples of the Gothic often cast the heroine as acting out her own transgressive fantasies. Maxine does to a certain extent fit into this categorisation. She displays a resistance to the

ideals of the dominant systems of power. However, rather than challenging the traditional divisions between the physical and digital space, she wishes to maintain them. Despite her conservative desires, she is still cast as an unruly heroine. Of course, as this is a Pynchon novel, Maxine's unruliness is a cause for celebration rather than condemnation within the text. In spite of *Bleeding Edge*'s approving presentation of Maxine's resistance to digital hybridity, in the Gothic, the fear of a space or character can only exist if it poses a threat to *the dominant systems of power*. On the other hand, if these spaces or characters threaten to upset the subject's sense of self, but are beneficial to the wider ideological structures, it is the subject who is considered the transgressor for wishing to maintain the previously accepted social norms, rather than subverting them.

Bleeding Edge addresses the dominant systems of power's approval of the new digital space from the outset of the novel. Near the beginning of the text, DeepArcher is described as "bleeding-edge technology" (*BE* 78) which has "[n]o proven use, high risk, something only early-adoption addicts feel comfortable with" (78). The programme's lack of a definitive use and its basis within the Deep Web are indicative of the type of taboo element that early Gothic texts would present as threatening and therefore to be erased. However, in Pynchon's novel, this type of "bleeding-edge technology" is characterised as "[t]he crazy shit VCs [venture capitalists] used to go for […] Back then 98, 99, some of the places they were putting their money? You'd have to be a lot weirder than DeepArcher to even get them to raise their eyebrows" (78). The admission that DeepArcher as a programme would not be weird enough to attract the

attention of private investors reflects Mark Coeckelbergh's claim that "in the 1990s, the Web itself becomes an extraordinary place full of magic and mystery" (144), a space that could "not only host gothic underworlds" (144) but also became, in its own right, "a mysterious and fascinating being, an entity itself that might develop consciousness or something sublime and something living" (144-145). *Bleeding Edge* also recognises the sublime potential of the early internet, but demonstrates how this potential is eroded by the dominant systems of power. Jason Siegel argues that, in *Bleeding Edge*, what really "determines the extent to which evolving computer technologies serve to oppress or liberate individuals are the hands that control those technologies" (5). The novel reveals that it is the larger systems of control within these digital spaces that regulate the level of freedom offered to the individual, in much the same way physical institutions do in Pynchon's previous works. As was the case with anarchism in *Against the* Day, bleeding-edge technology like DeepArcher becomes a tool with which the dominant system can experiment and harness the qualities that were once viewed as threatening to its integrity, in order to re-assert and broaden its authority over individual subjects who believe that they occupy oppositional forms of ideology through these co-opted frameworks.

Maxine's engagement with the alternative social landscape in *Bleeding Edge* acts as a kind of next step to the ideas that Pynchon first explored in *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966). Several critics have noted the similarities that exist between these two novels. Kostas Kaltsas notes that:

> [t]o an extent DeepArcher functions as the Tristero equivalent in *Bleeding Edge*. Unlike the Tristero, it is unquestionably real, and its origins and goals are not a

> mystery, but similarly to the Tristero it initially serves as an alternative and antagonistic to a commercialized, hypermonitored world, in this case, the wold of the internet (41).

Kaltsas recognises in both texts that there are systems that, at least initially, point towards alternative modes of existence outside of conventional society. The Tristero in *The Crying of Lot 49* is a, possibly real, underground mail service which makes deliveries through a system known as W.A.S.T.E., or *We Await Silent Tristero's Empire*. At one point in the novel, Oedipa notes that "[l]ast night, she might have wondered what undergrounds apart from the couple she knew of communicated by WASTE system. By sunrise she could legitimately ask what undergrounds didn't" (*L49* 94). Like Maxine in *Bleeding Edge*, Oedipa is presented with an alternative network that exists as a double of the socially accepted and approved mode of communication. *The Crying of Lot 49*, through its own use of doubling with regard to the postal system, works as the origin point for the larger scale application of the same motif in *Bleeding Edge*. Whereas *The Crying of Lot 49* presents one aspect of alternative communication within a larger ideological structure and society, *Bleeding Edge* presents potential alternatives to these entire structures themselves. Pynchon's earlier novel offers a parallel, but separate, system of alternative communication to that of the dominant systems of power. *Bleeding Edge* takes this idea a step further and presents an entirely parallel environment which directly engages with and affects the dominant systems of power themselves.

With that said, there are significant differences in the novels' presentations of doubled systems. Maxine, through DeepArcher, is able to prove that this alternative

society actually exists. She can, and does, access and engage with other users who make up this alternative community. Oedipa, on the other hand, cannot do the same for the Tristero. If the Tristero does exist, it represents a collective form of resistance to the dominant form of social order, but Oedipa is never able to find the evidence she seeks to prove that this is the case[10]. She finds herself wondering whether the "Trystero did exist, in its own right, or it was being presumed, perhaps fantasied by Oedipa" (*L49* 82). Despite her best efforts, all she has are clues that might lead to something that may or may not be ultimately useless. Perhaps Pierre-Yves Petillon puts it most usefully when he suggests that Oedipa is "a 'passenger,' and her nighttime journey leads her into the ghostly world of no-man's land, an in-between twilight zone" (137). Oedipa cannot see or engage with Tristero on a physical level and as a result has no proof that any form of alternative culture truly exists. She is forced to occupy this in-between space because there is nothing concrete that she can see to confirm that this countercultural system exists. For Maxine, the question concerns how this doubled social structure will impact her life, whereas Oedipa is not even able to discern whether this doubled society exists in the first place. *The Crying of Lot 49* is concerned with the potential existence of an alternative culture, whereas *Bleeding Edge* aims to

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[10] Brian McHale offers a similar reading of *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow* in his book *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987). He argues that the modernist novel is a work of the epistemological whereas the postmodern work is concerned with the ontological. McHale then claims that *The Crying of Lot 49* is a transitional text between these two modes, in that the ontological aspect of the novel may or may not exist, whereas *Gravity's Rainbow* is distinctly postmodern because the ontological occurrences in this text are not only visible, but essential.

demonstrate that, not only do these alternative cultures exist, but they can be absorbed by the dominant social system for its own ends.

As *Bleeding Edge* reaches its conclusion, the invasion of suits and tenderfeet that Eric Outfield fears will occur in the Deep Web has started to take place. Eric himself laments that the internet is "turning into nothin but portals to Web sites for what Management wants everyone addicted to, shopping, gaming, jerking off, streaming endless garbage–" (*BE* 432) and the companies in charge "are all screaming louder and louder about 'Internet freedom,' while they go on handing more and more of it over to the bad guys" (432). The notion that the digital world can offer a new sense of control to the individual with regard to their own identities has fully disappeared from the text. It is no longer a space in which those who wish to escape the conformity of the physical world can exist without fear of authoritarian intrusion, but an environment in which these systems of power can extend their control over the individual. The Deep Web of *Bleeding Edge* now resembles the commodified internet that that Rafael Rodríguez Prieto describes in his essay on the topic. Prieto asserts that the "[i]nternet has shown us its spying brawn, capacity to control, tendency to become a tool in the hands of those who actively deny the above" (298). For Prieto, the internet now provides the dominant systems of power with more tools to repress and control its subjects. Within contemporary society, the influence of the digital has overflowed into the physical environment and the influence that the dominant systems of power can exert over the digital landscape has been increased, just as Eric predicts will be the case in *Bleeding Edge*. Although the Deep Web is presented as a space of subjunctive potential for its

users, just as the newly discovered American space is becoming in *Mason & Dixon*, this subjunction has been severely reduced by the end of the novel. It may not have become the fully declarative environment that America does in *Mason & Dixon*, but the areas of subjunction that do remain in the Deep Web of *Bleeding Edge* are still heavily influenced and policed by the apparatuses and frameworks which ensure the continued subjection of all individuals to the dominant ideologies.

Even DeepArcher itself becomes co-opted and opened up to the larger population. Despite the beliefs of several of the novel's characters that even if you are the "poorest, no home, lowest of jailbirds" (*BE* 373) it will "always take you in, keep you safe" (373), DeepArcher is inevitably invaded by the bad guys that Eric refers to earlier in the novel. As Justin explains to Maxine, "for DeepArcher to be untraceable, we happen to need a high-quality supply of random numbers" (341). However, after 9/11 takes place within the narrative, Justin describes how the numbers "depart from randomness" (342) on the tenth of September, and "kept on that way through the 11th and a few days after" (342). During this time "DeepArcher's defenses began to disintegrate, everything was more visible, easier to access. It's possible some people may have found their way in then who shouldn't have" (342). Hanjo Berressem recognises this moment in the text as the point in which "the virtual America of DeepArcher turns from open-range to barbed-wired property, and thus from communal to private" ("Threat and Crisis" 169). Berressem's notion that DeepArcher has become a space that is restrictive rather than freeing demonstrates its shift from a potential space of transgression to one of conformity. The ability that those who

represent the dominant systems of power now have to access DeepArcher leads to the programme ultimately being unable to fulfil its original purpose as a sanctuary from reality. It becomes yet another example of a space or society in Pynchon's writing that is presented as having the potential to offer an alternative mode of existence or ideological framework, before ultimately being corrupted and transformed into an extension of the conformity that it once stood against.

DeepArcher's, and the wider Deep Web's, shift into conformity acts as an extension of the role that anarchism plays in my Althusserean reading of *Against the Day*. Whereas anarcho-syndicalism was used as a tool for a the trade union ISA in *Against the Day*, in a Althusserean reading of *Bleeding Edge*, DeepArcher is a space that can be co-opted by all of the dominant systems of power's ISAs. Whilst the digital landscape is initially presented as a potential source of greater subjective freedom in *Bleeding Edge*, the text also makes clear that it can and is used to reinforce the ideals of the dominant systems of power within the subjects who engage with its technologies. Upon entering into this new virtual reality, Maxine immediately feels threatened by the extended influence the digital space has on her own identity. In this sense, *Bleeding Edge* restores the fear of the Gothic double within its narrative. Maxine is presented with a doubled otherness, both in terms of her digital avatar and the aspects of the DeepArcher programme which resemble real world geographies. The influence that these doubled elements are able to exert over Maxine then causes her to question her grasp of reality. However, rather than representing a reinforced conformity to the dominant ideals of society, Maxine's sense of fear towards these hybrid spaces casts

her in the role of a transgressive, rather than conformist, character. The contemporary culture dictates that these digital doubles are necessary for life and, therefore, to reject them is to reject the larger ideological structures which approve of their existence. In *Bleeding Edge*, the double no longer represents the potential transgression from authority that it would in a Gothic narrative. It becomes a signifier for the greater level of authority the dominant systems of power have over the individual's life. Rather than reinforcing the subject's conformity to the governing ideals of society, in the digital landscapes of *Bleeding Edge*, to reject the double, is to reject the dominant ideological structures themselves.

In the final section of this chapter, I will look more closely at the central set of ideals which form the basis of the dominant social structures in the novel: neoliberalism. I examine the role neoliberalism plays in the subjectivity of characters like Maxine and explore how these characters' imagined relationships to their ideologies are undermined by the realities that are presented in *Bleeding Edge*. It will be the purpose of the following section to explore how neoliberalism is the prevailing ideological state, even for those who wish to resist it. In *Mason & Dixon* and *Against the Day* these ideologies were presented within specific geographical spaces, but the rise of the digital age means that, in the twenty-first-century setting of *Bleeding Edge*, neoliberalism is able to act on a global scale. In *Mason & Dixon* there are still undiscovered spaces in which alternative forms of ideology can exist because not all of the American landscape has been colonised. Even in *Against the Day*, when America has been fully colonised, Reef and Frank are able to enact minor transgressions against

the dominant ideological structures because to a certain extent they can isolate themselves from other subjects. Contrastingly, there is nowhere in world of *Bleeding Edge* that the neoliberal systems of power cannot observe or police their subjects. This makes even the notion of ideological transgression near impossible. Characters like Maxine, who still believes that they represent some resistance to neoliberalism, are presented as being just as guilty of neoliberal practices as those they condemn for enacting the practices of the dominant neoliberal ideologies in the text. As a result neoliberalism domination over all of the ideological space in *Bleeding Edge*, I want to argue that at least one of the characters who appears to be fully subjected to neoliberalism, Nicholas Windust, is presented as far more complex than the all-out villainy that Scarsdale Vibe encapsulates in *Against the Day*. It will be my contention that, whilst the neoliberal ideological frameworks of *Bleeding Edge* are presented as purely antagonistic and evil, those who are subject to them, including Maxine and Windust, are certainly not.

The Neoliberal Subject, Forms of Doubling, and Ideological Uncertainty in *Bleeding Edge*

The ideological framework of neoliberalism is the other defining factor within the narrative of *Bleeding Edge*. Whilst the novel traverses both digital and physical space, the influence of neoliberalism can be felt across both of these geographies. Like several other terms that are central to the argument of this thesis, such as postmodernism or Gothic, it is almost impossible to construct a definitive definition of neoliberalism but David Harvey offers a useful explanation for the term in his *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2007). Harvey claims that "Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that propose that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework" (2). He goes on to characterises these freedoms as "strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (2), indicating that, under a neoliberal power structure, "[t]he role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices" (2). In Harvey's definition of neoliberalism, it is the role of the state to ensure that the individual can maintain economic autonomy. This autonomy allows the neoliberal subjects to improve not only their own lives, but society collectively, through personal financial gains.

At first glance, David Harvey's definition of neoliberalism is incredibly similar to the ideas that serve as a framework for classical liberalism. Liberalism is another difficult-to-define mode of ideological thought that grew out of the ideas of Enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. In his second treatise of

Government, Locke argues that “every man has a property in his own person: this nobody has any right to but himself” (111). Locke goes on to state that “[w]hatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property” (111-112). Locke defines property as anything that an individual has produced or affected through their own labour. Later in his treatise Locke, when discussing the political or civil society, argues:

> Those who are united into one body, and have a common established law and judicature to appeal to, with authority to decide controversies between them, and punish offenders, are in civil society one with another: but those who have no such common appeal, I mean on earth, are still in the state of nature, each being, where there is no other, judge for himself, and executioner: which is, as I have before showed it, the perfect state of nature. (137)

Locke indicates then that it is the role of the state to act in the interests of all of the individuals that it represents in order to protect individual rights and property, just as a person who exists without a state would protect their own property and rights as they saw fit out of a natural urge towards self-preservation.

These concepts form the basis of the liberal ideas that appeared in the wake of Locke’s writing. In terms of economic liberalism, this developed into the laissez faire economic policies that were popularised by liberalist thinkers such as Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Smith writes that:

> every system which endeavours, either by extraordinary encouragements to draw towards a particular species of industry a greater share of the capital of the society that what would naturally go to it, or, by extraordinary restraints, force from a particular species of industry some share of capital which would otherwise be employed in it, is in reality subversive of the great purpose which it means to promote. (914)

For Smith, any system that places restraint on or shows favour to a particular industry will ultimately cause more harm to the whole economic system, including the industries it wishes to aid, than simply allowing the whole market to function without interference. In fact, Smith indicates his belief that the best economic system is one in which "[e]very man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way" (914) and that he should be free "to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man" (914). Under the liberal ideas that Smith posits, the government should not interfere with the workings of industry and allow the economy to function freely in the best interests of the individual industries that shape it. His ideas of free trade and markets that form the basis of classical liberalism are also used to underline Harvey's definition of neoliberalism.

However, although Smith's liberalism initially appears to be very much in keeping with the machinations of Harvey's definition of neoliberal ideals, there is a significant difference between neoliberalism and classical liberalism. This is something that Thomas Biebricher points out in his assertion that "neoliberals are no market fundamentalists; on the contrary, in a certain sense the market turns into a problem for them, because in light of liberalism's decline and crisis, simply watching the iron laws of economies unfolding automatically and autonomously is no longer a tenable position" (26). The liberal decline and crisis, to which Biebricher refers, is most visible in President Herbert Hoover's administration's attempts to unsuccessfully apply the laissez faire policies of liberal thought following the Wall Street Crash of 1929. In light

of the failure of these laissez faire ideas, “neoliberalism must be understood as a discourse in political economy that explicitly addresses the non-economic preconditions of functioning markets and the interactive effects between markets and their surroundings” (Biebricher 27). The clear failures of liberal ideals in the early twentieth century demonstrated the need for the state to take a more proactive approach to economic and market policies. Although neoliberals share the classical liberal belief that the state should not interfere with the markets themselves, they do not agree with the principles of total economic and political separation. In fact, neoliberals believe that these two areas should not be considered as separate at all. In neoliberal thought, the economic and political should be intrinsically linked in a way that facilitates the maximisation of market profits. Whilst liberals believed that political policy should not interact with the market at all, neoliberals instead argue that the market should form the basis of all political policy.

In principle then, neoliberalism’s ideological structures provide the framework for an individual to accumulate as much personal wealth and financial security as they desire. Throughout works such as Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) or Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) it is the responsibility of the subject to defend the dominant systems of power by destroying the transgressive outsider that threatens their ideological structures. The same can also be said, as I have argued, of Pynchon’s narratives. Characters such as Mason and Dixon are sent to America in order to further solidify the dominance of the Enlightenment associated ideological structures of colonialism in this space. They are employed by the Royal Society, a representative of Enlightenment

thought, to maintain ideological order. In contrast to these previous subject and ideology relationships, Rachel Greenwald Smith argues that neoliberal frameworks place "emphasis on the necessity of personal initiative" (2) along with a "pathologizing of structures of dependence, [which] calls upon subjects to see themselves as entrepreneurial actors in a competitive system" (2). The individual is expected to act in their own personal economic interests with the assistance of ideological systems that provide a framework for them to be successful. It is now the responsibility of the ideology to preserve the integrity of the individual and create an economic environment that allows for consistent prosperity. As David Harvey notes in his book, the state is responsible for setting up "those military, defence, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets" (2). Harvey's recognition that it is both the military and police who are partially responsible for acting by force to maintain the proper function of the market is indicative of the Repressive State Apparatus that Althusser argues, along with Ideological State Apparatuses, are essential for maintaining the dominant systems of power. In fact, Harvey's mentioning the legal structures also points towards the ISAs having an active role in maintaining the neoliberal subject's rights to personal property. In the Althusserean sense, neoliberals claim that whereas the Repressive State Apparatus and ISAs where once used as a means to ensure the subject continued existing in service to the dominant systems of power, in the neoliberal society these apparatuses are tasked with acting in service to the subject as a means of providing them with financial autonomy from the

dominant systems of power themselves. Althusser himself would probably argue that this is simply an extension of ideology's role in representing "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (36). Neoliberal subjects believe, through the apparatuses of ideology, that the ruling systems of power are working to provide them with greater financial autonomy. However, in reality, these systems are still only interested in maintaining their own dominant position.

Whilst Althusser makes no specific reference to the shortcomings of neoliberalism in his thesis, and these ideas were still being established when Althusser published his essay, more contemporary critics have been quick to point out the realities of these neoliberal policies which only really benefit a very small percentage of the population. In the words of Robert W. McChesney, neoliberalism "refers to the policies and processes whereby a relative handful of private interests are permitted to control as much as possible of social life in order to maximize a personal profit" (7). He also suggests that neoliberal policies "represent the immediate interests of extremely wealthy investors and less than one thousand large corporations" (7). According to McChesney, those who can truly benefit from neoliberalism are the ones who are rich and powerful enough to influence its application in the real world to begin with. McChesney's observations on neoliberalism come from his introduction to Noam Chomsky's *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order* (1999). In this work Chomsky himself asserts that "[f]or most of the US population, income has stagnated or declined for the last fifteen years [Chomsky published the book in nineteen ninety-nine], along with working conditions and job security" (28) whilst "the business press

cannot find adjectives exuberant enough to describe the 'dazzling' and 'stupendous' profit growth" (28) of large companies. In essence, whilst neoliberalism claims to offer economic benefit for all, the reality is that it only benefits a small cross-section of society. For Chomsky the stagnating wages of the larger US population represents the true nature of neoliberalism. It serves to increase the influence of those who already have the ability to manipulate its principles and systems in their own favour, whilst the rest of society continues to be exploited by these neoliberal ideologies in much the same way that Althusser would argue has always been the case.

In his recent book, *The Market Logics of Contemporary Fiction* (2019), Paul Crosthwaite's approach to neoliberalism is similar to those of Chomsky and McChesney, although his wording is slightly less aggressive. Crosthwaite defines neoliberalism in theoretical and historical terms before stipulating that there is also a concept of neoliberalism in which it can be considered:

> a set of practical processes whereby governments, regulators, central banks, international financial institutions, business leaders, and other elites exert their power in order to restructure global flows of capital, systems of welfare provision, corporations' organizational arrangements, the relations between public and private sectors of the economy, and, ultimately, the subjectivities and rationalities of ordinary citizens. (9)

Crosthwaite's definition of the neoliberal process is highly reflective of the means by which Althusser argues ideology is interpellated by and into subjects. Like Althusser's concept of ISAs, and ideology more generally, Crosthwaite indicates that the systems of neoliberal power are responsible for structuring the subjective beliefs in individuals. In his thesis, Althusser asserts that "[a]ll ideological State apparatuses, whatever they are,

contribute to the same result: the reproduction of the relations of production, i.e. of the capitalist relations of exploitation" (28). In his thesis, Althusser argues that capitalist systems of power, through ISAs, maintain their control by reinforcing the principles of ideology that facilitate the continued exploitation of the majority of subjects. Crosthwaite's argument places these same methodologies in a neoliberal context. The processes Crosthwaite claims take place, according to Althusser, occur within the ISAs of the neoliberal ideological structures. More specially, Crosthwaite's evocation of governments, international financial institutions, and business leaders indicates that these processes take place within the political and, as previously introduced and defined through a reading of Ralph Clare's arguments in *Fictions Inc.*, corporation ISAs.[1] The ISAs of neoliberal systems of power are, through the processes that Crosthwaite lists, able to affect the actions of the individuals who occupy their sphere of influence and ensure that they continue to exist as subjects who continue to support the goals of the neoliberal systems of power.

Sean Carswell has noted that these methods of exploitation are also presented in Pynchon's construction of neoliberalism. He claims that in *Bleeding Edge* "[t]he power of neoliberalism is the same as the power of myth. In both cases, attractive stories trump evidence that would otherwise negate a belief system" (*Occupy* 148-149). For Carswell, neoliberalism is far more interested in building its power over the subject

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[1] See pp. 200-204.

through a process of false narratives of success for all, whilst concealing the reality that it actually only benefits a select few. Carswell goes on to explain that one of neoliberalism's false claims is that "accumulation is so intrinsically valuable that it should take priority over all other concerns" (*Occupy* 149). Carswell's reading situates *Bleeding Edge* in conversation with the ideas that McChesney, Chomsky, and Crosthwaite express in their views of neoliberalism. The average person is not really free to accumulate a limitless number of commodities. However, the belief within these individuals that this is possible and should take precedence over everything else prevents the larger population from questioning the few individuals and groups who are able to freely accumulate on a massive scale. Rather than offering a greater freedom to the individual, neoliberalism is in reality the natural evolution of the ideas that Pynchon first explores through the character of Scarsdale Vibe in *Against the Day* (2006). As I have previously noted, in his condemnation of Tesla's wish to provide free electricity, Vibe exclaims that "[t]o put up money for research into a system of free power would be to throw it away, and violate-hell, betray-the essence of everything modern history is supposed to be" (*AD* 37). Through Vibe's outburst, *Against the Day* indicates that the principles that make up neoliberalism were already starting to take shape even in the early twentieth century. To not make a personal profit from a source that would otherwise benefit the entirety of society fundamentally undermines Vibe's ideology. In *Bleeding Edge*, this belief is not only maintained by a few of the economic and political elite, but has permeated the whole of society, and by extension strengthened the position that the rich and powerful already held in the first place.

The market's evolution into the defining ideological system acts as a conclusive realisation of the ideological shifts that were beginning in *Against the Day*. In this text, Scarsdale Vibe begins to view himself as a God-like figure in within the newly emerged capitalist systems of power. In his thesis, Althusser's asserts that "in mature capitalist social formations as a result of a violent political and ideological class struggle against the old dominant ideological State apparatus, [the dominant ISA] is the *educational ideological apparatus*" (26, italics in original), which usurped the Church. However, through my analysis of Vibe, I utilised Ralph Clare's argument that "corporations can be said to function as ISAs" (38) to indicate that not only was this the case but, in *Against the Day*, it was the corporation ISA that was in fact presented as being best-placed to become the dominant ISA within society. In a continuation of this argument about the role of the corporation ISA in an Althusserean reading of Pynchon, by the time of the early twenty-first-century society in which *Bleeding Edge* takes place, the corporation ISA's ascent to the defining ISA has come fully to fruition. In fact, Birsen Filip has even posited that during the Reagan-Thatcher era of the 1980s, which is largely seen as the beginning of the global shift towards neoliberalism, large corporations:

> were able to amass unprecedented freedom, power and influence over many aspects of society, which has allowed them to become leading actors in the political, social and economic lives of people, similar to the church and monarchies in the past (106).

Filip makes a direct link between the position of the corporation in contemporary society and the place of the church in the past. In doing so he affirms the idea that, in Althusseurian terms, the corporation ISA has become the dominant form of Ideological State Apparatus. Like the religious and education ISAs were once able to do in

Althusser's argument, the corporation ISA is responsible not only its own apparatus, but those of other ISAs, notably the political ISA. The corporation ISA has not only emerged as an ISA in its own right, as it was beginning to in *Against the Day*, but established itself as the dominant apparatus within neoliberal systems of power.

In my reading of *Bleeding Edge* alongside Althusser's thesis, the extent to which the corporation ISA, and its prioritisation of economic profit, has become the defining ideological apparatus of neoliberalism is initially presented through Maxine's close friendship with Reg Despard. Reg is a documentary film maker who was discovered by a professor at New York University (NYU) whilst using "a borrowed camcorder to tape first-run features off the screen" (*BE* 8) in cinemas. The professor was so impressed by Reg's particular style that he had Reg begin "showing his tapes to doctoral seminars" (9) which led to Reg "shooting his own pictures" (9). His current project is a movie about a "computer-security firm […] called hashslingrz" (10). Reg begins as an outsider, breaking the laws of society for his own profit, before being accepted into this society and profiting even more heavily for doing so. In Peter Knight's reading of earlier works of fiction such as Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit* (1955) and Richard Yate's *Revolutionary Road* (1961), he contends that these texts feature "men who feel their individuality and masculinity diminished by working for a faceless corporation that no longer values the independent spirit of a Rockefeller or Ford" (155). In these mid-century works, Knight asserts that the characters feel they have lost their individuality to a corporation ISA that dominates their lives. However, in *Bleeding Edge*, the neoliberal systems of power offer Reg an illusion of continued independence, even

though he is now working within the larger corporate confines of the film industry. Whilst the systems of power do not actually value the independent spirit that Reg displays in his illegal activities, they are able to use other subjects, such as the NYU professor, to convince Reg that they do. This allows the same corporate structures, and the corporation ISA itself, that threaten the characters in Wilson and Yate's novels, to continue to exploit people, but in a way that feels less of a challenge to their own individuality and more encouraging of the individual's own profit-making potential.

Reg occupies a dual state in which he is willing to take advantage of an opportunity to personally benefit from neoliberal systems but, as the novel quickly reveals, is critical of certain other individuals who wish to do the same thing. Reg's latest film about hashslingrz brings him into contact with the company's head Gabriel Ice. Ice is described as "[o]ne of the boy billionaires who walked away in one piece when the dotcom fever broke" (*BE* 10). The character's attitude towards Ice is made even more explicit when it is suggested that Ice has "a purpose on earth written in code none of us can read. Except maybe for 666, which tends to recur" (11). During his research for the film, Reg encounters some issues with the accounting of the company and asks Maxine to examine these financial irregularities with the warning "suppose this isn't embezzlement. Or not only. Suppose there's something else" (11). Although Reg is no longer bootlegging films from cinema screens, he still wishes to maintain some sense of the outsider status he once possessed. What Reg fails to recognise, or at least acknowledge, is that the thing that made him transgressive to begin with, stealing from large corporations, is also what Reg wants Maxine to investigate and potentially punish

Ice for doing in his own company. The difference being that Reg committed his crimes outside of the corporate structure itself, although not outside of its influence, whereas Ice's crimes can only be committed within this structure. If, as Massimo Pendenza and Vanessa Lamattina propose, under neoliberalism "the success of individuals depends solely on their ability to gather more information about the market, and so to act with competitive advantage" (106), then Ice is acting in the most successful way he can. He is exploiting information he has about a specific market to improve his personal position. However, for Reg this is a negative occurrence. He too is a competitor in the same system as Ice. Therefore, when Ice is able to succeed, Reg maligns this success because he too is a competitor who is trying to achieve their own sense of personal victory.

Of course, as is suggested through his role as head of an international tech company, the scale at which Ice is able to exploit these neoliberal systems far exceeds Reg's filming of movies in the back of a cinema. During a conversation with Driscoll Padgett, "a freelance Web-page designer" (*BE* 45), Maxine learns that hashslingrz have set up a "virtual corporation, totally bogus, sittin out there as bait for the script kiddies" (47) in order to "bust them and threaten legal action. Offer them a choice between pullin a single over on Rikers or an opportunity to take the next step to becoming a 'real hacker'" (47). Ice is able to take advantage of people who are in a weaker position than him in order to personally benefit his business. He deliberately entraps young hackers, essentially encouraging illegal activity, and then uses this as leverage in order to recruit them. Ice's ability to benefit through the threat of legal

action is a symptom of Wendy Brown's understanding of the "neoliberal rationality […] which displaces legal and political principals (especially liberal commitments to universal inclusion, equality, liberty, and the rule of law) with market criteria" (22). In Brown's understanding, the only principles that matter under neoliberalism are economic. In her book *Walled Streets, Waning Sovereignty* (2010), Brown goes on to argue that neoliberalism "recognizes no sovereign apart from entrepreneurial decision makers" (22) suggesting that these systems demote "the political sovereign to managerial status" (22). According to Brown, the political leader is no longer tasked with running the country they represent. Instead, they are simply there to ensure that the neoliberal economic systems can function successfully. In Ice's case, this means he can use morally and legally questionable methods to recruit those he wishes to exploit, and, because he is in a role of power greater than the state sovereign, continue to be celebrated and praised by other neoliberal actors for exploiting this position.

Brown further suggests that "key characteristics of sovereignty are migrating from the nation-state to the unrelieved domination of capital and God-sanctioned political violence", going on to assert that "[n]either capital nor God-sanctioned violence bows to another power; both are indifferent to and/or tacticalize domestic as well as international law; both spurn or supervene juridical norms" (22). Brown's observation that capital and religious violence have become the two most significant factors in the loss of sovereignty's power reverses the traditional understanding of ideology. As previously noted, Althusser points out that the Repressive and ideological State apparatuses, are just that: tools of the state. Although neoliberalism has not

meaningfully affected the way in which ideologies function and the methods by which they interpellate individuals as subjects, the systems of power that exploit these apparatuses have undergone a significant shift. In the earlier capitalist societies that Althusser explicitly refers to in his thesis, both God-sanctioned violence and economic capital would have been part of the religious and corporation ISAs respectively.[2] However, within the neoliberal framework, the state itself has become a tool of the market and religious violence, on a global scale, rather than being the controlling force with regards to the apparatuses of a particular society. Most significantly for my argument, the corporation no longer even continues to function as an ISA at all. In fact, as Brown points out, ISAs now function in service to them rather than the state itself. As a result, the systems of power that were once defined as those who had authority over a particular state, the ruling class as Althusser would put it, on a nation-by-nation basis, have now been usurped by a small handful of corporations on a global scale.

However, the waning influence of sovereign political groups still offers a threat to the majority of neoliberal subjects' economic positions. The systems of power are no longer tasked with making sure that all subjects are conforming to its ideals. Instead, they are in place to ensure that a select few individuals have the ability to benefit as much as possible from these ideological structures. As Birsen Filip argues, "[e]ven

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[2] As previously mentioned, Althusser indicates that although ISAs function predominantly through ideology, they also on occasion functions through repression, often manifested in an act of violence. See Althusser 19.

though corporations play an increasingly important role in terms of governing society, they are not concerned with issues pertaining to social responsibility, justice, equality, or the collective good" (106). For Filip, the neoliberal corporation has taken a defining role in society, but it has refused to take on the same responsibilities as the political state. As a result, the loss of a state sovereignty acts as a threat to the subject's ability to thrive within their own culture. They are in a weaker position legally and politically than they were when it was a state sovereign who was responsible for their well-being. This is what makes those who actually do benefit from neoliberal economic systems appear so villainous. Whilst the majority of people feel threatened in their own economic position, as a result of the competitive and apolitical nature of neoliberalism, those who benefit are seen as evil because they are the ones manipulating these ideological structures for their own gain. In these circumstances, larger neoliberal ideologies are secure, and the power that specific individuals can hold is ever increased, but those simply subjected to these ideologies are left with less and less personal security.

Bleeding Edge addresses the unstable position that subjects occupy under neoliberalism through characters such as Driscoll Padgette. Before revealing Ice's methods of recruitment, Driscoll explains to Maxine that she is "temping as a code-writer, for $30 an hour–she's fast and conscientious, and the word has gotten around, so she's more or less steadily in demand, though now and then there's a gap in the rent cycle" (*BE* 45). Driscoll does not work for a specific large company or institution and although managing to mostly support herself, there are still gaps in her income.

Despite the opportunity for greater financial security and wealth that is on offer to her, she even knows people who "took the deal" (47) and began working for Ice, Driscoll has not entered into the corporate structures that neoliberalism favours in its methods of ideological control. Consequently, she finds herself in a position of continuous economic uncertainty. Whilst characters like Maxine and Reg condemn the symbols and systems of neoliberalism, they still continue to function within the larger corporate systems of the novel. Reg works within the larger film industry and Maxine is a fraud investigator whose task it is to directly ensure that other subjects are functioning correctly within the ideological structures of neoliberal society. Driscoll, on the other hand, maintains a level of distance which, although not completely isolated from the corporations of the text, still places her in an unstable economic state. Although neoliberalism is supposedly a source of greater economic opportunity for all, it really only benefits those who truly engage with it. If an individual even begins to distance themselves marginally from these structures, they will find their competitive status weakened and thus their ability to function as a subject further limited by the neoliberal ideologies of society.

Other critics have also noted Maxine's engagement with neoliberal practices, despite her condemnation of others for doing the same thing. In their essay on neoliberalism in *Bleeding Edge*, Ivan Stacy and Arin Keeble have noted that "[o]ne of Maxine's defining characteristics is the way she is simultaneously critical of neoliberal politics while participating in neoliberal practices, often with relish" (325). She condemns Gabriel Ice and hashslingrz for using "[c]onsecutive invoice numbers. Hash

totals that don't add up. Credit card numbers failing their Luhn checks" (*BE* 42), all of which are signs of fraudulent activity. Yet, in spite of this, Maxine is also willing to offer "a few tricks of the trade" (17) to Joel Weiner, a real-estate obsessive who has a history of "committing serial co-op board membership, the beefs resulting over sums entrusted to him, typically, as co-op treasurer, plus [a] civil RICO indictment in Brooklyn" (17). She is willing to help Weiner because of the, as she puts it, "no-brainer of a choice between friendship and super-picky guideline adherence" (18). Maxine is shown to be willing to utilise the same basic means of competitive advantage that she condemns Ice for using in his own work. Furthermore, unlike the doubling that occurs when she enters the digital space, Maxine is not even concerned or particularly aware of this dual position that she inhabits throughout the text. She personally decides whether someone should be allowed to break the law or not, based on her relationship to that person. Through this characterisation of Maxine, *Bleeding Edge* indicates that in a neoliberal space the law and regulations come secondary to personal decision. Maxine chooses to overlook the laws that she is paid to uphold when it benefits a friend. Conversely, she will apply these guidelines and rules rigorously when they are applicable to a character like Ice, who she has decided is evil.

Maxine's contradictory attitude towards neoliberalism is not only reflected in her opinion of others but in the way she personally engages with its ideals as well. Upon being invited on a date, Maxine finds herself heading "straight for the closet and an understated yet tabloidworthy Dolce & Gabbana number she found at Filene's Basement for 70% off, being obliged in fact to separate it from the grasp of a Collegiate

mother" (*BE* 149). The fact that Maxine has bought the dress at "70% off" is indicative of her own use of competitive knowledge to take advantage of a specific economic situation. It is moments like this that have led Hanjo Berressem to point out that "it is somewhat disconcerting that there is an awful lot of happy shopping going on in *Bleeding Edge*" ("Economies" 448). Berressem's observation reinforces the idea that Maxine clearly functions in relation to the neoliberal social relations that govern her existence. She is excited at being allowed to show off an object she has accumulated and, as Berressem notes, enjoys accumulating more when the opportunity presents itself to her. From an Althusserean perspective, Maxine, like those around her, adheres to Belsey's characterisation of ideology in Althusser's writing as:

> both a real and an imaginary relation to the world—real in that it is the way that people really live their relationship to the social relations which govern their existence, but imaginary in that it discourages a full understanding of these conditions of existence and the ways in which people are socially constituted within them (48).

Maxine imagines that she acts in opposition to the dominant ideologies of neoliberalism in her disapproval of the actions of large businesses and their owners, as represented by Gabriel Ice. However, her real relation to the neoliberal society is one of conformity, in that she assists others who wish to exploit the morally and legally questionable aspects of this system, and takes pleasure in indulging these ideals in her own life when given the opportunity to do so.

As Catherine Belsey observes is the case for all ideological subjects, Maxine is unable to develop a full understanding of her conditions of existence and the ways in which she is socially constituted within them. She fails to recognise that her actions signal her

constitution as a neoliberal subject. This love of a cheap deal is especially pertinent when considered in light of a conversation that Maxine has at a party where she discovers that Gabriel Ice has been "[b]uying up all of the budget infrastructure he can find" (*BE* 156) which has become available as a result of "[d]otcoms that overbuilt their fiber networks, went broke doing it, their loss, Ice's gain" (156). Ice has spotted an opportunity to profit and has taken advantage of it, failing to consider those who have lost out in the process. Maxine has done this on a smaller scale with the dress. She relishes the opportunity to purchase an item at a low price and prevent others from doing so, but is critical of Ice for doing the same. Despite the fact that Dolce & Gabbana is just as large a business as hashslingrz, if not larger, because it provides her some level of personal satisfaction Maxine does not treat the fashion company with the level of distrust and scorn that she does Gabriel Ice's business. Although Maxine cannot cease to engage with the economic system altogether, the pleasure she takes in acquiring specific brands as status symbols, despite the potential wrongdoing of the companies that produce them, demonstrates the selective disapproval that Maxine applies to the neoliberal structure. It acts as an extrapolation of the selective judgment Maxine used when choosing to assist certain individuals in illegal activities whilst condemning others for doing the same. Dolce and Gabbana are an acceptable corporation because they bring Maxine pleasure, but hashslingrz is evil because it does not offer anything that can personally benefit Maxine on a social or economic level.

Maxine believes that her apathy towards Ice makes her an enemy of neoliberalism, whilst her love of shopping actually situates her within the confines of "the neoliberal

self" (218) which Christina Scharff claims is "defined by its capacity to consume" (218). Scharff also adds that women are often presented as the idealised neoliberal subject, partially as a result of neoliberalism's privileging of the feminine "through the long-standing association between women and consumption" (218). Through this idealised form of neoliberal subjectivity, not only do Maxine's shopping habits demonstrate her subjection to neoliberal ideals, but, according to Ivan Stacy and Arin Keeble, actually act as a means for perpetuating these ideals to other subjects. Stacy and Keeble claim that, within the narrative of *Bleeding Edge*, "the neoliberal economy creates the desires that then impel individuals to act in ways that perpetuate the system" (326). When Maxine wrestles the dress away from another woman, the neoliberal ideals of competition are reinforced as beneficial not only to her but those around her, including the 'loser' in this situation who feels disappointment in defeat, whilst witnessing Maxine's joy in victory. Despite her apparent resistance to it, Maxine occupies a doubled state through her neoliberal subjectivity. She is not only unable to recognise the double standard that she applies to others in her own life, but also the double standards in her own identity. Despite her characterisation as having an antagonistic view of neoliberalism in her psychological state, her physical actions demonstrate that she is still a subject to its ideals. In the neoliberal space, the subject's actions can be completely contradictory to their imagined relationship with neoliberalism. They will always be a subject to its ideals because they have become the dominant form of subjective interaction. Therefore, by existing as a part of contemporary society, the

individual will always be interpellated into neoliberalism's ideological structures, even when they imagine they are not.

Maxine is perhaps the clearest manifestation, within the works I have discussed, of Althusser's argument that:

> [w]hat thus seems to take place outside ideology […] in reality takes place in ideology. What really takes place in ideology seems therefore to take place outside of it. That is why those who are in ideology believe themselves by definition outside ideology: one of the effects of ideology is the practical *denegation* of the ideological character of ideology by ideology (49).

Althusser makes it clear that whilst one cannot exist outside of ideology, it is important for the ideology itself to offer the illusion to the subject that this is exactly what is taking place. Ideology is the central component in how subjects interact with each other and the society around them but, from the perspective of the subject, none of these interactions have any basis in ideology. This is how ideology is able to create an illusion of free will in the subject. By having itself denigrated as an ideological, and therefore defining, element within the subject's sense of self, ideology can continue to exert its influence on the subject. This leads Althusser to indicate that "the accusations of being in ideology only applies to others, never to oneself" (49). The subject views other people as being subjected to ideology, but never themselves. In *Bleeding Edge*, Maxine's attitude towards Gabriel Ice allows the novel to demonstrate these principles. She condemns Ice for working within, and taking advantage of, the systems that produce neoliberal ideologies but fails to recognise that she too operates within these same ideological structures. In *Mason & Dixon*, the central characters are able to recognise and wilfully participate as subject to an Enlightenment ideology. In *Against*

the Day, the characters are presented as at least recognising their own complicity with the dominant power structures, even if they do not approve of its ideals. However, in *Bleeding Edge*, the neoliberal systems are so subtle that subjects like Maxine do not even begin to formulate any system of resistance. The characters who believe that they resist the neoliberal ideals of those around them already believe they exist outside of this ideology, but in reality, as Maxine's shopping habits demonstrate, they are just as much as subject to neoliberalism as everyone else.

The novel that Pynchon wrote prior to *Bleeding Edge*, *Inherent Vice* (2009), sets out the process through which neoliberalism became such an all-encompassing framework for the dominant ideological structures of society. Towards the end of this novel, the protagonist Doc Sportello, a hippy private investigator, is chastised by his ex-girlfriend Shasta Fay for being "peas in a pod" (*IV* 313) with Coy Harlingen, an ex-surf rock performer turned police informant. Shasta goes on to explain that both Doc and Coy are "cops who never wanted to be cops. Rather be surfing or smoking or fucking or anything but what you're doing. You guys must've thought you'd be chasing criminals, and instead you're both working for them" (313-314). Like Maxine, Doc believes that he is an antagonist to the dominant system. He considers himself to be separate from people like Coy Harlingen, who have aided the representatives of ideological order. Joanna Freer has noted that even in the 1970s setting of *Inherent Vice*, Doc feels "already nostalgic for the moment when the counterculture was at its height, before it was compromised by government infiltration or had sold out to consumer capitalism" ("Politics and Counterculture" 177). Whilst I agree with Freer's observation, I would

also add that it is this nostalgic approach to everything happening around him that prevents Doc from recognising that he too has also compromised his position within the countercultural movement. Doc condemns Coy Harlingen for selling out and working for the government, but his own role as private investigator also entails a restoration of the order of the dominant society. Regardless of whether he works as a part of the officially sanctioned legal system, he still acts within and relies upon the legal ISA of the dominant systems of power. Like Maxine in *Bleeding Edge*, Doc is highly aware of the corruption of the culture that he feels he belongs to but, previous to this moment, he is unable, or unwilling, to confront this corruption in his own identity.

However, after Shasta's outburst, Doc does begin to recognise his complicity in the dominant ideological structures of the novel. He initially objects to this accusation, before going through his customer list of "studio executives, stock-market heroes of the go-go years, remittance men from far away […], rich old guys with cute young wives and vice versa" (*IV* 313). After this consideration, he recognises that "[i]t sure was a piss-poor record, not too different after all, he guessed, from the interests Coy had been working for" (313). Doc realises that Shasta's accusations are not completely unfounded. Doc's illusion that he exists outside of the dominant ideological structures is shattered by Shasta's recognition of his participation in its apparatuses. He is no longer able to condemn those around him because he cannot hide from his own complicity. In his reading of the text, Sean Carswell points out that "[i]t is not enough to end *Inherent Vice* with a protagonist on the verge of realization that he helps to create and is corrupted by the very world he criticizes" (*Occupy* 128) instead "Doc must

learn how to live in this contaminated world. He must find something to work for" (*Occupy* 128). Carswell's reading of Doc presents a character who is aware of the corrupt systems that he is subject to within his own society. The text is also optimistic that Doc will continue to search for a way of living which allows him to at least be in control of the level of collaboration he has with these systems. Unlike Maxine, Doc is afforded an awareness of the complicity of his actions within the governing systems of power's ideological structures. As a result, although he is still unable to defeat the system, Doc does gain a greater level of autonomy over how he engages with it.

Whilst Maxine does not quite reach the moment of revelation that Doc does in *Inherent Vice*, the introduction of Nicholas Windust, a "Special Case Officer" (*BE* 99) for an unknown entity within the text, at least challenges her own relationship with neoliberalism. Upon first receiving a thumb drive with information on Windust, Maxine reflects that "Windust does not after all seem to be FBI" (108) but, if there is "a brotherhood- or God forbid sisterhood of neoliberal terrorists, Windust has been in there from the jump" (108). Again, Maxine's characterisation of Windust as a "neoliberal terrorist" suggests that she views herself in opposition to these structures of ideology. Maxine goes on to learn that "[w]henever a government at the behest of the IMF sold off an asset, [Windust] agreed to go in for a percentage or, later on, with more leverage, to buy it outright" (109). An example of these investments being when a "power plant goes private for pennies on the dollar, [and] Windust becomes a silent partner" (109). Like Maxine and the dress or Gabriel Ice buying infrastructure, Windust see the opportunity to buy shares in a power plant at a discounted rate and takes up

the investment opportunity. When Maxine does this, she takes a sense of pride in her actions, but when Windust does it, he is considered a "neoliberal terrorist." The text initially appears to be offering another example of the economic double standards that occur within the neoliberal system. Just as Maxine is pleased to achieve her own economic victory with regards to the dress, she is quick to condemn Windust's own victories, as she does with Gabriel Ice, because they do not fit within her own definition of a morally acceptable form of economic action.

However, unlike Ice, who Maxine views as entirely repulsive, Windust is both threatening and seductive to Maxine. Although she finds herself contemplating Windust's "portfolio of pain and damage applied to various human body parts that have added up to hundreds–who knows, maybe thousands–of deaths on his karmic ticket" (*BE* 109), a few pages earlier she also has "a vivid, all-but-lucid dream about him, in which they are not exactly fucking, but fucking around, definitely" (106). Maxine recognises that Windust has the blood of potentially thousands of people on his hands but is also sexually attracted to him. Maxine's feelings towards Windust are similar to the emotions that several characters exhibit towards the Gothic antagonists of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Early in Stoker's novel, one of the lead characters, Jonathan Harker, is seduced by Dracula's brides. In an analysis of the scene, David J. Jones stipulates that the "taboos summoned up here flex between arousal and disgust, the reader imaginatively complicit in the Englishman's 'delightful anticipation' of unfaithful carnal abandon" (2). Harker and, according to Jones, the reader are both excited and repulsed by a potential sexual experience with these symbols of

transgression. *Bleeding Edge*'s description of Maxine's sexual fantasy evokes a similar combination of arousal and disgust in Maxine. The use of the word "fucking" to describe the imagined encounter she has with Windust indicates the illicit nature of Maxine's fantasy. Rather than romanticising the experience, the text employs the crudest verb to describe sexual intercourse. The inherently transgressive, or at least restrictive, social stigma that surrounds the use of the word "fuck" immediately suggests that this is a taboo experience that Maxine is imagining for herself. Like Jones's reading of Jonathan Harker's reaction to Dracula's brides, Maxine is both disgusted by the thought of having a sexual relationship with Windust, but also aroused enough to have a near lucid dream in which this act takes place.

Maxine also exhibits many of the same traits towards Windust as Mina Harker does after the eponymous villain in *Dracula* begins feeding upon her. Like Maxine, Mina has her most significant encounter with the antagonist in bed. She recalls to her husband, Jonathan, that whilst Dracula fed upon her, Mina found herself "bewildered, and, strangely enough, [she] did not want to hinder him" (Stoker 267). Although she does not actively take pleasure in the experience of Dracula's attack, as is implied in Maxine's dream of Windust, Mina is willing to submit to this figure of transgression. Later in the novel, Mina declares to Van Helsing: "I want you to hypnotize me!" (Stoker 289) in order to discover the location of Dracula. Like Maxine with Windust, Mina is willing to submit to Dracula on specific occasions but is ultimately concerned with ensuring his destruction. Jeffrey L. Spear notes that:

> [a]fter being attacked by Dracula, Mina is restored to her place of honor among the vampire hunters and supplies vital information, at first through

> insight and meticulous record-keeping, but later more passively and ominously through the telepathic contact established with Dracula when she drank his blood (190).

Mina is simultaneously responsible for helping the male characters in the novel to defeat Dracula, whilst also being a victim of his villainous advances. She occupies a doubled state in a way that does not conform to the traditional presentation of the trope. Mina is not a character with a fractured or split personality. She is simultaneously connected to the transgressive antagonist, through the telepathic link, and also responsible for banishing the evil. Like the characters in *Bleeding Edge*, Mina is able to reconcile a complete self from two contradictory positions. She maintains a beneficial connection to the antagonistic whilst, at the same time, deploring their methods and representatives, just as Maxine adopts the practices of neoliberalism that are of the greatest benefit to her, whilst condemning others for doing the same thing.

Dracula and Windust conform to the notion that in Gothic literature men are "larger than life patriarchal mirrors of the general zeitgeist that do as they choose and get what they want" (Van-Veda 1078). However, the zeitgeist is of course very different in each of these texts. In Stoker's novel, Taylor Kern argues that Dracula represents a "gendered representation of foreign invasion [which] also implies that the other can taint England as easily as a man can assault a woman" (16). The text conforms to the typically Gothic trope of the transgressive other that threatens to invade the civilised culture of English society and must be destroyed in order to maintain the dominant systems of power. This threat, and its ultimate erasure, is focalised during the final confrontation with Dracula and his brides. Mina is accosted by the brides who implore

her to "[c]ome sister. Come to us. Come! Come!" (Stoker 341). Van Helsing describes witnessing "the terror in [Mina's] sweet eyes. The repulsion, the horror" (Stoker 340). Mina's response provokes Van Helsing to exclaim in his account "God be thanked she was not, yet, of them" (Stoker 340). Mina's terror at the thought of joining Dracula's brides demonstrates that she is still a part of the dominant social structures within the text, and this is what brings joy to Van Helsing. It allows the novel to suggest that even when the other has invaded the dominant spheres of influence, it can still be defeated through resistance to its calls, or interpellation as Althusser might put it. Mina becomes a symbol for the means by which order can still be restored in the dominant systems of power, even when it seems to have already been corrupted by the outside other.

Windust, on the other hand, is a living representation of the ease with which the *dominant* ideological structures can corrupt the individual. Arin Keeble suggests that Windust is "an embodiment of how neoliberalism is tacitly approved by middle class, socially liberal citizens like Maxine" (255). This tacit approval is most explicitly illustrated when, upon both characters entering his apartment, Windust orders Maxine to "[g]et down on the floor" (*BE* 258). Despite realising that she should walk out, Maxine finds herself in a state of "instant docility" (258). She then "slides to her knees. Quickly, without further discussion […] she has joined months of unvacuumed debris on the rug, face on the floor" (258). Windust then places his "murder's hands" (258) on Maxine's hips and has sex with her. Windust is able to quickly place Maxine into a position of instant submission, a position that Keeble indicates further reveals her own submission to the neoliberal ideologies in the novel. In fact, Keeble adds that "[i]f

Windust and his dossier represent the defining practices of neo-liberalism—privatization, deregulation, and private sector and state collusion—his appeal to Maxine represents the way these practices have permeated American society" (256). Whilst Maxine expresses disapproval of Windust's methods in his is absence, as soon as an opportunity arises for him to dominate her, she does not even struggle against him. For all of the disapproval that Maxine expresses towards neoliberalism and its methods, her encounter with Windust demonstrates that when presented with a human embodiment of it, she is powerless to resist the allure of these ideological structures. The earlier incident with the dress indicated that although Maxine certainly engaged in neoliberal practices, this was very much on an unconscious level. She was not personally aware of the level of influence neoliberalism had on her own life. However, this encounter with Windust leaves little doubt that, in this instance, she is highly aware of the neoliberal agenda that Windust represents, and is attracted to him in spite of or, more than likely, because of this.

The relationship that Maxine has with neoliberalism in *Bleeding Edge* is symptomatic of a more contemporary form of doubling than that traditionally found in the Gothic text: the principle of doublethink. The term doublethink relates to George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and is used in that text to explain the process by which the individual holds "simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them; to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it" (Orwell 37). Doublethink is centered around the idea that the subject must make two contradictory claims into a single authoritative one.

The individual must reconcile a single claim that makes seemingly complete logical sense, despite the illogical nature of considering two opposing ideas as resulting in same thing. Since *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s publication, the term has become part of a more general political, social, and psychological lexis, and its definition has broadened to suit these larger discourses. In his essay on the concept, Mike W. Martin argues that doublethink is a form of self-deception by which "[t]he truth evaded is often primarily about ourselves; for example about wrongdoing which, if admitted, would cause guilt feelings; about flaws which would cause shame, or about love which would bring onerous burdens of responsibility" (320). He goes on to indicate that "[j]ust as often, however, the truth concerns disturbing aspects of the world we live in" (320). In Martin's understanding of the term, the individual uses doublethink as a means to avoid acknowledging the flaws in one's personal actions. It also becomes a method for the subject to reconcile the contradictions that exist between the ideals of their society and the values that they hold personally. In both instances, the subject knows that what is happening is wrong, or at least in opposition to their own beliefs, but can convince themselves that it is right in order to continue to function within society.

It makes sense then that doublethink can be interpreted as a useful tool for ideology when it comes to interpellating subjects. As I have noted above, for Althusser, one of the key principles in ideology is to convince the subject that the ideology they belong to does not influence them personally, but only those around them. From a logical standpoint, this makes very little sense. If all the people who surround an individual are subject to an ideology, how can it be possible that the individual themself is not? To

reconcile this within one's own thought process requires a form of doublethink. In her own writing on the role of doublethink in the work of postmodernist author Kathy Acker, Emilia Borowska argues that "[a]s a result of mixed, reductive messages from leaders and the media, people acquire a confused conscience, trusting and distrusting the government at the same time, while the role of those in power remains unthreatened" (101). Borowska identifies doublethink as a means for the larger population to remain in a state of constant confusion, and therefore stationary with regards to any resistance to those in power. If a subject believes that they are already outside of an ideology, then they will feel out of the spheres of its influence and make no great attempt to escape them because they will feel they do not have to. As a result, the ideology itself can continue to exert a greater and greater influence over the subject without their knowledge.

Nineteen Eighty-Four, like *Bleeding Edge*, acknowledges the oppressive strength of doublethink on those who wish to resist its principles. One of the central representations of resistance within *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a text written by Emmanuel Goldstein. Goldstein is the figure in the text who represents the greatest threat to the Party and who may or may not be a construct of the Party itself. In Goldstein's book, the main character of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston Smith, reads that "it is by means of *doublethink* that the Party has been able–and may, for all we know, continue to be able to for thousands of years–to arrest the course of history" (Orwell 223, italics in original). The subjects of the authoritarian ideology in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are responsible for maintaining their own oppression by subscribing to the

principles of doublethink. This allows the Party to constantly shift the course of history for their own benefit, with the willingness of most of the population. If the population were willing to acknowledge that they had the power to change things, then they would but, because doublethink is so ingrained in subjective thought processes, this is made to seem impossible. As soon as any small pockets of rebellion begin to emerge, the principles of doublethink can be invoked to erase these resistances immediately from history, and thus prevent a unified attack on the ruling systems of power. Not only is it nearly impossible for individuals to recognise that anything is wrong in the society of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but when they do, a contradictory idea will be introduced that immediately disproves these issues as falsities and replaces them with facts that benefit the Party.

E. Ann Clark defines doublethink in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as "an ideology of acceptance and perpetual fabrication. Everything is subject to continual revision and reinterpretation by the Ministry of Truth, inculcating the citizenry to acknowledge contradiction as a normal part of life" (106). It is through a process of further doublethink that theses contradictions and fabrications are made a part of normal life. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* indicates that another central aspect of doublethink involves the indvidual being able to

> forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then draw it back into memory again at a moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again: and above all to apply the same process to the process itself. That was the ultimate subtlety: consciously to induce unconsciousness, and then, once again, to become unconscious of the act of hypnosis you have just performed (Orwell 37-38).

Not only is the subject forced to hold two simultaneously opposing ideas in their minds at once, but they must simultaneously erase all acknowledgement that this is what they have done. They remove the memory of the past from their minds immediately and completely and replace it with a new fabrication. The lack of contradictory evidence that now exists from the past means that, in the present, this fabricated information immediately becomes true. Such is the strength of the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that not only can they use their own systems to dictate historical facts, as Linda Hutcheon asserts is the case for all ruling power structures, but, through the process of doublethink, they no longer even require evidence of the past events that Hutcheon argues forms the basis of these facts. Instead, the Party can fabricate facts instantaneously based on nothing more than its own desires. According to Winston in the novel, those who "have the best knowledge of what is happening are also those who are furthest from seeing the world as it is" (Orwell 224). What is actually happening in the world is very different to what the Party tells its subjects. The subject who has a total ignorance of any other events which may expose the falsehood of the Party's contradictions and fabrications are also the ones who have the best grasp of the facts as they are constructed within their society. They exhibit the idealised form of subjectivity which provides them with a greater level of agency to interpellate others into this same form of subjection.

In an Althusserean interpretation of doublethink, this process takes ideological control to its furthest conclusion. It is no longer necessary for a specific set of systems to reinforce an idea repeatedly, instead the subject does it to themselves. As I noted in

the introduction to my thesis, Althusser's theory of ideology places great importance on "obviousness" (46). Althusser argues that it is "a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are 'obviousnesses') obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot *fail to recognize*" (46, italics in original). In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* this process is filtered through doublethink. Initially, the subject is made to believe that something is obvious. However, if the dominant systems of power wish to change what is considered obvious, doublethink means that all they must do is tell the subject. After being told, the subject now considers this new piece of information obvious, even if it completely contradicts the previous pieces of obvious information. This process occurs within the subject without them even considering it as an act of the Party. It is simply a fact that now exists and has always existed. These shifting obviousnesses are best reflected in the changing nations with which Winston's own country, Oceania, are at war. In one sequence, Winston remembers:

> it was only four years since Oceania had been at war with Eastasia and in alliance with Eurasia. But that was merely a piece of furtive knowledge which he happened to possess because his memory was not satisfactorily under control. Officially the change of partners had never happened. Oceania was at war with Eurasia: therefore Oceania had always been at war with Eurasia (Orwell 36).

The obviousness surrounding who Oceania is at war with has been changed completely. Although Winston is able to remember that Oceania was once at war with Eastasia, this is only a result of his memory not being fully controlled by the systems of the Party. For the larger population, it has always been obvious that Oceania has always been at war with Eurasia. Not only is the ideology able to function through obviousnesses which the subject cannot fail to recognise, but it can make changes to them so quickly that the

things which one initially cannot fail to recognise can be made instantaneously ridiculous and that which was once ridiculous can be made instantly obvious.

Although doublethink differs from the more traditional Gothic forms of doubling, the two still share several key similarities. Both the Party of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the Gothic genre wish to emphasise the chastity of women. Leah Richards specifically argues that "[f]irst and foremost, the Gothic involves a woman in peril, whose fortune, sanity, chastity, and life are threatened" (135). The threat to chastity is a central source of terror for the Gothic heroine. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the Party's attitude towards sex and relationships also prioritises chastity. During an early episode within the novel Winston notices "a bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven" who is wearing "a narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League" (Orwell 11). The existence of an Anti-Sex League is demonstrative of the Party's attitude towards passion. In fact, Winston notes that "[t]he women of the Party were all alike. Chastity was as deeply engrained in them as Party loyalty" (Orwell 71). The chaste principles which are ingrained in these women demonstrate their similarity to the female characters of early Gothic novels. Winston believes that "[t]he sexual act, successfully performed, was rebellion. Desire was thoughtcrime" (Orwell 71). The Party wishes to frame itself as a rational system through an application of ideological principles that share several elements with the "Enlightenment values of the eighteenth century (reason, virtue, moderation)" (Botting, "Gothic Culture" 199). Chastity is valued as one of the most significant indications of subjection to the ideals of the Party, just as it is a strong indicator of social conformity in the Gothic narrative. Therefore, as is the case in the

Gothic text, if one were to threaten the chaste nature of another citizen in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* it would be considered a punishable act of transgression.

However, this chastity, and by extension the Enlightenment values that appear to be foundational to the Party's ideology, is undermined by the Party's reliance on other vices to control the population. In the earliest descriptions of Winston's life, he is described as taking down from his shelf "a bottle of colourless liquid with a plain white label marked VICTORY GIN" (Orwell 7). After drinking a teacup of this gin, Winston notices "the world began to look more cheerful" (Orwell 7). The Party utilises certain vices such as alcohol to suppress the masses, whilst also discouraging other forms of iniquity such as sexual gratification. Not only does this demonstrate another example of doublethink, but also the means by which the rational and irrational are blurred in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Doublethink is described by Goldstein, within the novel, as a system of "controlled insanity" (Orwell 225). Despite the Party wishing to appear as a rational and enlightened entity, its main means of power is predicated on irrationality. As I have already argued, the principles of doublethink are inherently irrational. The text reveals how easy it is for a system to rationalise the irrational to suit its own desires and aims. This is the ultimate purpose of doublethink: it rationalises the irrational. The Party can blur the lines between what is rational and irrational and as a result the distinctions between these terms are constantly shifting and being reconciled. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* utilises the foundations of Gothic narratives, the tensions that occur between the rational and irrational, and demonstrates how these terms can be manipulated and changed to ultimately become meaningless. Whilst the

Gothic text is concerned with exploring exactly what could be defined as rational and irrational, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is concerned with how these terms themselves are defined and who is responsible for doing so.

The presence of doublethink within *Bleeding Edge* demonstrates a further evolution of doubling in Pynchon's work. The double is no longer a manifestation of a divided self but has become a psychological phenomenon within a single whole. Of course, this argument can also be levelled towards Webb Traverse in *Against the Day*. However, Webb occupies two separate selves in order to remain subject to two separate ideological apparatuses. In *Bleeding Edge* this dual system of thought is necessary to remain subject to a single dominant ideology. This set of contradictory feelings occurs for Maxine after her sexual encounter with Windust. In a taxi away from Windust's apartment, Maxine asks herself "[w]hat […] was I, the fuck, thinking?" (*BE* 260), before realising that:

> the worst, or does she mean the best, part of it is that even right now it will take very little, yes, all pivoting here on FDR's silvery small cheekbone in fact, to lean forward, interrupt the call-in hatefest on the cabbie's radio, and in a voice sure to be trembling ask to be brought back to the homicidal bagman in his dark savage squat, for more of the same (260-261).

Maxine knows that Windust is homicidal and represents everything that she claims to despise, but still wishes to return to his apartment for another sexual encounter. In fact, the ambiguous use of "trembling" suggests that there is even a sense of excitement about making this return. She knows that this should never have happened in the first place but is simultaneously excited by the idea of doing it all again. She is holding two contradictory ideas in her head, knowing that both are true. Maxine is

experiencing a form of doublethink. If this doublethink is considered in light of Keeble's previous assertion that Windust represents as tacit approval of neoliberalism, it suggests that not only is Maxine able to apply neoliberal ideals when she feels it benefits her, but the inverse is also true. She is also willing to submit to the whims of neoliberalism whenever they require it of her as well.

Maxine's troubled relationship with Windust is more overtly brought to the fore after she discovers his corpse late in the novel. Maxine concedes that "[h]e was a torturer, a murder many times over, his cock has been inside her, and at the moment she's not sure what she feels" (*BE* 411). However, Maxine later feels "the unrelenting vacuum of Windust's departure" (421), which does indicate a mournful emotional response to this event. Initially, when Maxine considers Windust's murderous past alongside her own personal relationship with him, she appears to be entering the first stage of doublethink. However, whilst she can hold these two contradictory ideas about him in her mind simultaneously, on this occasion, she is aware that this is happening on a conscious level. In a discussion of Windust as an evolution of the femme fatale in hard-boiled detective fiction, Jennifer Backman contends that "[i]n true noir form, desire for the femme fatale is once again rooted in repressed aspects of the detective's subconscious and bound up with the detective's most fervently disavowed forms of economic connection" (30). In Backman's reading, Windust is representative of the neoliberal economic systems that Maxine wishes to disavow, despite, as I have also argued, her repressed desire to engage in its techniques. In this moment though, when thinking about Windust, Maxine is forced to confront these

subconsciously repressed desires on a conscious level. Maxine considers the contradictions in her relationship with Windust, something she fails to do with regards to her relationship to neoliberalism and her hatred of Gabriel Ice. Through this consideration of Windust, the novel begins to challenge the process of doublethink that Maxine has been able to successfully apply to other representations of neoliberal ideologies. It suggests that Maxine may be reaching a point of greater recognition with regards to her own position in neoliberal society, which was previously absent from her characterisation.

There are similar instances of this incomplete doublethink occurring in Pynchon's earlier novel, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966). As I touched on in the last section, the novel's protagonist Oedipa Maas is forced to consider the prospect that a whole alternative postal system, W.A.S.T.E, may exist, whilst having little to no evidence that it does in any concrete way. Towards the end of the novel, Oedipa wonders whether she has discovered "a network by which X number of Americans are truly communicating whilst reserving their lies, recitations of routine, arid betrayals of spiritual poverty, for the official government delivery system" (*L49* 131); a plot which has been "mounted against [her], so expensive and elaborate, involving items like the forging of stamps and ancient books, constant surveillance of [her] movements, planting of post horn images all over San Francisco" (131); or whether neither of these things are true and she is "fantasying some such plot" (132). Much like the first phase of doublethink, Oedipa is considering all three of these contradictory ideas at the same time. However, from the outset, she is highly aware of them all being contradictory. She believes that all of

these plots could be true, and also that they may all be untrue. As a result, she cannot reconcile them into a definitive answer. In *The Crying of Lot 49* all of the potential outcomes are kept separate in Oedipa's mind, despite being treated as equally possible, but in *Bleeding Edge* the contradictions are initially melded together to maintain a single, consistent line of thought in the characters. Until Windust enters her life and challenges these assumptions, the novel characterises Maxine as very much applying the principles of doublethink in her engagement with neoliberalism. However, after Windust appears, it challenges the doublethink that the characters have already submitted to in the neoliberal space. Through Maxine and Windust's relationship, *Bleeding Edge* hints at the prospect that these characters have the potential to return to the level of self-awareness, with regards to the contradictions within their own thought processes, that Oedipa displays in the earlier text.

The principles of flawed doublethink that exist in the characterisation of Maxine are also projected onto Windust, by Maxine, relatively early on in the novel. Maxine begins to imagine parallels between herself and Windust, at one point wondering whether "Windust, once in a more sympathetic-juvenile day, actually [hung] out at the old 9.30 Club the way Maxine did at the Paradise Garage?" (*BE* 254). Maxine pictures Windust in his "uncorrupted youth" (254) having a similar formative experience to herself, but the locales in which these experiences took place are telling. Maxine notes that she hung out at Paradise Garage, a nightclub in New York's SoHo neighbourhood which has played host to acts such as Madonna, Dianna Ross, and Wham. The 9.30 Club on the other hand is a Washington D.C. venue where Windust may have "caught Tiny Desk

Unit and Bad Brains in their local-band period" (254).[3] Maxine attended a club that hosted several mainstream pop acts who represent the competitive economics of neoliberal society. These acts are generally considered to be in competition to reach the top of the music charts, which are determined by sales and therefore economic success. The 9.30 Club on the other hand is associated, even in the novel, with more underground alternative music. The text frames Windust as being uncorrupted when attending a subversive music venue, whilst Maxine's uncorrupted youth is spent in a more mainstream space. Not only are she and Windust doubles, in that Maxine imagines they share similar experiences, but these experiences represent opposing aspects of the ideals that they wish to project. Maxine is associating herself with more ideologically conformist music, whilst she views Windust as more interested in the transgressive branch of the industry.

Although they may be doubles of each other, Maxine's reflection makes clear that the binaries that one might assume in the doubling relationship are complicated in the novel's representation of these characters. Samuel Thomas acknowledges that in this scene "the association between music and '*un*corrupted youth' remains potent" ("Blood on the Tracks" 47, italics in original). Thomas recognises the importance of music to situate the characters within a specific place and context. The implication here is that Maxine's youth was uncorrupted because she did not have to consider her own

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[3] Both Tiny Desk Unit and Bad Brains are associated with the D.C. Punk scene that emerged around the late 1970s and early 1980s.

relationship to neoliberalism so carefully. She was without the shame that Mike W. Martin associates with the principles of doublethink and simply able to enjoy the pleasure that the music brought her, without having to confront the prospect that it was the product of a neoliberal system. The same is also true of Windust in this imagined scenario. He is uncorrupted because, in Maxine's imagination, he has not yet become so entrenched in the neoliberal systems that would ultimately dismiss this music as less useful, because it is less profitable. In this instance, doublethink itself is being used to double Maxine and Windust in more traditional binary terms. The lack of complication in their relationship to the neoliberal ideological structures in these imagined scenarios, allows Maxine to consider both herself and Windust as more innocent. Neither has been forced to confront the contradictions in their engagement with neoliberalism. It is with the loss of doublethink that the characters develop a more personally problematic approach to neoliberalism, even if it results in a more free-thinking mode of thought, and thus lose their ignorant innocence of its machinations.

As their lives have progressed, Maxine has become more aware of the neoliberal corruption in society and believes she has become a figure of resistance. In contrast, Windust has become a greater proponent of the neoliberal ideological principles. Although the ideological position that they occupy with regards to the neoliberal power systems of the text may shift, the intensity with which they adhere to these values remains in a state of balance. Windust goes from "a clean-looking kid, short hair, chinos and button-down shirts, only has to shave once a week" (*BE* 110) to a point where "he took a step. Hardly measurable in that immensity and yet, like finding and

clicking on an invisible link on a screen, transported in the act over into his next life" (110). Although there is never a specific instance where a similar change is described as occurring in Maxine's own life, when she goes from certified to de-certified fraud examiner, she too reaches a point when she runs "gravely afoul of the ACFE Code of Conduct, which Maxine had in fact been skating up to and all along the posted edges of for years" (17-18). Although Maxine still operates within the apparatuses of neoliberal ideology as a fraud investigator, her de-certification, as well as previously discussed attitude towards neoliberalism more generally, indicates that she does not necessarily engage with these systems on an entirely sympathetic level. Maxine's imagining that her and Windust have similar formative experiences, is indicative of a feature that Freud argues is a central aspect of the double. However, these experiences also result in their moving in completely opposite ideological directions. Maxine makes a decision which distances her from an institution which represents the interests of the neoliberal systems of power, whereas Windust commits to these neoliberal systems more emphatically.

With that said, Maxine's ability to imagine youthful similarities with Windust demonstrates a realisation that, despite ostensibly acting in opposition to each other, they do have certain shared characteristics and, in Maxine's eyes, formative experiences. With reference to her encounters with him, Brian Chappell recognises that Maxine's "feelings for Windust are cast as a desire to change him (and she perceives in him a desire to change), to save his soul from murdering once and for all" (9). For Chappell, although Maxine recognises that although Windust has committed

acts of evil, she refuses to acknowledge that this was all that he was capable of in life. She feels a sense of responsibility to help him. I would add that this need to save Windust is also representative of a need for Maxine to save herself. These similar formative experiences are the first indicator that Maxine has the capacity to acknowledge an engagement with neoliberal practices in the past, even if she cannot see them in the present. If Maxine can admit that she is willing to indulge neoliberalism when it suited her and Windust was once, and as I will explore later in this section, may still be willing to act against it when it suits him, the separation between them starts to disappear. By extension, the evil that Windust is now willing to utilise in the name of his ideology also exists in Maxine's own identity. Windust forces her to question what her personal relationship to the neoliberal ideology is. Maxine's relationship with him begins to erode the doublethink that allows her to describe herself as an opponent of neoliberalism whilst still adhering to its principles. Therefore, if she is able to save Windust from his neoliberal practices, she too may be able to eventually escape the influence of neoliberalism in her own life. *Bleeding Edge* completely reverses the idea of the double needing to be destroyed in order to restore the originals sense of self. Instead, Maxine feels that in order to save herself from total submission to neoliberalism, she must restore Windust from this position.

With that said, Windust is also presented as displaying a protective attitude towards Maxine in certain instances throughout *Bleeding Edge*. Late in the novel, Maxine comes across Windust's avatar in DeepArcher and she imagines them as "[l]overs on the run" (*BE* 407). Windust' avatar replies "great call. Your kids, your home, your family, your

business and reputation, in exchange for a cheap fatality for all those you can't save" (407). As Miriam Fernandez Santiago observes, Maxine's suggestion is "a fantasy Windust would not let her trade for the safety of her reality" (102). Just as Maxine is capable of defending those she feels close to, so is Windust. This occurs more overtly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks when Windust calls Maxine to ask "[a]re you all right?" (*BE* 318) before reminding her that if she wants to talk "you've got my number" (318). Although Maxine dismisses this call as Windust trying to take advantage of the tragedy for his own benefit, there is no evidence that this is really the case. In fact, Fernandez Santiago suggests that "Maxine's failure to acknowledge Windust's feelings for her only raises the reader's suspicions that such feelings might be genuine" (102). Whilst Maxine's wish to restore Windust from his total subjection to neoliberalism is one aspect of their relationship, Windust is also presented as taking on a protective role towards Maxine when he needs to. According to Fernandez Santiago, he sincerely wishes to protect her from the danger of the 9/11 attacks. In fact, Windust's actions are arguably more sincere than Maxine's in general. They are motivated by the selfless wish to ensure Maxine's safety, rather than the urge towards self-preservation that motivates Maxine's sympathetic treatment of Windust. In any case, *Bleeding Edge* undermines the idea that Maxine and Windust are antagonistic doubles. Like Frank and Reef in *Against the Day*, they occupy roles that are mutually beneficial to each other depending on the situation within the novel.

The novel's desire to present an increasingly sympathetic characterisation of Windust is made even more explicit after he is killed. Shortly after his death, Maxine

notices that new material is being added to the file of information she has on Windust by an unknown source. This information is "all strangely nonnegative when not outright eulogy material" (*BE* 427). Maxine then ponders "who would benefit from knowing that twenty years ago Windust was still capable of a good deed […]?" (427). The answer, considering that she is the only person who has access to the information, is Maxine. These additions act as confirmation of Joanna Freer's assertion that "Pynchon's commentaries have an open-ended quality; there are very few, if any, final judgements in his work" (*American Counterculture* 7). Whilst *Bleeding Edge* initially cast Windust as a "neoliberal terrorist" (*BE* 108), the novel also recasts him as something more complex as the narrative goes on. Of course, this complexity is again the result of Maxine's own relationship with Windust. Although certain characters like Reg engage in neoliberal practices, these practices are often unacknowledged by Maxine because she had a positive personal relationship with them. However, despite being a self-proclaimed neoliberal subject, Maxine still affords Windust a level of sympathy that was not reserved for characters such as Gabriel Ice. In an earlier text like *Against the Day*, characters like Scarsdale Vibe are presented as being entirely antagonistic to the characters who wish to resist the ideologies which underpin the dominant systems of power. In contrast, although *Bleeding Edge* initially forefronts Windust's commitment to neoliberalism as a defining feature of his identity, it is careful not to characterise him exclusively through this lens. It is through this characterisation that the text further erodes any suggestion that the binaries between good and evil are useful within neoliberal ideologies.

Despite being "motivated only by raw ideology" (*BE* 109), Windust is still capable of transgressing the neoliberal system when he feels it is required of him. His marriage to Xiomara, a Guatemalan woman who he meets while stationed there, is characterised as "less than acceptable on a number of counts" (110) to the government agencies that employ Windust. Xiomara's family are described as being from "old-school arevalista 'spiritual socialists' on leftward, through activists with a history of nonnegotiable hatred for United Fruit, hardcore anarcho-Marxist aunts and cousins" (110) as well as "assorted gun runners and dope dealers who just wanted to be left alone but were invariably described as Suspected Guerrilla Sympathizers" (110). Despite not being a traditionally economic proposition, at least not exclusively, Windust's marriage to Xiomara is looked upon with disdain by the neoliberal systems of the text. In fact, according to Rachel Greenwald Smith, "[n]eoliberal individualism is […] expansive enough to include relationships – as long as those relationships do not violate the aims of entrepreneurialism in general" (40). As Greenwald Smith argues, neoliberal ideologies have no issue with the individual forming relationships, as long as these relationships are economically beneficial. It is not unreasonable, or anti-neoliberal, then for Windust to marry and fall in love. However, his choice of partner contradicts the approach to love that Greenwald Smith suggests is central to the neoliberal subject's success. Xiomara's family represent everything that would limit Windust's economic prospects and as a result, indicates a betrayal of the neoliberal ideals that he supposedly holds in the highest esteem.

Windust is indicative of my contention that, in *Bleeding Edge*, doublethink is not exclusive to those who wish to resist the neoliberal ideals that populate the novel. During a conversation late in the novel, Maxine learns from Xiomara that, during their marriage, "[o]ne morning Windust found the office he'd been working out of abandoned and cleared of everything sensitive. No sign of the Neoliberal scum he'd oozed into town with" (*BE* 444). The doublethink that Windust allows himself to indulge works against him here. He has been abandoned by his fellow neoliberal agents. Just as doublethink can be used to justify neoliberalism, it can also be used to distract its followers from its ideals. In his reading of Orwell's novel, John J. McGraw asserts that the political elite of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* "use doublethink as a technique to control the masses. By effectively boggling their minds, the masses–now inept at thinking clearly–can be more easily directed to whatever course the elite pleases" (339). Whilst McGraw is certainly correct in his characterisation of doublethink in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as means to force subjects to adhere to the ideals of the ruling systems of power, *Bleeding Edge* also demonstrates how doublethink can lead to the opposite. The novel uses doublethink in this instance to demonstrate that even the most zealous proponents of neoliberalism are capable of betraying its values, and still justifying their position within its systems through a process of doublethink. Just as Maxine is willing to act as a critic towards this ideology whilst continuing to engage with it, Windust is able to do the opposite. Windust is actually inhibited by his use of doublethink because it leads to a distancing of himself from the desires of the dominant systems of power, rather than a continued adherence to its ideals.

During the same encounter cited above, Xiomara describes a place called “Xibalba” (*BE* 443) to Maxine. She shares her belief that Windust considered Xibalba to be “a parallel world, somewhere beneath his feet where another Windust was doing the things he was pretending not to up here” (443) and that after his death Windust is “down in Xibalba, reunited with his evil twin” (446). The revelation that Windust not only engaged in doublethink but also believed that he had a physical double, places him in closer proximity to a Gothic character. Despite being an apparent disciple of the neoliberal system, Windust tried to separate the evil he committed from the self that was capable of good. The novel presents Windust as a character who, like Webb Traverse, has to use two identities which he believes allows him to maintain a whole sense of self. However, rather than doing this in defiance of the dominant ideological structures, Windust does so to maintain his subjectivity within the neoliberal system. Windust is not under threat from his double, instead he utilises this separate self to carry out the acts of death and destruction that he wishes to avoid acknowledging in his “good” self. He pairs the doublethink of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the physical double found in the Gothic to explain away his own evil acts. He is able to commit evil acts by blaming his physical double, and then uses doublethink to erase the perceived sense of irrationality suggested through his belief that this double actually exists. As a result, Windust is able to function within neoliberal society without acknowledging the personal moral repercussions of the actions he must undertake in order to maintain this social position.

Whilst Maxine does not have the explicit moment of revelation that Doc Sportello does in *Inherent Vice*, after learning of the struggles that Windust has faced with regards to his own neoliberal subjection, she does become more tolerant of the other neoliberal subjects around her. She joins her sister's "state-of-the-art health club Megareps" (*BE* 448) where she "isn't quite used yet to this nightly spectacle of yups on treadmills, plodding to nowhere while watching CNN or the sports channels" (448). Maxine is willing to mix with these "yups" in a way that seemed alien when she described the anti-yuppie video game her children were playing at the beginning of the novel as being "[a]ctually, sort of fun" (35). *Bleeding Edge* indicates that Maxine is softening towards those who are more explicitly pro-neoliberalism. Maxine's more broadminded attitude towards those who willingly engage with neoliberal society is indicative of the alternative freedom that Jonathan Sudholt argues Pynchon presents in *Bleeding Edge*. Sudholt states that, in the novel, this alternative freedom "comes from the capacity to endure, rather than escape, the pressures of our world" ("*Bleeding Edge*"). Sudholt's presentation of Maxine differs slightly from that of Sean Carswell's reading of Doc Sportello. Sudholt suggests that Maxine will simply endure the neoliberal aspects of her own life but does not go as far as to suggest that she will address them directly. Instead, she has developed a greater level of tolerance for the neoliberal structures she is forced to engage with but has still not reached a point where she will explicitly consider her own present position within these neoliberal systems of power. Although she has become more understanding of other neoliberal

subjects through her relationship with Windust, Maxine is still not quite able to acknowledge that she is one herself.

Maxine's approach to neoliberalism demonstrates that its ideals are far more deeply engrained in her psyche, than they are in Doc Sportello's psyche in *Inherent Vice*. Despite her apparent hatred of the system, her frequenting of Paradise Garage, love of designer clothing, and her relationships with both Windust and her ex-husband Horst Loeffler, a trader with an office at the World Trade Center, reveal Maxine's complicity. Although Maxine personally believes in her subjective resistance to neoliberal ideologies, *Bleeding Edge* indicates that objectively she is still subservient to neoliberal urges, just as Windust is prone to acts of anti-neoliberal practice on occasion. Even at the close of the novel, unlike Doc in Carswell's reading of him, Maxine is left only on the verge of realising that she helps to maintain, and continues to be corrupted by, neoliberal society. The novel's refusal to offer her a true moment of realisation surrounding her ideological complicity demonstrates neoliberalism progression as the dominant ideological framework between the mid-twentieth-century setting of *Inherent Vice* and the early twenty-first century setting of *Bleeding Edge*. In *Inherent Vice*, the characters still have some control over their level of complicity with the dominant systems of power, but in *Bleeding Edge* even the revelation that could provide a small sense of autonomy is just out of reach.

Bleeding Edge then brings the possibility of ideological autonomy to its bleakest conclusion. In *Mason & Dixon* there was still the opportunity for ideological uncertainty to exist, both in the subject's definition of what the ideology should be and the

potential for other ideologies to continue to function alongside the dominant mode. Even in *Against the Day*, there is the notion that Anarchism can offer an alternative to the dominant structures of power. However, *Bleeding Edge* presents an environment where even those who are critical of the ideology have no alternative but to subject themselves to it. Both *Mason & Dixon* and *Against the Day* demonstrate that, in their settings, doubling can be a tool of positive subversion and interrogation of the systems that claim absolute power. In these texts, the double was a symptom of the aspects of self that challenged the conformist notions of ideology. Whilst this is also true of the Gothic novel, Pynchon's works celebrate rather than condemn these doubles. In *Bleeding Edge*, the double ceases to be a form of resistance to the dominant systems of power. Instead, it becomes a tool for the ideological structures of neoliberal society. If the subject can define themselves in opposition to what they consider a conformist subject, they will see themselves as transgressive. The double serves to reinforce this belief. It allows the subject to imagine they are acting in opposition to neoliberalism. However, in reality, the subject continues to conform to the neoliberal structures of ideology because there is no alternative. Whilst the position that individuals occupy in relation to each other may change, their position as a subject to and object of the neoliberal systems of power remains a constant.

Conclusion: "Keep Cool, But Care"

The reading of Gothic doubling in this thesis demonstrates the ways in which Pynchon's work challenges notions of fixed identity within its characters, and attempts to undermine the ideological methodologies and frameworks utilised by larger systems of power. It has been my contention that Pynchon's novels present the ideological structures of the dominant systems of power as ultimately inescapable. With that said, these texts are also optimistic about the individual's ability to enact small acts of rebellion within these structures. In order to support this reading of doubling in Pynchon's novels, the thesis has employed Louis Althusser's arguments surrounding Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. As Althusser argues, an ideology is "the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live" (39). However, the three novels discussed indicate that these relationships can also shift and change as a direct result of their imagined nature. It has been my contention that the significance of the double becomes clear when considered in light of these shifting imagined relationships to the dominant systems of power within these texts. In each instance of doubling, the character achieves a greater clarity with regards to their position in society. The double either reinforces the imagined relationship that the dominant ideology bestows upon characters, as subjects, in a more complete way, or it provides the characters with marginal opportunities to get closer to recognising and challenging their real conditions of existence in relation to the dominant systems of power within these narratives.

The first chapter focused on the earliest novel, both in terms of setting and release date, *Mason & Dixon*. The opening section argued that Mason and Dixon themselves were doubles. I asserted that, whilst the characters are subject to the same ideological structures, they do not share the exact same interpretations of the intellectual frameworks that exist within these structures. This is what characterises them as doubles. It was my assertion that, contrary to the Gothic double, their similarities are indicative of a move towards a more complete form of knowledge rather than the divided binaries that previous incarnations of this motif have sought to present. Mason and Dixon subvert the traditional relationship that a doubling would usually entail in a Gothic narrative. Neither one of them is the dark half of the other's rationality. Instead, both characters express equally valid forms of rationality which, when worked through as a doubled process of thought, allows both Mason and Dixon to reach a greater level of personal understanding.

In the following section, the thesis explored the means by which the dominant systems of power utilised ideological structures to erase those that they view as a challenge to their authority. Beginning from the position that the Native American ideologies in *Mason & Dixon* are doubles of the Enlightenment-influenced ideologies of colonialism, I offered a brief history of the American Gothic genre's characterisation of Native Americans as violent and savage. The thesis then introduced Althusser's concept of the Repressive State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). It argued that the Gothic literature of early American colonisation existed as a tool of the "cultural ISA" of the dominant systems of European power. I then posited that *Mason*

& Dixon serves to undermine and challenge the Gothic's characterisation of Native American society. Contrary to the Gothic iteration of these Native cultures, the novel attempts to present the colonial systems of power as an aggressive and destructive force during these early colonial endeavours which took place on the American continent. In contrast, Native Americans are just as intelligent and civilised, if not more so, as the narrative's colonial elements. It was with these characterisations in mind that the thesis claimed *Mason & Dixon* attempts to present the benefits of a hybridised system of knowledge, which includes contributions from, and equal acknowledgement of, Native American societies.

The second chapter of the thesis shifted focus to Pynchon's 2006 novel *Against the Day*. The first section was focused on the character of Webb Traverse and his doubled subjection to both capitalist and anarchist ideological structures. I claimed that as ideologies, both capitalism and anarchism function as tools of the dominant systems of power. This led to a reintroduction of ISAs, arguing that Althusser's claim that the concert of ISAs "is dominated by a single score, occasionally distributed by contradictions (those of the remnants of the former ruling class, those of the proletarians and their organizations)" (28) is particularly applicable to *Against the Day* and anarchism. Anarchism, which functions in the novel as a part of the trade union ISA, is presented as a proletarian ideology. It is forced to function within the frameworks of the dominant systems of powers and, as a result, anarchism becomes a tool for the apparatuses of these systems. I then attempted to demonstrate the means by which *Against the Day* subverts the traditional framing of the double, by making

Scarsdale Vibe, the clearest representation of the dominant capitalist systems of power, Webb Traverse's evil counterpart. Furthermore, through this examination of Vibe's role in the novel, the section explored how different ISAs take on greater levels of significance during specific moments in history. It was my contention that whilst the dominant form of ISA in the late-capitalist society in the twenty-first century is the corporation ISA, as defined by Ralph Clare, *Against the Day* indicates that this apparatus' origins can be traced back to the early capitalist setting of the novel.

In the second section of this chapter, the focus shifted to Webb's two sons Reef and Frank. The novel offers an ambiguous presentation of these two characters in relation to their father. Webb's dual subjection to both the anarchist and capitalist ideological structures means it is impossible to say whether Reef and Frank are entirely doubles of him. The novel never discloses whether Reef and Frank are consciously emulating Webb or share characteristics with him simply as a result of being interpellated into the same ideologies. Instead, it was my assertion that, like Mason and Dixon, Reef and Frank act as non-antagonistic doubles of each other. For the majority of the text, they are separated, but both characters find themselves unconsciously shifting between opposing ideologies. When they are re-united, they form an alternative family unit within the confines of the dominant systems of power. It is this community that I posit offers them a small amount of personal freedom from a specific ISA, the family ISA, but their continued need to engage with the other subjects that surround them ensures that it is still the larger ideological structures of the ruling systems of power which dominate their lives.

The final chapter's focus on Pynchon's most recent novel *Bleeding Edge* examined the role of doubling in a contemporary setting. The characters in this novel, I asserted in the first section, are forced to create doubles of themselves in order to continue to function as stable subjects within the ideologies of the early twenty-first century. The protagonist, Maxine Tarnow, exists in both a digital and physical space throughout the course of the text. Initially the digital environment appears to be present as a space for alternative ideologies to appear outside of the realms of the dominant systems of power. However, these spaces are quickly subsumed into the authoritative field of the governing systems' ideological structures. As a result, the thesis argued, in *Bleeding Edge* the double is restored to its position of terror for the characters. However, whereas in the Gothic genre doubling is "a clear indication of internalised 'evil'" (Aw. Smith 94) and this evil "is often defined by the threat it poses to 'civilisation'" (Aw. Smith 100), in *Bleeding Edge*, the evil stems from the doubles ability to extend the authority of the dominant systems of power. In the digital age, doubles are no longer a tool for indulging one's transgressive urges, but a means to show a more concrete conformity to the dominant systems of power.

The concluding section of this chapter addressed the neoliberal systems which dominate ideological structures of *Bleeding Edge*. It argued that, within a neoliberal ideological framework, alternative forms of ideology are no longer even allowed to form. In *Against the Day*, anarchism at least represents an alternative form of ideology, even if it is still in service to the dominant systems of power, but in *Bleeding Edge* even this is no longer possible. The text, I posited, represents Althusser's assertion that that

"the accusations of being in ideology only applies to others, never to oneself" (49) at its most effective. Maxine is presented as having the belief that she, and those she views as friends, are antagonists to the neoliberal ideological structures of the text. However, the novel also presents her as being a neoliberal subject in her own right. It is with this contradictory characterisation of Maxine in mind, that I claim the novel applies the principles of doublethink. Like the characters in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Maxine is able to hold two contradictory views in her mind at the same time and reconcile them as completely logical. I argued that this is made all the more obvious by her relationship with the "neoliberal terrorist" (*BE* 108) Nicholas Windust. It is my contention that Windust and Maxine are doubles of each other, and through their relationship Maxine comes to develop a greater awareness of the lack of binaries that can be used to define subjects within a neoliberal society.

It is my hope that, by offering a reading of Pynchon's work through the lens of both Gothic doubling and Althusserean Ideology, I can enter into conversation with of other works of Pynchon scholarship such as that produced by Sean Carswell, Joanna Freer, Arin Keeble, and Shawn Smith. It is also my aim to encourage a wider consideration of Pynchon's texts and its engagement with the Gothic genre. Not just in terms of the double specifically, but the means by which these novels challenge the conventions of the Gothic more broadly, and what this suggests about how Pynchon's work engages with the larger social principles that the Gothic wishes to preserve through its narratives. The same is also true of my consideration of these three novels in conversation with Althusser's conception of ideology. It is my wish to encourage a

closer inspection of Pynchon's presentation of ideology, not just from an Althusserean perspective, but through the ideas of others such as Slavoj Žižek, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu.

In closing, I'd like to refer to an episode in Pynchon's first novel *V.* (1963), which offers a useful means of articulating the central concept my PhD thesis hopes to demonstrate is applicable to all three of the late-Pynchon works I have examined. During a conversation with his girlfriend Paola, the jazz saxophonist McClintic Sphere lands upon the notion that a person should "[l]ove with your mouth shut, help without breaking your ass or publicizing it: keep cool, but care" (*V* 365-366). He later adds that "[n]obody is going to step down from heaven and square away […] Alabama, or South Africa, or us and Russia. There's no magic words. Not even I love you is magic enough" (366). Sphere is pessimistic at anyone's ability to meaningfully affect large-scale change in the world and the systems of power that govern it. In his reading of this scene, Joel Dinerstein explains that, in the postwar era, "[t]o be *cool* was to be artistically self-expressive within a framework of restraint" (26). In this case, Dinerstein equates this artistic restraint to the confines of jazz music, as Sphere is a jazz musician. However, it has been my contention, that finding the ability to be self-expressive, in any way, whilst being trapped within a framework of restraint is a central desire for all of the characters in Pynchon's work.

Dinerstein also notes that to be cool is associated with being "detached, diffident, isolated, and hyper-masculine" (25-26), but Sphere's assertion that one should keep cool, but care allows him to "add his own twist to the concept" (26). However,

Dinerstein does not elaborate further on what this twist is. In response to this, I will add that Sphere's mantra to keep cool, but care, suggests a recognition that whilst large scale change is ultimately futile, helping those around you is essential. Thomas Moore offers a similarly optimistic reading of Sphere's mantra when he posits that to "keep cool, but care is to make connections, coolly but caringly, on all our open bonds, to include and not preclude the senses of other lives, or life" (108). Moore offers a reading of keeping cool, but caring as a means by which one should always be aware of those around them and try to maintain these personal connections, rather than any attachment to the dominant systems of power. In other words, to "keep cool" is to search for the ability to freely express oneself within the constraints of the ideological frameworks, but to "care" means remembering to help others do the same and allowing others to help you. The application of the doubling motif in Pynchon's work extends these sentiments. The characters may be entrapped within the confines of the dominant ideological structures, but the doubles that develop within and between them aid in their abilities to help each other reach brief moments of subjective freedom whenever these opportunities do appear in the texts.

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