It is not that the singular event of a catastrophic outcome of a late-capitalist social reality is either currently being deferred or has been postponed for some time now even if its “preliminary” phase began earlier. This global social, economic, and geopolitical default mechanism has already occurred and cannot be reversed. It is the altogether shattering message concerning the irreversible onset of the collapse of urban civilization that has necessarily been deferred, perhaps primarily because this singular text must compete with the proliferating multiplicity of an endless stream of self-evident announcements of the arrival of a cybernetic and robotic utopia. According to Pynchon’s no doubt highly imaginative suspicion of this infiltration of a deviant futurism in the contemporary world of imperfect humans, every alleged improvement of the human condition that has been attributed to integrated technologies and electronic telecommunications is so overstated that something like a global metacartel’s actual effect of an infinite regression of degradation of intelligent social, economic, and communicative systems has been ignored by too many of its subjects and for too many years of irreversible time since the interwar period (between World Wars I and II) and during and after World War II. Even the distinction between an anachronism and a salvageable technology or social scientific product or text of knowledge originating in the pre-cybernetic era has been erased so thoroughly that it is an exceedingly rare student of history, social sciences, and the cultural objects of anthropology and literature who can either detect or otherwise decipher the slightest clue, much like the semiotically informed reader or interpreter must attempt to correlate the signifying structure and semantic coding of a sign of recognition, that this state of affairs of an absolute reduction of collective human intelligence, as well as of the intellectual resources needed to sustain it, has already taken place.

In his series of postmodernist American fictions, Pynchon has probed, from a semiotic point of view that must be described as historical in the sense that it is anything but ahistorical, the twentieth century for evidence of the onset of a “critical mass” of the social, economic, and
communicative technology of futurism which was sufficient to instigate the irreversible process of human failure on a global social evolutionary scale, whether this metahistorical shift occurred in 1984, 1970, 1945, or even earlier. Of course, supplementary (economic, social, and geopolitical) accelerator or multiplier mechanisms, improved machine languages and codes, and other technological increments of futurism in its mostly already completed industrial and even psychic terminal phase of the still irresistibly expanding and increasingly integrated metacartel-like technocracy with its characteristic emphasis on artificially semiotic conditioning of its impressionable populations of subjects remain to be “downloaded” as historical time transpires. That Pynchon has actually accomplished the narratological expression of his metahistorical prospectus for the conceptualization of a cultural downfall that has already occurred, while the sufficient metahistorical text or message other than its doxastic literary precursor will be postponed because it awaits the primarily historiographical coding possibilities and semantic contents according to which it can be conveyed to the widest possible global audience, is nevertheless a type of proof of the truthful content of his novels that accords with the judgment of their unmistakable importance as a received and interpreted oeuvre at the exclusive level of an aesthetic idiolect which changes all of a society’s codes. Furthermore, because such a fiction as Gravity’s Rainbow purports to undertake both an escape velocity and a trajectory of rejection of simple ahistoricism that confirms the expectations of its most responsive readers that a metahistory of late-capitalism’s terminal technocratic phase is the most likely object of its literary return to the project of recuperating a more dialectical, intelligent, and interpretatively diverse historiography of the near or at least not too distant future, this renowned work of fiction, as well as every exemplar of Pynchon’s oeuvre idiolect, exceeds the capacity of any other author’s exercise of counterfactual time periods, places, and characters in either postmodernist fiction or conventional science fiction to engage readers in their own parallel and intersecting search, with respect to his novel, in both today’s history and sometimes even its antecedent courses of events in both natural and social history.

In other words, perhaps none of Pynchon’s contemporaries among fiction writers offers such a complex and dynamically destructuring narrative on the vast scale of both well-researched actual and surprisingly reinvented historical events as he does, and his purpose for this tour de force is to invite his readers to engage both his unlimited inference of cultural (semantic) coding possibilities and corresponding aesthetic sign of invention in Gravity’s Rainbow of the actual world as if they were capable of reciprocating his effort of communication with diversely responsive texts of their own culturally coded integration and interpretation of an actual world of today as they have learned about it from the individual reader’s perspective and developed the necessity to contribute such a worldview of each one of them to the collective forum comprising the narrative’s Model Readers. To do so, they have to depart as far as they possible can both interpretatively and communicatively (in their sign production) from any reliance on the deviant current culture’s stereotyping of “character types” and accompanying reductive range of their stereotypical anti-intellectual behaviors in both a narrative mode of electronic entertainment mass media and a general mode of social conditioning of these same readers’ deviantly
socialized role-playing personae, which even intelligent readers have been conditioned to internalize in conducting their public roles in work, business, family life, civic affairs, and politics until they teach themselves by means of an exceptional effort of reading and writing how to exceed the degraded social behaviors of all of their not so interpretatively responsive contemporary non-readers of advanced postmodernist fiction (or historiography); only in terms of such an effort to conceptualize and communicate and otherwise sometimes behave non-verbally according to a course of alienation from all that is currently too familiar about one’s socially conditioned stereotype and gross caricature, i.e. by a modeling of human behavior and speech which is to any degree deficient with respect to Pynchon’s suggested behaviorally reinventive expectations of intelligent action and communication on the part of Model Readers (who thereby do not have to reinvent themselves exactly in the inspirational roles of Shlothrop and Tchitcherine, for example), can this most responsive of all modern readers of literature, history, social and natural science, and philosophy altogether begin to develop a renewed reading and writing competence—a semiotic competence as conducive to intelligent, original, and creative efforts of metafiction, metahistory, and metalinguistics as it is resistant to the fundamentally anti-intellectual “culture” of today’s industrial, social, and academic elites.

In terms of my entire previous line of inquiry from its opening with an excerpt from A Tale of Two Cities until the current passage, is there any neglected context of interpretation of a constellating network of cultural propositions that remains to be abduced, or inferred, among such components of a semiotic model of an actual world of pending human evolutionary failure as the following: I. the contemporary historiography of (several) radical market collapses throughout the history of large-scale economic affairs (D. H. Fischer’s The Great Wave); II. Pynchon’s extraordinary contemporary refracted autobiography in especially Gravity’s Rainbow; III. Eco’s theory of semiotic codes and sign production; IV. R.M. Quillian’s Model of infinite semantic recursivity; V. Eco’s adaptation of a Semantic Possible Worlds theory of counterfactual semantic logic to a strictly doxastic modeling of literary possible and actual worlds in “Possible Worlds” (Limits 64-82); and VI. Johnston’s Deleuzian reading of The Crying of Lot 49, Gravity’s Rainbow, and Vineland? Finally, this list of topics and methodologies of relevance to the problem of determining whether any additional insight has yet to be disclosed in the analysis of Pynchon’s importance to a study of the crisis of contemporary society includes Eco’s exegesis on the unavoidable implications for any epistemology (encompassing a global knowledge system) of coded semantic structures upon which all readings of social and natural scientific information, including the interpretation of social integration of apodictic data and theorems, must rely to remain intelligible according to a given culture’s demand for understanding of its occupation of a Lebenswelt in a specific worldwide and also local natural historical biosphere; therefore, there is the overarching significance for both semiotic theory and praxis of C.S. Peirce’s seminal explication of the unlimited semiosis for which only the triadic semiotic sign in all respects of its signifying action of representamen, object (dynamic and immediate), and interpretant can be adduced to answer the question of semiotic agency.
An additional investigation of the potential for collaboration between a semiotic approach to temporality and that of historiography for which Pynchon’s effort to reinvent a temporality of both the modern and postmodernist eras provides a unique opportunity of dialectical engagement is perhaps all that remains to be discussed in response to the question that was posed in the preceding paragraph. Concerning the reference to a Peircean expectation for a science of semiotics to undertake a program of infinite structural semantic analysis exclusively with respect to an understanding of the action of signs, or unlimited semiosis, in both nature and society, the semiotician’s analytical exercise in semantic recursivity is in theory, of course, unlimited in time insofar as it always defers its final reading of the sememe in question until the point in time in the future when a perhaps currently unforeseeable outcome of its program of interpretation should arrive at a pragmatically optimal though not perfect understanding of both human semiosis (anthroposemiosis) and the semiosis in nature that gives rise to all natural history and the “language” of codes in which this course of evolution is written. Likewise, the signifying action of anthroposemiotic signs is no more likely to attain a terminal state of perfect self-realization of infinitely transparent and irreducible knowledge than the signing activity of natural semiosis itself from which human semiosis is derived in that natural evolution cannot even be conjectured to ever cease, and, therefore, according to a semiotic theory of sign production, the main emphasis of semiotic research must be focused on the undeniably pragmatic nature of the semiotic judgments that correlate a segmented continuum of expression with the segmented continuum of content and thus are at work during the process of all authentic (non-ideological and free of unsuccessful efforts of incomplete exertion of sign producing labor) sign production, which manifests the recognition that its unlimited course of manufacturing signs that are changing other signs is sufficient evidence of a search for a practical truth of both dwelling in and understanding the natural process to the extent that this achievement of a Lebenswelt is species-specifically (humanly) possible.

As finite in time as any provisional increment in human knowledge that is brought about by the action of linguistic signs is, it is, nevertheless, a proof in itself of the extent to which the infinitude of the eternal signing action of nature makes possible the conditions in which its process of designing and testing all of its species should allow for the concerted effort of at least one species to take advantage of the temporal continuum and thereby invent a language with which the segmentation of the timing and cultural meaning of a human occupation of a natural world can be converted to the pragmatic pursuit of the propagation of the sapient species. In this regard, Eco has observed the fundamental realism of a dependency that obtains between any process of signification, regardless of how original it is or how many times it has been translated through one interpretation after another, and the physical relations of dynamic forces (not a metaphysical “presence”) which that triadic sign has always purported to represent to the knowing subject of semiosis in a society such as ours:

It is true that for Peirce the Dynamic Object can never be attained in its actual individual identity but is known only through the Immediate Object, and it is as an Immediate
object that the representamen offers it to further interpretations. If perception is—as it is for Peirce—semiosis, then even at the original moment of our perceptive acquaintance with the external world the external world becomes understandable to us only under the form of an Immediate Object. For Peirce, when the sign is produced the Dynamic Object is no more there (and before the sign was produced it was not an object at all). What is present to our mind and the semiotic discourse is only the Immediate Object to be interpreted by other signs.

Moreover, the Dynamic Object that was, and which is absent in the ghost of the Immediate One, to be translated into the potentially infinite chain of its interpretants, will be or ought to be. Here it appears something that cannot find a place within the deconstructive framework: outside the immediate interpretant, the emotional, the energetic, and the logical one—all internal to the course of semiosis—there is the final logical interpretant, that is, the Habit.

The Habit is a disposition to act upon the world, and the possibility to act, as well as the recognition of this possibility as a Law, requires something which is very close to a transcendental instance: a community as an intersubjective guarantee of a non-intuitive, non-naively realistic, but rather conjectural, notion of truth. (“Unlimited” 39)

That the utmost possible judgment of a semiotic truth of the changing state of human culture must always be deferred, while at the same time provisional and temporary decisions adhering to as much of a consensus as possible should be made for the sake of the contemporaneous interests of interpreting (by means of the cumulative and historical increments of the same postponed semiotic truth) the prospects for propagation of the sentient species in an actual world of which (in a manner that seems contrary to the expectations of semiotics) its resources of medicine, water, energy, food and others are now increasingly rationed to the advantage of an artificially and entropically self-selected technocracy, underscores the importance of maintaining a study of dynamic transformation in a society’s Encyclopedia of coded and structured cultural meanings. Insofar as it is the primary object of both a semiotic theory of codes and a theory of sign production, semiotic research into structural semantics cannot be divorced from the other most globally constituted social science of dynamic transformation of culture: historiography.

Of course, a wide range or even a provisional consensus of semiotically-informed readers encompassing such literary analysts and cultural critics as Johnston and Friedrich Kittler, as well as such radical theoreticians of the presence and function of signifying systems in the context of changing social and economic circumstances (and their associated flows of always fragmentary historically inscribable and actual worldview modeling information) as Deleuze and Guattari and
even Michel Foucault, have made known their unmistakable suspicion that not enough tangible historiographical evidence can be discovered to recuperate a sufficient epistemological system for the definitive interpretation of any period of history, whether it is in the past or is that of the present. While these notable critics of naïve historicism do not deny that fascinating fractal perspectives on real social, economic, and geopolitical causation can occasionally be glimpsed in the historical record as if these mirages of insight were incapable of ever constituting a sustainable metanarrative or metaphistory, they are, as Eco puts it in the excerpt above with respect to the radical literary and philosophical movement of critique that has been described as deconstruction, so insulated within the interior processes of the “course of semiosis” and its attendant but hermetic type of “semiosic discourse” that they remain unwilling to extend the even more radical interpretative effort according to which demonstrable progress might be realized in addressing in the most open-ended manner of inquiry the actual extent of the effects of integrated technology’s aberrant ideology on the cultural values, however imperfect these have usually been instituted or applied in the past, of formerly pre-cybernetic societies whose advancement toward a pragmatic Peircean “Habit” of a “disposition to act upon the world” could, presumably, be measured by a given population’s or society’s acquisition of improved literacy, numeracy, and general intellectual dedication. As Eco has so eloquently and logically demonstrated most especially in *A Theory of Semiotics*, the presupposition of an intelligent, literate, numerate, and semiotically competent worldview is preconditional to the meta-semiotic extra-coding of a foreseeable Peircean destiny of advancement of knowledge by means of increasing integration of both overcoded extrapolations of coded portions, as well as by means of undercoded interpolations of supplementary (observing a coded relation of semantic structure where no such coded portion was observable hitherto), of which both extra-coding actions of signs operate together or apart to augment a culture’s semantic world model (of its Lebenswelt).

It is Pynchon’s possible worlds modeling of a doxastic world view that presents the most likely bridge of understanding between a world of fictional characters and that of historiography’s potential post-capitalist world model of transformation in societies, populations and their individual subjects (of a semiotic regime), geopolitical relations among cultures and their competing worldviews, and biogeographical and other resources, and *Gravity’s Rainbow* is the most representative fictional narrative of all to fulfill this role as a deviantial matrix of narrative coding which surpasses the bankrupt model of a late-capitalist technocracy so dramatically that it has every chance of attracting the most critical and literate of all readers whose consensus on this matter of a cybernetically induced and thus infinitely repetitive entropy of chaotic contemporary social organization and its characteristically deconconstructed flows of electronic mass communications may yet achieve agreement in the recognition of a new “disposition to act upon the world” even while, or because, that Lebenswelt of humans and their machines is undergoing its worst possible future—a terminal phase of history during which all of the worst possible methods of industrial and social conditioning have been accelerated into the present time by integrated technology’s metacartel-like military and corporate instigation in the mid-twentieth century of a revolution in the unrestrained integration of one computer system.
after another according to only probability-evaluated interests in the constant reinforcement and upgrade of command, control, and communications networks above all other social and industrial needs.

Although he does not acknowledge a Peircean prospect for opening a dialogue of interpretative interests in surpassing the current hegemony of a metacartel-like system of global integrated technologies and communications, Johnston deserves the credit for recognizing that Pynchon’s narratological coding of *Gravity’s Rainbow* is unprecedented in terms of its “refracted” isolation of, according to the critic’s reference to Donna Haraway’s analysis of the American military’s own symbol “C³I,” the unrelenting wartime and post-World War II development of cybernetic and intelligence-processing systems of command, control, and communications that have come to dominate, just as a despotic semiotic regime should be expected to engineer such an overarching and self-serving matrix, corporate and governmental relations among computer hardware and software, biogenetic, telecommunications and “Sigint” (signals intelligence), aerospace, electronics, and nuclear weapons and materials and other armaments producers in both the government and private corporate sectors to such an overwhelming extent of industrial integration that the priorities of the C³I world model also psychically infiltrate every subject’s (citizen’s) social reality (Haraway qtd. in Johnston 267n2).

Because cybernetic technologies and their associated streams of electronic mass media have reached such a current state of nearly total integration at a hitherto inconceivably all-pervasive and massive level of occupation of all known outlets of not only media and publication but also any form of labor and organized social participation, this experience of a subject’s social life is conducted or “lived” according to merely electronically reproduced semiotic-like effects of reading and writing that condition the subject psychically to absorb the products of mass entertainment, mass journalism, mass education, mass democracy, mass justice and civic participation, and mass health care as if no alternative or alternate possible world could exist for her or him. Such a semiotic regime has for some time enabled itself to determine exclusively not only the means of delivery but also the content of narrative television programming, news reporting that also rarely departs from electronically-assisted cinematic editing, post-capitalist dogmatic and ideological messaging, consumer advertising that seems to resemble only ideological messaging, and psychological and medical promotion of therapies, diagnoses, and instructions that, beyond the conventional pre-digital intuitive and apodictic knowledge and Hippocratic ethics which have sustained the social mission of medicine historically, are now configured within the late-capitalism’s supplementary semiotic regime of industrial medicine’s ambiguated flows of information multiplicity, ideology, money, and geopolitics as inextricably as the web of misinformation, isolated and contextually unrecognizable apodictic data, and “ideological code switching” (Eco, *Theory* 289) comprising any other institutionalized entropic change regime of the current era’s technocracy. As the author of *Information Multiplicity* demonstrates so consistently and persuasively regarding Pynchon’s literary withdrawal from the toxic actual world of C³I by means of a destructuring narrative that mimicks knowingly that world’s same military-industrial-cybernetic model while it also knowingly manifests its
innovative Model Author’s evasion of the line of flight into a post-signifying regime of solipsism in terms of a philosophy of knowledge or hemeticism in terms of theology and ethics, the constructed code-changing persona of the Model Author is certainly not identical to that of the narrative POV of *Gravity’s Rainbow* and, therefore, is not necessarily subject to the depicted disintegrative effect on the psychic composition of either the character of Lieutenant Slothrop, for example, or the narrative POV.

While there is almost no reason to depart from Johnston’s view of the importance of Pynchon’s novel to a critique of the shocking social reality that has overtaken the actual world of today’s economy, society, and geopolitics in a way that eludes any well-known Marxist or classical capitalist epistemological analysis of the erasure of both temporality and historicity as meaningful subjects of discussion and conceptualization, and, likewise, as the critic observes, no obvious clues or signs of recognition are embedded in the narrative to guide the reader to any contemporary school of historiography or even cultural anthropology possessing a sufficient critical perspective on this fundamental problem of reading and writing about history in a context of research that is itself saturated by the despotic signifying products of a metacartel-like semiotic regime, the very state of affairs of literary invention that entails an understanding of the undeniable uniqueness of an aesthetic idiolect such as Pynchon’s cannot finally be denied by even the most semiotically-informed of cultural critics. Again, while literary and cultural critics who have vested their analytical interests in the seeming perfectionism of a deconstructive approach to avoidance of a naïve historicism in the context of denying absolutely the influence of autobiography on the author’s aesthetic doxastic world claim to exercise the utmost self-restraint in confining their interests to internal semiotic transformation of all signifying and semantic aspects of the text, there remains an argument to be made for always including any relevant autobiographical information in analyzing *Gravity’s Rainbow*, for example, according to any knowledge about both the author and his text that can possibly be disclosed for the sake of a dialogue about the narrative among diversely interpretative readers. In this respect, the psycholinguistic entity or subject of semiosis which is the Model Author comprises, in Eco’s terms, every aspect of the conventional author’s or Pynchon’s (insofar as we can know Pynchon) narrative intentions, including autobiographically-influenced as well as, expectedly, non-ideological ones, with respect to his status as the sender of his celebrated text to his audience of Model Readers.

If it still seems too bold, or even too radical beyond any previous radicalization of the study of history and culture together for which Deleuze and Guattari have most notably theorized a conceptual framework in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, to maintain that some coherence of an extra-coded interpretation of an independent, uncompromised, and non-ideological viewpoint can be suggested for coded potions of texts in contemporary historiography, cultural criticism of postmodernist American and international fiction, and certain insights of semantic research that are of interest to Eco especially in anthropology, electronic and non-linguistic (extra-linguistic) communications, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics, then an effort should be made in the next few pages to review these portions of s
new scientific understanding of current history so that readers may evaluate for their own sake the collective relevance of such evidence of a startling new phase of history to both their own lives and associated reading and interpretative interests.

The textual evidence for linking autobiographical elements of Pynchon’s historical life to some residue of a Model Author’s aesthetic coding of Gravity’s Rainbow and his other novels is cumulatively significant and cannot finally be dismissed as if it were not deserving of scrutiny by interested Model Readers who, first, are not naive historicists and, second, seek to develop diversely interpretative perspectives on the current crisis of a technocratically disabled culture from which these readers desire a critical distance. This perspectival distance amounts to a coded semantic space for which semiotics should sustain a context of research and dialogue according to its scientific commitment to a Peircean expectation of pursuing the labor of sign production until an agreement can be conjectured concerning that Habit of literate and intelligent beings which is not only a “disposition to act upon the world” but also is expressly not an instance of an infinite regression of entropic worldview systems, which are especially manifesting an information multiplicity or proliferating media channels of an impossible world of futurism that is currently being imposed both entropically and mindlessly on our actual world of material scarcity and deprivation of intellectual resources. Therefore, to position Pynchon’s aesthetic work of sign production according to a specific time and place in the uniquely representative period of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by utilizing both autobiographical elements and the doxastic historiographical trends of his unprecedented scale of observation of the cybernetic despotic semiotic regime should qualify as the groundwork for a “nonnaive” historical truth that resists reversion to a “post-signifying semiotic regime” of betrayal and schizophrenia in all respects of signifying and interpretation. However, some unquestionably empirical trends in or factual measurements of pertinent economic, social, geopolitical, and psycholinguistic change-regimes, i.e. those which exemplify the historical course of the same time period as that which coincides with both Pynchon’s refracted autobiography and Gravity’s Rainbow’s depiction of the timing of the seemingly irreversible subversion of human culture by a meta-cartel-like technocratic signifying regime for industrial and psychic conditioning of contemporary populations, will have to be drawn upon to assemble a realistic rubric or set of standards for the Peircean-type inference or “conjecture” of parameters of scale and metrics of trending data that are most critical to both semiotically- and historiographically-informed readers who obligate themselves to pursue the research into and interpretation of the suspected reversal of global human civilization exceeding even the current and well-known debates of predictive ecology and climatology.

First of all, the truly significant and also seemingly obvious relevance of Pynchon’s autobiography to his unprecedented vision of a modern world that has been irreversibly overtaken by the integrated industrial and psychic mechanism of C³I is that, along with this narrative world model’s being exclusively his doxastically differentiated possible and actual worldview system or coded aesthetic matrix and no one else’s, his aesthetic tour de force, which is foremost among even other postmodernist fictions in its exemplification of the argument for a
product of aesthetic semiosis that surpasses any other according to its refusal to remain
constrained by the self-possessive state of schizophrenia, betrayal, and paranoia to which the
post-signifying semiotic regime subjects those “in flight” from the despotic regime, is a
testimony bearing witness to the historical truth of the author’s contemporary society.
Furthermore, it is a truism that the autobiographical authenticity informing Pynchon’s semiotic
“assemblage” of an actual worldview of the catastrophe of the cybernetically-processed
infiltration of formerly human society and culture by an alien futurism is so fundamentally
grounded in his readings of historical texts that it is constantly evidenced in every one of his
narratives by his own exclusive reading perspective on the vast supporting system of referential
texts which underlie his narrative sign of invention or idiolect. In addition, his unique variation
on a postmodernist reader’s perspective is so authentically representative of reading interests that
are focused on wartime and post-World War II documentation of and literature on technological
developments in rocketry, cynernetics, telemetry, and communications taking place during his
formative years, especially from 1937 until 1959 (graduation from Cornell), that his
autobiography, especially insofar as it should be considered the chronicle of the development of
an author’s readerly inventory of narrative contents and means of expression, must be linked
inextricably to this general historical period in which he states his utmost interest: from
approximately 1932 until circa 1945, circa 1970, circa 1984, and the historical context of
_Bleeding Edge_ (circa 2001). While Pynchon may often “reinvent” and otherwise narratologically
“refract” the contents of many of his actual textual sources to approximate or demonstrate
doxastically the scientific, cultural, psychological, ethnographic, and geopolitical reading
interests attributable to any of his leading characters or narrative POV of _Gravity’s Rainbow_,
many of the novel’s undocumented narrative references to prewar, wartime, and postwar non-
aesthetic texts and technical manuals concerning German rocketry, Herero ethnography, and
well-known military, colonial, and geopolitical historiography of the narrative’s depicted time
period, such as textual evidence of the proximity of the Dora concentration camp to the
Nordhausen rocket factory, are as transparent as those of a documentary media product’s
depiction of the authenticated realism of human affairs or natural processes. In addition, as these
references are incorporated most doxastically in the refracted characterological context of the
historical frame of reference and cognizance of dramatis personae or most straightforwardly in
the Model Author’s conceptual framework of factually coded information about at least
fragments of the actual world of science and other scholarship, an exceptional number of
allusions to early twentieth-, nineteenth- and eighteenth-century and sometimes earlier studies
and creative expressions of religion, art, literature, and the sciences, including, for example, I.P.
Pavlov’s _Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes_, are at work semiotically in Pynchon’s novel and
reflect his own remarkable effort of scholarship, which is both coextensive with any superior
output of scholarship in the postmodernist time period and unconstrained by any obligations of
professional membership and academic administration.

Owing to the also exceptional textual design and editing and exhaustive scholarly contents
of Weisenburger’s _A Gravity’s Rainbow Companion_, it is difficult to discover a source in any
medium for Pynchon’s narrative that is not included in this interpretative guide’s bibliography (317-328), which, of course, also incorporates Weisenburger’s extensive range of sources that are drawn from the literary criticism on Pynchon’s novels and their literary precursors as well as from relevant supplementary texts of science, mathematics, history, and psychology, all of which contribute to the understanding of the context of the novelist’s own scholarship and reading interests and, therefore, include a bibliographical item such as The Rand-McNally Encyclopedia of Military Aircraft (pub. 1980) to clarify the difference between an American P-47 fighter plane and a C-47 transport aircraft in the narrative. It is in Weisenburger’s book that readers can discover, for example, that among Pynchon’s American and German sources for historical and technical information about the Nordhausen-Dora V-2 manufacturing complex is the partly autobiographical account in the book entitled V-2 of this site by the Nazi rocket program’s longtime director, Walter Dornberger, a Wehrmacht general officer who was replaced by the SS general Hans Kammler when Heinrich Himmler brought advanced German guided ballistic missile production and launch batteries under SS control in 1943. (As a V-2 battery commander operating out of the Hague and until the time of his launch of the special V-2 00000 bearing Gottfried, Major Weissmann is depicted as an SS officer). Among other narrative and thematic threads that Weisenburger illuminates with respect to Dornberger’s account of the V-2 factory’s final location, including the occasion of Lieutenant Slothrop’s only visit to the Mittelwerke site in the middle of May of 1945 during his quest throughout the Occupied Third Reich for the truth of Dr. Jamf’s Imipolex G and the American’s ostensible mission of finding the Schwarzkommando, is, as the literary critic frequently insists, the instance of a moral element in Pynchon’s authorial conception of this complex fictional world that defies any interpretative effort to subordinate it to the novel’s justly celebrated narrative technique—Pynchon’s vision of an absolutely good (innocent) and equally absolute evil agency of actions undertaken by individuals with respect to others in our actual world is no less important to the novelist even if it always seems slightly out of focus in comparison to not only the much more spectacularly counterfactual circumstances of most of the novel’s characters and events but also to the conventionally narratively framed modern literature of realism and didacticism (Weisenburger 150-156). Weisenburger also notes in this respect that both Dornberger’s and SS officer Wernher von Braun’s self-serving published recollections of their contributions to German prewar and wartime ballistic missile development scarcely acknowledge their use of the slave labor inmates drawn exclusively from the Dora camp while both of these postwar expatriates to the United States overlook the suffering and death they must have witnessed daily; in addition, their books appeal to “the romance of rocketry” (ballistic and interplanetary) that has been a theme of much popular science fiction since the 1930s and both NASA and branches of the military since the 1940s and 1950s (157). Whether or not one chooses to either deny the author’s autobiographical element of humanitarian concern for the tragedy of innocent victims and, generally speaking, enslaved and exploited “preterites” in Gravity’s Rainbow or consign this narrative infusion of a seemingly conventional expression of tragic narrative circumstances (in the context of the other destructuring techniques of the novel) to a purely literary non-referential conceptual status of
floating indecisively between one rejected post-signifying regime after another and thus remaining in the semiotic state of always being undermined by the “impossibility” of a postmodernist acknowledgement in a fictional world view of moral behavior that has not been tainted by a despotic regime’s subversion and mimickry (of everything), the argument should be made that humanitarian concerns are not necessarily antithetical to either Pynchon’s intentions for a semantic space of his narrative or his coding of the most complexly destructuring narratological matrix for changing all known codes of contemporary society, industry, and culture.

While Weisenburger states no preference for even consulting the radical interpretations of *Gravity’s Rainbow* that can be attributed to psychoanalytic, Deleuzian, and deconstructive schools of criticism, and, indeed, the design of *A Gravity’s Rainbow Companion* excludes the most densely articulated theoretical analyses of figurative and rhetorical narrative language for the sake of the editing and contents of the already immensely challenging and exhaustive inventory and intellectual history of which his book is comprised, he would agree with a semiotic critique of the novel that attributes to it a moral vision as profound and inescapable as that of any great literature or philosophies of ethics of the past. By the same token, he could not be expected to reject the idea that Pynchon’s work encompasses the notion of a return to a realism of the near or at least not remotely distant future which has not sufficiently materialized yet and should be deferred until that time when enough of the author’s doxastic investigations of the significant trends of actual history, as these are revealed by the most imaginative reinventions of empirical trends of the recent past that lead to the structural historical processes of the present leading to the future, arrive at a moment of consensus among his diverse Model Readers who can then state with some confidence the truth of a history toward which they have been heading for most or all of their lives (circa 1932-present).

Incisively articulated in their own cumulatively encyclopedic manner are frequent commentaries by Weisenburger on Pynchon’s intertwining, i.e. for the novelist’s overarching destructuring narrative reasons, of coded matrices of intersecting characters and events which may manifest some tragic circumstances even though there is not necessarily a tragic outcome of the narrative’s not quite actual imaginary world as a whole, and both the dispersal of its characters and POV and the depicted deferral of the conjectured effects of any technocratic despotic signifying regime undoubtedly pursue the prevailing and intended narrative trajectory of *Gravity’s Rainbow*. Regarding the eleventh episode of the segment entitled “In the Zone,” Weisenburger observes a narratological network of the Deleuzian type of semiotic assemblage that Johnston would describe in terms of characterological *mappings on* and epistemological *interfaces*, and it would also be capable of limitless interconnective semantic investigation of Pynchon’s fictively refracted authorial perspective on the current actual historical world whether one chooses Johnston’s restricted approach to linking history and fiction or the more open view of Eco on the social code-changing impact of the exceptional aesthetic idiolect. (Either program for an aesthetically responsive reading program can be predicated on the presupposition of the unlimited semiotic potential of any number of rereadings of any of Pynchon’s fictions or all of
them taken together despite Johnston’s unshakeable conviction that historical judgments originating in even the most advanced postmodernist fiction can be considered only in terms of a communicative product commenting on other signifying regimes and products of communications insofar as the literary model world of narrative fiction cannot encompass empirical historical data and analysis in support of the interpretation of the lives of either its author or readers). On the other hand, in isolating the following narrative subsystem, Weisenburger notes of this eleventh episode (Gravity’s Rainbow 397-433) of “In the Zone” that its tragic thematic undertones are barely “refracted” away from the reader’s attention to the historical circumstance of the narrative despite the usual narrative complexity of one “bridge” between an event or character and another that leads to yet another bridge of this nature, which, in turn, shows every possibility of semantic interconnectivity with every other linking device (Weisenburger’s term for what Johnston means by “mapping on” and “interface”) in the narrative to the unprecedented degree of destructuring structural complexity that Pynchon achieves in this novel beyond, arguably, that of any previous or competing novel (Weisenburger 194).

Among the threads of Pynchon’s narrative that are suggestively interwoven in this eleventh episode are the bridge between Slothrop’s sexual conquest of the former film actress Margharita Erdmann at the end of the previous episode and the first of an extensive series of reminiscences by Franz Pöklér with which the eleventh episode begins and in which the German rocket engineer recalls by way of these sequences of variously dated analeptic recollection much of his experience of both his marriage to Leni during the turbulent early 1930s (she is a socialist activist destined for incarceration along with their daughter Ilse in Nazi concentration camps) and his subsequent wartime career in the V-2 program including six annual two-week “furloughs” with his daughter owing to the intercession of Major Wiessmann who arranges to release her temporarily each year from the Dora camp. As Weisenburger explains, there is an important narratological subsystem at work in this critical juncture at the midpoint of Gravity’s Rainbow that entangles such narratively resonant overlapping doxastic events and structures as the semantic association of the word bitch with the expressionist and horror screen siren Margherita Erdmann, other associations of that term with Bianca Erdmann as well as with both Leni and Ilse Pöklér, and a number of key triads of relations among (a) Franz, Leni, and Ilse; (b) Max Schlepzig, Margherita, and Bianca; (c) Slothrop, Margherita, and Bianca; and (d) Weissmann, Katje Borgesius, and Gottfried (Major Weissmann’s sexually exploited sacrificial astronaut). Furthermore, both of the tragically murdered children, Bianca (who is deceased when Slothrop boards the yacht Anubis for the second time) and Ilse (who may have actually died in Dora or another concentration camp along with their daughter Ilse in Nazi concentration camps) and his subsequent wartime career in the V-2 program including six annual two-week “furloughs” with his daughter owing to the intercession of Major Wiessmann who arranges to release her temporarily each year from the Dora camp. As Weisenburger explains, there is an important narratological subsystem at work in this critical juncture at the midpoint of Gravity’s Rainbow that entangles such narratively resonant overlapping doxastic events and structures as the semantic association of the word bitch with the expressionist and horror screen siren Margherita Erdmann, other associations of that term with Bianca Erdmann as well as with both Leni and Ilse Pöklér, and a number of key triads of relations among (a) Franz, Leni, and Ilse; (b) Max Schlepzig, Margherita, and Bianca; (c) Slothrop, Margherita, and Bianca; and (d) Weissmann, Katje Borgesius, and Gottfried (Major Weissmann’s sexually exploited sacrificial astronaut). Furthermore, both of the tragically murdered children, Bianca (who is deceased when Slothrop boards the yacht Anubis for the second time) and Ilse (who may have actually died in Dora or another concentration camp along with her mother prior to Major Weissmann’s first arranged “reunion” of Franz and his supposed six-year-old daughter at Pöklér’s quarters in Peenemünde for a planned vacation trip to the Nazi Party’s family resort Zwölfkinder), are conceived in the context of the motion picture Alpdrücken in 1933: Bianca’s birth results from the filming of Margherita in this typically “vaguely pornographic” (Gravity’s Rainbow 393) horror movie at the Neubabelsberg studio where most likely she is impregnated, while fastened
to a torture device, by Max Schlepzig (she is not sure of this causation concerning Bianca’s conception), and Ilse is conceived in a rare effort of lovemaking between Franz and Leni upon his return from viewing the same film in Berlin (Weisenburger 194).

It is the remarkable mapping on consisting of Franz Pöklers’s recollections throughout much of the eleventh episode that draws together a number of the key epistemological interfaces, characters, and narratologically structured temporal and doxastically “historical” events of the novel, and these semiotic phenomena include the refraction of Dornberger’s personal history of the V-2 (A4) rocket program (including Von Braun, General Kammler, and the politically impressionable and “idealistic” outer space traveling enthusiasts of Berlin’s Society for Space Travel in the 1920s and 1930s), Maxwell’s Demon, the mandala archetype of C.G. Jung’s collective unconscious (mandalas often coincide in the novel with the Christian liturgical calendar and Herero mythology), and the structural order of the thirty-two episodes of “In the Zone,” which, according to Weisenburger, coincide with the Kabbala’s representation of Yahweh’s inscription of thirty-two avenues of approach to omniscience, of which ten are the constituents of the Sephirot and the remaining twenty-two are the units of the Hebrew alphabet (149). Just as a number of densely networked and articulated refractive narratological moments of epistemological insight seem to accumulate throughout Gravity’s Rainbow—as a residue not to be discharged into a post-signifying regime by the end of the narrative and thus still awaiting a deferred or proleptic semantic resolution according to a Peircean expectation of diversely dialogic semantic interpretation in the future beyond the V-2’s ballistic re-entry circa 1970, Franz Pöklers’s recollections of his engineer’s life of technological discovery in pursuit of a dream of space travel and the accompanying social fulfillment of marriage and fatherhood, all of which have by wartime been distorted beyond recognition by the Nazis and Major Weissmann’s SS operatives, are, arguably, as reflective of the author’s fictional but refractively actual view of the period from 1932 until the present time or not remotely distant future as are the leading indicators of an almost currently materialized yet refractively narrated most possibly actual worldview that are represented by the depicted psychic experiences of Slothrop, Tchitcherine, and Enzian. Hence this historical view that is narratively expressed by Pynchon is refracted by Pöklers’s growing moral vision of the unprecedented horror of the Nazis’ linkage of the most advanced technology to a relentless distribution of death at the receiving end (London) and production source (Dora-Nordhausen) of the V-2, including the intrusion into his life of the social effects of the most sinister wartime laboratory for the new metacartel, which, while it may not adapt every Nazi-like behavior of not only degradation of human intelligence and human rights but also extermination of scapegoated populations according to the Third Reich’s fascist extremes of racist, anti-Semitic, and megalomaniacal pretexts for political action, learns nevertheless how to dominate its psychically fissured subjects (each betraying oneself, the despot, and the other) through an increasingly integrated technology of ideologically saturated electronic mass media. Concerning Pynchon’s narratologically refracted perspective on this utmost extreme of genocidal Nazi anti-Semitic behavior throughout World War II, therefore, there is no doubt that the author’s view of this historical tragedy neither diminishes nor evades a
full recognition of the unique horror of the Holocaust as a calculated and industrialized exercise on an unprecedented scale in the deliberate genocide of every last Jewish citizen of Europe.

Pynchon’s qualifications as a witness to every extreme measure of immoral behavior of individuals, corporations, and armed services that exploit the war to further their entangled ideological and technological interests should not be doubted in terms of his self-identification as an observer of his time in history and no other historical period that is not intrinsically related to his contemporary era (1937-present). Perhaps only in the culturally coded context of the author’s unprecedented narrative matrix of an idiolect that is unerringly yet refractively representative of the wartime phase and its somewhat greater historical context of the onset of a metacartel-like despotic signifying regime could an intersection be configured (in a semantic space) of such metahistorical circumstances as the advanced technologies of aerospace, avionics, and computerized electronic communications, the industrialization of slave labor and death camps, and the diabolically conceived cinema-like orchestration by Major Weissmann of annual visitations by as many as six different juvenile female inmates to play Ilse’s role for the sake of securing Pökler’s loyalty to the V-2 program (Gravity’s Rainbow 422). These provocative narrative threads, interweaving fictional but also sometimes factual judgments of the author’s actual period of both autobiography and world history, engage the novel’s readers to perceive the potential for a metahistory in a narrative that both despite and because of its narrative innovation should strike them as not only more psychically realistic about their own range of social and linguistic behaviors but more epistemologically real in terms of studying history to discover a logical model for understanding their individual behaviors in the collective context of all of their society’s behavioral reaction to the current crisis of a failing aeconomic and social system than the world model that any other contemporary fiction or work of history is capable of representing:

Pökler helped with his own blindness. He knew about Nordhausen, and the Dora camp: he could see—the starved bodies, the eyes of the foreign prisoners being marched to work at four in the morning in the freezing cold and darkness, the shuffling thousands in their striped uniforms. He had known, too, all along, that Ilse was living in a re-education camp. But it wasn’t till August, when the furlough arrived as usual in its blank kraft envelope, and Pökler rode northward through the grey kilometers of a Germany he no longer recognized, bombed and burned, the wartime villages and rainy purple heath, and found her at last waiting in the hotel lobby at Zwölfkinder with the same darkness in her eyes (how had he missed it until now? Such swimming orbits of pain) that he could finally put the two data together. For months, while her father across the wall or the wires did his dutiful hackwork, she had been prisoner only a few meters away from him, beaten, perhaps violated….
Trying, a bit late for it, to open himself to the pain he should have been feeling, he questioned her now. Did she know the name of her camp? Yes, Ilse confirmed—or was told to answer—that it was Dora. The night before she left to come here she’d seen a hanging. Evening was the hour for hangings.

Even though he knows with enough certainty (as certain as a character can be when the narrative POV is often less so) that near the end of the fifth year of the war (1944) he is speaking to an inmate actress who has been diabolically rehearsed in the role of Ilse for a sixth annual father and daughter two-week reunion, because, as Pökler suspects, each one of the six Ilses has been a different inmate and none of them could be confirmed as his daughter, all but the last one of these inmates having almost certainly died as this most recent “Ilse” has been selected because of her approximate age of eleven or twelve years, the deceived Mittelwerke rocket engineer experiences an overwhelming sense of the tragic circumstances of the loss of all of these young lives that moves him to not only cling emotionally to the movie director’s (Weissmann’s) Ilse-fidgment (who is utterly real to him as her own person) of his vanished daughter but also attempt fruitlessly to rescue the sixth and final Ilse upon the break-up of the Nordhausen-Dora complex and the evacuation of its transferred/murdered prisoners before the end of March in 1945 (and Wiessmann’s launch of rocket 00000 on Easter, April 1). Unfortunately, the SS camp guards prevent him from entering Dora.

Regarding the exceptional range of scholarship and equivalent critical insight with which Johnston has achieved a complexity of Deleuzian and otherwise postmodernist as well as communications science-informed set of interpretations of three of Pynchon’s novels but perhaps most especially including the reading of Gravity’s Rainbow (extended by Johnston to encompass the increasing state of integrated information multiplicity, media assemblage, and multiple media synergy—all becoming as one semiotic wellspring of an all-encompassing human experience of saturation by limitless quantitudes of entropic information and the accompanying infinite regression of artificial worldviews of our species-specific history as this social reality is depicted in Vineland), there is no reason to doubt that the literary critic’s complex reading of the former novel not only renders complete critical justice to the unique complexity of the narrative structure of Pynchon’s most celebrated fiction, but Johnston’s interpretation would also not overlook the moral theme of the narrative insofar as it unreservedly incorporates a literary type of testimony as to the perpetration of evil upon the victims of both World War II in general and the Holocaust in particular. However, as worthy as this theme and its attendant testimony are of continuing investigation and commemoration, these cannot, according to the postmodernist critical viewpoint, entirely escape saturation by the arbitrary and synthetic semiotic effects of the contemporary despotic signifying regime on all reporting of historical phenomena, nor can this theme and its semiotic action of witnessing be linked to any logically predictable outcome of expected improvement of relations among peoples along the lines of difference in ethnicity, religion, social class, and nationality that should arise from a radical breakthrough in reading
metahistory but only if that paradigm were attainable in a world of “late-capitalism” where such an intersection of metahistory, metalinguistics, and metafiction altogether has been foreclosed for the duration of this episode of history featuring a globally networked and integrated system of metacartel-like economic and communications systems.

Since, according to the postmodernist critique of any interpretative extension of *Gravity’s Rainbow* to historiographical relevance other than American postmodernism’s status as a distinctively radical innovation in only culture and related outlets of mass communications (popular culture) beyond the preceding literary and artistic movements of modernism, the presence in a fiction of narrative elements of tragic outcomes for not only characters who can only simulate real persons but also fictively depicted witnesses of such plot-driven tragedies who suffer the post-traumatic stress trauma of surviving even their child’s (Ilse’s) untimely death (Caruth 92-112) cannot be carried forward into a context of sufficient innovation in the reading of metahistory to allow for a dialectical view of history that rises epistemologically above, in the first place, the politically volatile and intellectually bankrupt ideologies of both classical capitalism and socialism and, second, the astonishingly deceptive and constantly cybernetically dispersed (through an infinite regression of media channels and their entropic contents of worldviews) “post-ideology” of the contemporary global corporate and military system of command, control, and communications (C3I). Yet there may be an important sense in which, despite the most complex narratological modeling system for depiction of our world by which *Gravity’s Rainbow* is so distinguished, the sheer number of exploited and brutalized workers (and their depicted activity whether it is signing or producing), marginalized or displaced persons (DPs in the Zone), victims of violence, ethnic cleansing, sexual and otherwise predatory exploitation who accumulate not only in this novel but also most especially in two later full-length narratives, *Vineland* and *Against the Day*, may ultimately and especially in the proleptic manner of a projection into some as of yet incompletely fulfilled consensus on the state of real knowledge of history’s destination in the near or not too distant future prove themselves to be more than just mere counterfactual role players in a counterhistorical gaming of the technocratic computer gaming world of today’s social reality. In Eco’s *A Theory of Semiotics*, for example, it is literally impossible to divorce the concept of labor (and some notion of a natural continuum underlying social semiosis) from any of the four modes of semiotic sign production regardless of whether or not those resulting signs of replication, ostension, recognition, and invention are suspended from direct contact with both labor and nature by socially evolved superimposed layers of intermediary (superelevated) networks of one coded network of industrial, economic, and communicative engineering upon another. According to at least Eco’s understanding of semiotics and language, there is no enduring and effective role in the production of human language and thought for a purely electronic artifice of signs and codes that have no basis in reality other than constant distortion of stimulated flows of either natural or demographic data for which no earthly plan of social utilization and consensus thereof is proposed whatsoever (except insofar as it is a probabilistic and ideological figment or science fiction of cybernetic gaming of industrial, demographic, and geopolitical binary codes).
The reader of *Gravity’s Rainbow* must not ascribe to this narrative a semiotic element or linguistic function that simply is not there, but there is no intellectual or literary critical offence to be registered when the novel’s semantic catalog of a Linear Text Manifestation (in Eco’s terminology) is extra-coded for a purpose of semiotic analysis of a culture’s encyclopedia (and not overly formal and computer-ready dictionary) of the codes for historical semantic distribution of both denotations and connotations. Hence investigating the definition of such a constant term in Pynchon’s fiction as *preterite* can implicate a broader semantic field consisting of not only narrative elements of tragedy including the witnessing and reporting of tragic outcomes of victims, slaves, neglected and exploited subclasses, and ideological dupes but also autobiographical elements of the author in the narrative and the actual historiographical relevance (to a view of history) of the author’s selection of historical sources according to their importance in defining both a particular period of and viewpoint on history. Even if the frequently mapped on speech acts and interior monologues of Pynchon’s characters, which are depicted as being recorded according to the narrator’s attempts at explication, are always supposedly representative of one or another of the four semiotic regimes of despotic signifying, post-signifying, pre-signifying (atavistic), and counter-signifying, that narrative design of *Gravity’s Rainbow* does not necessarily mean that the author refuses to acknowledge the expropriation of such narrative elements as the witnessing of tragic victimization and exploitation, auto- biographical contents, and historical reporting and interpretation into an open debate among Model Readers of the significance of the novel’s depicted events and characters to real lives and the currently prevailing social reality in which these readers are striving to live or even survive in the condition of a preterite.

Entirely in the manner of expediting a sememic/lexemic trace of denotations and associated semantic markers along the lines of Quillian's Model of infinite semantic recursivity (Eco, *Theory* 121-125), narrative linking devices, as Weisenburger would describe them, constellate around such semiotic elements of *Gravity’s Rainbow* as: the constant recurrence of the semantic item *preterite* and any characterological instance of such a role, a remarkable manifestation in the doxastic world of the novel of a narratologically refracted but actual text of fascinating social and theological commentary (on the status of preterites according to the fanatical theocrats of the Puritan Massachusetts colony) of which the author was Pynchon’s own ancestor, and the narratological semiotic effect of the insertion by the narrator (seeming to be the same old “usual” narrator again—not a disembodied POV) of an alleged Puritan hymn by “William Slothrop” (William Pynchon) in the embedded context of performative singing instructions (to the assembled “captive” audience in the Orpheus movie theater) which constitutes the very last subepisode of the novel. As previously noted, this seemingly infinitely regressive and non-conclusive terminal trajectory of the refracted narrative and its doxastically depicted (not quite real) emblematic V-2 rocket descending upon the movie audience not only constitutes the end of the novel, but it is also a remarkable textual moment of the narrative’s most proleptic projection of an event beyond the main temporal setting from 1944 to 1945, and it can be dated to approximately 1970. The prolepsis of a time-warping V-2 reentry is potentially
more than just emblematic of a postmodernist allegory of a dystopian future of no definitive historical relevance, and, therefore, it should be considered as indicative of a toxic infiltration by “futurism” of a late-capitalist social reality whose social, economic, and geopolitical absorption of such astonishing quantities of entropic data and their attendant delusional world models has most likely already foreclosed any chance that non-despotic subjects can recover a sustainable understanding of the unlimited degree to which they have been relegated to the preterite condition. Its relevance, as a temporal narrative device, to the semantic field linking the term preterite to literally the entire narrative and its author’s intentions behind his expression of an aesthetic text of code-changing significance to his society is even far greater than that of a mere communications failure, for its innovative status is that of an extraordinary plot device which threatens to escape any extraneous critical conceptualization of Pynchon’s novel as an allegory so that it may signal in the least allegorical way possible the absolute imperative of understanding a temporal structure (periodicity) of the dynamic trends of events according to which the actual history of the twentieth century has given rise to a current century of looming demographic and economic catastrophe for both preterites and despots alike. In this context of the greater historical study of the present time, both semiotic research into Pynchon’s seminal aesthetic work of counterfactual semantic possible worlds modeling and the historiography of economic history may recognize the only opportunity that will ever arise for a necessarily joint effort of achieving an unambiguous definition of the actual state of today’s human habitat on earth and its most probable destiny in the near future.

Author’s note: The following bibliographic list is that for the Introduction to and Chapters One through Sixteen of the MS LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND HISTORY (bibliographic items introduced in Chapters 17 and 18 of the MS are not included)
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