4: "America was the only place . . .": American Exceptionalism and the Geographic Politics of Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*

Pedro García-Caro

> *But should [the poet] venture upon the dark story of their wrongs and wretchedness; should he tell how they were invaded, corrupted, despoiled, driven from their native abodes and the sepulchers of their fathers, hunted like wild beasts about the earth, and sent down with violence and butchery to the grave, posterity will either turn with horror and incredulity from the tale, or blush with indignation at the inhumanity of their forefathers.*
>
> — Washington Irving

IRVING OUTLINED THE TROUBLED, ambivalent attitudes toward the genocide committed against Native Americans by whites: incredulity — confirmed by a silence, which not always sounds condemnatory — or indignation — spoken through many acts of contrition — are only two, perhaps the most prevalent, of the many possible outlooks on the American Holocaust. Assuming the relentless impact of the Westward expansion of the country, Irving's prediction anticipates the destruction not only of the East Coast Indians, but of all the Native American peoples and their ways of life across the territory claimed by the United States in successive years: "They will vanish like a vapor from the face of the earth; their very history will be lost in forgetfulness" (361).[1] With a mixture of liberal nostalgia and historical fatalism, Washington Irving endorsed the prevailing myth of the "vanishing Indian," a theme that would pervade American culture into the twentieth century. The reverse trope of this historical fatalism — its photographic negative — is, of course, the grand narrative of Manifest Destiny: the American nation as a triumphant exception in a history of constant decline and depravation.

American exceptionality, a set of totemic narratives on which the politics of continental expansion and its associated ethnic cleansing, built from the time of its independence, is a complex and evolving group of myths about selfhood which range from Protestant millennialism to secular (pseudo)scientific theories about ethnic superiority. "Manifest Destiny" is but another phase in the evolution of the millenarian discourse that can be easily identified as the racial and religious justification of United States imperialism in the North American continent and elsewhere. It is one of the most powerful pieces in the ideological backbone of a certain "mainstream" definition of Americanness, and it provides American exceptionalism with a vigorous geographical agenda. America as the "consensual term" is thus the unchallenged space for a national "ideological consensus," as Sacvan Bercovitch's proposes (*Rites* 158).[2]

One of the main objects of study for Americanists is to inspect how these celebratory, omnipresent discourses of American nationalism, with their attendant silences, their erased flaws, and their implied expansionist agenda, rearrange historical materials in a teleological fashion. If Americanists — to paraphrase Amy Kaplan — aim to offer a critical remapping of America by looking at those "geographies that traverse and challenge [its official] borders," we need to avoid its recuperation as a spatial whole which, as Kaplan indicates, would present the danger "of reinstating a teleological lineal narrative of historical continuity, of viewing American history, even in its imperial dimensions, as a singular march [. . .]" (155). In that critical vein, the aim of this essay is to read Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* as a critical interpretation of American colonial history and the ensuing national foundation of the United States, short-circuiting its recuperation into the grand narratives of the American nation.

As Etienne Balibar has maintained, the historical teleology of the nation is constituted upon "a narrative which attributes to these entities [nations] the continuity of a subject" (86). Balibar describes it as a twofold illusion. The first effect "consists in believing that the generations which succeed one another over centuries on a reasonably stable territory, under a reasonably univocal designation, have handed down to each other an invariant substance" (86). The "invariant substance" indicated by Balibar is the totemic essentialist cultural construct that confirms the apparent projection of any national identity into the future in the shape of a common destiny. This "destiny" is the second element of the dual impression as portrayed by Balibar: "[it] consists in believing that the process of development from which we select aspects retrospectively, so as to see ourselves as the culmination of that process, was the only one possible, that is, it represented a destiny" (86). Thus, the "illusion of national identity" is thoroughly linked to the symmetrical narrative figures of "project" and "destiny." In other words, there is a diachronic syntax of the nation, one

that looks at history in search of the narratives of a particular subject whose invariant substance articulates those very narratives.

In its double axis, its Western projection, and its North-South divide, the Mason-Dixon Line embodies two main fault lines on which the historical narratives of the American nation have dwelled since before the time of its independence: two geographical axes and two subjugated groups, Native Americans and African slaves. These two geographical axes and their position in the formation of an independent American identity are prominently thematized in Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*.[3] Destructive racial and cultural relations with Native Americans on one hand, and the fracture posed by two conflicting capitalist systems — Northern freeholding farming and industry versus Southern slave-holding plantation — on the other, contest the combined discourses of scientific progress and of enlightened freedom inscribed into the national consensus.

Pynchon sets out to debase the nationalist histories of American exceptionalism by pointing at the epistemic biases of the discourses of progress and science at the time of the Enlightenment, the intellectual context in which part of the British American colonies became an independent nation. I will explore here the ways Pynchon parodically uses historical materials and characters in order to reinscribe into the birth of the nation the cultural erasures and the epistemic violence involved in the narration of American exceptionalism. Pynchon's political intervention in a critical rewriting of history is aimed at showing the lack of national exceptionality in the American history of conquest and cultural homogenization.

The narrator in Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* is the Rev[d] Cherrycoke; his voice replicates and parodies eighteenth-century English, asserts the need to see history, and the history of texts, not as a direct line — as lines are the real protagonist of that novel — but rather as an uncontrollable proliferation: "Not a Chain of single Links, for one broken link could lose us All,— rather, a great disorderly Tangle of Lines, long and short, weak and strong, vanishing into the Mnemonick Deep, with only their Destination in common." (349). Cherrycoke's chaotic "Tangle of Lines" is a fictional theory of history that advocates plurality of referent and multiple textual connections in the palimpsestic nature of the present text, or hypertext. Thus, the project of the novel is an incursion into some of those lines, a reading and a reworking of partial events in the history of the United States before its constitution as an independent nation, which seeks to refashion that history in a critical rather than an epic mode. Through a dense use of historical material, and through the use of parody, the novel confirms Pynchon's commitment to a reassessment of American history through fiction. Inconsistencies between discourses and practices at the time of the formation of the United States as a nation are

underscored while the foundational narratives of the United States of America are critically reinscribed.

In *Mason & Dixon,* the material demarcation of the boundary between Maryland and Pennsylvania epitomizes the uncontrollability of the scientific process of mapping new territories: the Line gains a separate life from the two surveyors who trace it and who become increasingly concerned about the cultural and social effect of incorporating into the world map previously uncharted territories. The Line becomes a "great invisible Thing" (678), a monster of human ambition, not merely a boundary between neighboring provinces, but a way into the western Indian territories, "a tree-slaughtering Animal" which kills "ev'rything due west of it." Its real "intentions" beyond that are unknown to all. The newly charted territories become "known" and accessible to future colonizers, while the landmarks of previous societies are erased. At the same time, it is noted that the Line will serve also as the official separating incision between North and South during the Civil War one hundred years after it was marked out. As an index to the two mythical efforts articulating the nationalist images of Americanness throughout the nineteenth century, the conquest of the West and the Civil War, the Line stands at the center of American nationhood. The story itself begins at the very place of birth of the United States: Philadelphia, 1786, a few months before the U.S. Constitution was approved.

"I make an effort to keep to the Margins close as I may."

Faced with the horrors of slavery in the African colony of Cape Town, Jeremiah Dixon, the Quaker surveyor from Durham, reaffirms his marginality and his loathing of the practices of the East India Company. As elsewhere in the novel, ideas about the characters' marginal relation to the projects of the British Royal Society, the East India Company or the proprietors of Maryland and Pennsylvania, convey a sense of their irresolute participation in those projects. Their status as insiders/outsiders is a position in tune with other characters' perspectives in Pynchon's fiction, characters that parallel Pynchon's paradoxical marginality in the national canon of American literature. A suspicion about the location of Pynchon's marginal voice has been expressed often among critics of his work. The coincidence in time between the development of poststructuralist critical practices in the American academy with the early reactions to Pynchon's work, added to the lack of a physical authorial presence, has too often led to the surmise that the point about his novels is precisely the process of avoidance of an authorial voice. Pynchon was, and is to this date, elusive

not only in real life — no photographs, no interviews — but also in a fiction opened up to many possible readings through the multiplicity of narrative voices.

My main concern is with the more formalist versions of these responses as they may be silencing one of the main textual features, namely Pynchon's critique in *Mason & Dixon* of the elimination of cultural differences by the homogenizing projects of enlightened modernity. In particular, the description of the novel as plot-less may be aimed at suppressing its politics. This process of political demotion in relation to *Mason & Dixon* is well illustrated in William Logan's article "Pynchon in the Poetic." The title gives away Logan's whole thesis: *Mason & Dixon* is "a poetic act" (424). What for some might be a point of agreement, the novel's excellence in metaphoric language, the dazzling sense of humor, the success of both pastiche and anachronism, turns under Logan's logic — or rather his lack of it — into a classification of the novel as a failure, which is a point that will surely provoke a strong cause for dissent. This is because Logan does not equate the language and the formal features of the novel to poetry as a form of praise of Pynchon's mastery, but rather as an excuse to indict its prose as hollow:

> Pynchon may have conceived *Mason & Dixon* as a supreme fiction, a poetic act freed of the slavery of plot and character; but conventions are cruel to those who betray them. As his stand-up comedy becomes merely a seven-hundred-page improvisation, the jokes grow hollow. Here Pynchon's poetics have seduced him: it hardly matters if most poems mean what they say. Poetry is the saying, but fiction (the drama, the action, the consequence, the regret) is the having said. (437)

The conclusion reached by Logan is consistent with his heavily formalist analysis of the novel. He accuses the characters' apparent "purposeful dither" of finally becoming "just dither" (433), failing to notice that the Line would *not* be finally completed, not because the "actions of the characters remain empty" (433), but precisely because of their final realization of the moral and cultural implications of the Line they are tracing. Logan's constant use of adjectives such as "empty," or "hollow" to refer to the novel and his affirmation that the novel's quasi-narcissistic texture is a product of the author's self-complacent attitude is one of the most explicit examples of a critic at the service of defusing a novel's voice through a mixture of praise and smear.

From a different angle, Pynchon's apparent marginality has been reviewed as part of the features that guarantee Pynchon's entry into the canon of American Literature. Michael Berubé's earlier *Marginal Forces/ Cultural Centers* connected Pynchon's seeming marginality with the

process of canonization of the author himself, underlining the status of Pynchon's voice as a "consensus criticism of the consensus" (310).[4] This dissenting attitude from inside would be in tune with Bercovitch's characterization of mainstream American literature as enacting an internal disagreement which finally "serve[s] to sustain the culture" (*Jeremiad* 205).[5] It is in this sense that Pynchon's conflicting voice comes from the center itself and not from the margins. Pynchon can therefore be seen as "one more white man from the Northeast, writing big books about the Puritan origins of the American self" (309), as Berubé casts him at a certain point, and his concern for the margins, as in *Mason & Dixon,* might identify him with that future poet previewed by Irving who would finally "blush with indignation at the inhumanity of their forefathers."[6] And yet, the assumption that Pynchon is working inside the framework of the mainstream in terms of his access to the canonizing resorts of a white man from the Northeast with his background, cannot or at least should not be at the service of defusing his effort to dissent with the nationalist grand narrative of American exceptionalism.

In *Mason & Dixon,* Pynchon explores and critiques the destruction of human difference in the apparently harmless scientific enterprises of observing the Transit of Venus or tracing a line through the wilderness. Both historical and fictional characters do become aware of the implications of western expansion and of the cruelty and barbarity of its agents. As in *Gravity's Rainbow* and *The Crying of Lot 49,* the 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 and trite lives. The direction westward of the Mason-Dixon Line criticizes the western movement of the Anglo-Saxon empire while it performs an indictment of the social relations prevalent before and after the American Revolution.

This inscription of Pynchon's text into a denunciation of imperial practices integrates it into a postcolonial critique of the structures of power, foregrounding the relation between space and power as the central theme in the novel.[7] Such a politicizing reading of *Mason & Dixon,* rather than ignoring the humorous and ambiguous aspects of the novel, its various registers, the accurately historical, the concisely anachronistic, Pynchon's mastery as regards the confluence of eighteenth-century styles of English and its parodic resonances in the twentieth and beyond, suggests a view of the text as a meeting point. In it, those stylistic features can be read not only as the signifiers of the political, but also as part of the signified, that is, part of the project of politically recuperating and re-enacting the past from the present time to which all historiography is committed.[8] A similar preoccupation with the epistemological problems of the interaction between history and fiction is expressed in the novel

through the reutilization of historical material in a parodic mode. As Douglas Keesey points out in his survey of the first reviews on *Mason & Dixon,* the novel's carnivalization of history should be approached "with this assumption that comedy is *not* incompatible with history, but a key route to other pasts and futures — an alternative history" (171).[9] Parody is not a mere formal feature, Logan's "hollow jokes," but a political movement away from the "want of objectivity" studied by Hayden White, and which usually manifests itself as a "failure to narrativize reality adequately" (25). As the ethnocentric seriousness of enlightened science is questioned by private morals and practices, so are the ethnocentric discourses of objectivity by jokes and laughter.

In his *Postmodern Cartographies* Brian Jarvis regards space and its politicization as a constant element in the works of contemporary artists such as David Lynch or Toni Morrison. Published only a year after *Mason & Dixon,* Jarvis's book does not discuss Pynchon's most explicitly cartographical novel, yet its perceptive analysis of his earlier fiction proves to be useful as a framework for reading *Mason & Dixon.* In his analysis Jarvis perceives

> an acute geographical awareness in Pynchon's work from the outset, one which manifests itself not in "adestinality" or directionlessness, but in a continual movement ***underground,*** towards the critical contours of the postmodern landscape. Pynchon's fictions gravitate towards the contraries and contradictions of uneven development, towards the spaces occupied by the underclass and the disinherited and towards the omnipresence of forms of waste, which, potentially, may become oppositional objects once situated as anti-commodities. (53)

In *Mason & Dixon,* Pynchon's "geographical awareness" is brought to the foreground. It demonstrates once more the author's commitment to that "continual movement underground" which Jarvis has identified in Pynchon's other fiction. In this case, the explicitly cartographical endeavor is also an encounter between Europeans and the pre-existing cultures whose geographical signposts they help erase. However much the fictional Mason and Dixon come to distrust the political motives behind their two expeditions, they were after all imperial bureaucrats at the service of the British Crown.[10] This contradiction allows us to look at the novel as an instance of postcolonial satire,[11] as it problematizes the contrast between the characters' moral beliefs and their scientific "westernizing" activities. Although it might be possible to claim that their metaphysical and moral beliefs are challenged by "Reason," it is their faith in progress that is ultimately shattered by their own actions and observations.

The Enlightenment as a liberating discourse has been an object of criticism on many occasions. Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* identified such liberation with a process of cultural homogenization that is indeed the "line both of destruction and of civilization" (Adorno 92). Apart from this analogous image of the Enlightenment as a destructive civilizing line, Adorno and Horkheimer's criticism of the unifying logics of Enlightenment also coincides with the denunciation expressed in Pynchon's writings. His fictional condemnation of the destructive projects of European civilization in America concentrates also on the process of erasure of those other forms of knowledge which Adorno and Horkheimer see as the victims of Enlightenment's demythologizing action.

As an ideology, Enlightenment can be defined as a series of efforts to establish rational and standardized ways to study and manage nature and society, but with varying degrees of access to knowledge granted to a given population. Adorno and Horkheimer would add two main provisos to this definition. The first one relates to the idea that Enlightenment is a form of domination and that its search for knowledge is not an end in itself: "[W]hat men want to learn from nature is how to use it in order wholly to dominate it and other men" (4). The second proviso refers to the social hierarchies and the "access to knowledge" promoted by Enlightenment. For the Frankfurt scholars, Enlightenment becomes "wholesale deception of the masses" (42) as its mechanics seem to "liberate" while pursuing domination. Their conclusion that "today machinery disables men even as it nurtures them" (37) is close to Pynchon's paranoia about the technopolitical order that may or may not know where it is going.

In "Is It OK to be a Luddite?" Pynchon addressed the inevitable question of the political and economic implications of technological development.[12] Pynchon situates the movement from religious theology and faith through to the technological theology of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century:

> In ways more and less literal, folks in the 18th century believed that once upon a time all kinds of things had been possible which were no longer so. Giants, dragons, spells. The laws of nature had not been so strictly formulated back then. What had once been true working magic had, by the Age of Reason, degenerated into mere machinery. Blake's dark Satanic mills represented an old magic that, like Satan, had fallen from grace. As religion was being more and more secularized into Deism and nonbelief, the abiding human hunger for evidence of God and afterlife, for salvation — bodily resurrection, if possible — remained. The Methodist movement and the American Great Awakening were only two sectors on a broad front of resistance to the Age of Reason, a front which included Radicalism and Freemasonry as well as Luddites and the Gothic novel. Each in its way expressed the same profound unwillingness to give up elements of faith, however "irrational," to an emerging technopolitical order that might or might not know what it was doing. (41)

In *Mason & Dixon,* the coexistence of "rational" and "pre-rational" beliefs contributes to the characters' hesitation about the morality of Reason. The possible validity of "other reasons" to account for the world puts into perspective the ideological discourse of Reason. Pynchon's preoccupation with the uses of contemporary technology for various political purposes can be clearly perceived in *Gravity's Rainbow* and in *V.,* where experiments with chemistry, conductist psychology, and rocketry commodify the human body, inserting it in the machine. As in those two novels, in his evocation of the origins of Luddism, Pynchon openly establishes the social consequences of technologies, old and new, to certain economic practices. Although Pynchon seems to cherish the old "elements of faith," he does not seem to be promoting a return to religious beliefs or to mythical explanations of reality. Adorno and Horkheimer pointed out the ineffective "opposition" to Enlightenment from earlier forms of knowledge: "Whatever myths the resistance may appeal to, by virtue of the very fact that they become arguments in the process of opposition, they acknowledge the principle of dissolvent rationality for which they reproach the Enlightenment. Enlightenment is totalitarian" (6).

In this article and in his novels, including *Mason & Dixon,* Pynchon explores the possibility of such an opposition to Enlightenment's domination in the form of realization and conscience. In this sense, his political agenda may belong to another version of Enlightenment, Enlightenment inside Enlightenment: we need to know, to liberate ourselves, to get out of the immaturity of the Enlightenment itself. This is built on the template of Enlightenment's popular claim, delineated by Kant in his famous essay "Was ist Aufklärung?" Published in the *Berlinische Monatschrift* in 1784 as a response to that same question, Kant uses the metaphor of childhood, maturity, and development as progress of the rational mind to explain the process of Enlightenment as one that should "take man out of his immaturity" (54). Kant brings up to date the old motto *"Sapere aude"* as the paramount expression of the enlightened man's challenge.[13] The same motto may be applied to Pynchon's paranoia: "dear to know." Instead of by reason, Pynchon's characters are motivated to know through paranoia, and their ultimate findings all direct them toward the conviction that they are being manipulated, that they are victims of a conspiracy, which is coincidentally, that of the technopolitical order that "might or

might not know what it was doing." These insiders who do realize, and grow out of the immaturity of not knowing, become aware of the disenfranchisement of the non-modern, the "Preterite" of *Gravity's Rainbow* and the "Subjunctive" in *Mason & Dixon*. Their knowledge is a knowledge of the past, a nostalgia for a diversity that was destroyed and erased. The Enlightenment is a homogenizing project as the unification of times and measurements proves in *Mason & Dixon,* but in those other times that are lost, Pynchon's nostalgic moods find a form of fictional resistance to the relentless advance of *the* Line.

As a parody of the grand narratives of scientific achievements of the age of Enlightenment, the novel voices a disagreement with the established discourses about the history of social and racial relations in early American history, critiquing the construction of power groups and the history of the appropriation of knowledge. By doing so, it subverts both the triumphal narrative of the scientific achievement of tracing the Line between Maryland and Pennsylvania, and the nationalist narrative of progress and democracy underlining the accounts of the American revolutionary period.[14]

". . . a Tale about America."

To most readers, *Mason & Dixon* will give the impression of an exceedingly complex text. Yet its complexity and the density of the historical material make it almost impossible to refer to the novel's structure without feeling that something is being left out. The novel is divided into seventy-eight chapters separated in three sections corresponding to the three main scientific activities carried out by Charles Mason (1728–1783)[15] and Jeremiah Dixon (1733–1779).[16] These are, in the first and third parts, the observations of the Transits of Venus in 1761 and 1769 respectively, and in the second part the tracing of the boundary between the provinces of Maryland and Pennsylvania, and the calculation of a degree of latitude in the Delaware peninsula.[17] The first section, "Latitudes and Departures" (chapters 1–25) deals with the expedition to the Cape of Good Hope to observe the Transit of Venus, the first occasion on which Mason and Dixon worked together. Although initially appointed to go to Bencoolen in the Island of Sumatra, the war between the English and French, and the fact that Bencoolen itself was taken by the French meant first a delay and finally a change of plans in their destination. In January 1761, they traveled to the Cape of Good Hope and stayed there until October 1761 when they first met up with the Reverend Nevil Maskelyne at St. Helena. At the end of the first part, Mason and Dixon return to England and sign the contract with the proprietors of Maryland and Pennsylvania that will engage them in drawing the boundary between those two provinces from

1763 to 1768. The second part (chapters 26–73), "America," has as the recurring theme Mason and Dixon's five-year-long stay in the British North American colonies. During these five years, they become close friends and while carrying out their jobs also get involved in observing and commenting on pre-Revolutionary American society. In the third part (chapters 74–78), "Last Transit," back in England Mason and Dixon observe separately the Transit of Venus from different points. After Dixon's death a decrepit Mason returns with his family to Philadelphia to die there.

Mason & Dixon starts in *media res:* it is Christmas time 1786 and Reverend Wicks Cherrycoke has arrived in Philadelphia in October to attend Charles Mason's funeral, although he was "too late for the Burial, as it prov'd" (6).[18] At his sister's, the reverend has been telling stories in exchange for accommodation, given that "for as long as he can keep the children amus'd, he may remain" (6). The opening scene of the novel focuses on an exchange between the reverend and part of his audience, the twins, Pitt and Pliny, who through these months have already heard "the Escape from Hottentot Land, the Accursèd Ruby of Mogok, the Ship-wrecks in Indies East and West,— an Herodotic Web of Adventures and Curiosities selected, the Rev[d] implies, for their moral usefulness, whilst avoiding others not as suitable in the Hearing of the Youth" (7). They now ask for a "Tale about America," "with Indians in it, and Frenchmen" or "French Women" as Pitt comically mutters (7). The significant exchange, from which the narration stems, requires some unpacking. To begin with, there is a humorous suggestion that the young American public in front of Cherrycoke is already craving the ultimate American epic: the frontier tale. Its implied nostalgic reference to the oral traditions of storytelling and the human interaction in the transmission of information characteristic of the past offers an indication of the dialogic nature of the narration to follow. Opinions are exchanged between the storyteller and his audience that account for much of the book's metafictional discussions: among other things, they comment on the act of remembering (350, 695). This setting is in turn, related by another narrator — the nameless editor of the novel — who will also organize and present quotations from sources such as Rev[d] Cherrycoke's *Spiritual Journal,* his sermons, and his treatise on *Christ and History.* Such a juxtaposition of materials, the ones used by the heterodiegetic omniscient narrator and those related by the storyteller, provides the novel with the appearance of a collage, out of which the plot and the chronological continuity of the narration emerge.

It is in relation to Cherrycoke's voice that Foucault's questions of "who is speaking?" and "what difference does it make who is speaking?" need to be posed. Cherrycoke, described as Mason's Boswell (718, 744), is *the* witness. He becomes the key character through whom the reader

and his audience have access to Mason and Dixon. Both his nostalgic mood and his moral expounding conjure up the history of the two British surveyors as an excuse for his "Tale about America." The storyteller is placed at a privileged viewpoint — 1786, ten years after the Revolution, and twenty after the surveyors' departure from America — from which he can resurvey the past through the many Lines that connect us with history, "into the Mnemonick Deep [. . .] with only their Destination in common" (349). The common destination of time is seen throughout the novel as the principal feature of Enlightenment's new order. Dixon reacts against superstitious warnings before departing for Cape of Good Hope, stating that "'tis the Age of Reason," and that he and Mason are "Men of Science. To huz must all days run alike, the same number of identical Seconds, each proceeding in but one Direction, irreclaimable . . ." (27). This belief in a relentless progress of time is partially contested by Cherrycoke's activity of remembering, but also by those "other times" and "spaces" that constitute themselves as oppositional to "rational time" and "measurable space": the "eleven missing days" of the old English calendar, and Dixon's exploration of the *Terra Concava* (740).

Cherrycoke is a self-styled "untrustworthy Remembrancer" (8) who selects and narrates facts in a consciously "moral" way.[19] His access to some information about the lives of the two British scientists immediately poses questions about the accuracy of the stories, the origin of the materials presented,[20] but also about their moral purpose. The narrator has a contradictory political position from the outset as an exiled member of the Anglican Church who represents, in an American context, dissent and "official" views at once. Cherrycoke's ejection from England characterizes him as an outcast, a "madman." The *Seahorse,* a commercial ship aboard which he travels with Mason and Dixon on their first assignment abroad, is described as an "Engine of Destruction" also used to seclude political dissent. His political activity is identified with madness in a way that recalls the exclusion of social "unreason" in eighteenth-century France denunciated by Foucault in his *Madness and Civilization.* Cherrycoke's political sin, "the Crime they styl'd anonymity," can be read as analogous to Pynchon's artistic standing and his own anonymity, his withdrawal from the public while engaged in a denunciation of technocracy as a conspiratorial entente in which military and economic powers collude. Cherrycoke's "insanity" is reflected in his anonymous activities:

> That is, I left messages posted publicly, but did not sign them. I knew some night-running lads in the district who let me use their Printing-Press,— somehow, what I got into printing up, were Accounts of certain Crimes I had observ'd, committed by the Stronger against the Weaker,— enclosures, evictions, Assize verdicts, Activities of the Military,— giving the names of as many of the Perpetrators as I was sure of [. . .]. (9)

All the "Crimes" catalogued here refer to the process of redistribution of communal properties carried out at the time of the Industrial Revolution in England, and of which Dixon was an agent as local surveyor in Durham (Robinson, "Dixon" 272). It is Cherrycoke's denunciation of those Crimes of the "Stronger against the Weaker" that account for his marginal position, for his initial sympathy with margins and excluded people.

For him, America appears to offer an "exceptional" opportunity to banish the corruption of the Old World, expressed in that continuous oppression of the "Weaker." Cherrycoke explains his wish when he remembers how in 1765: "I was back in America once more, finding, despite all, that I could not stay away from it, this object of hope that Miracles might yet occur, that God might yet return to Human affairs, that all the wistful Fictions necessary to the childhood of a species might yet come true, . . . a third Testament . . ." (353). America, as the "object of Hope" belongs to the non-conformist traditions established in the American colonies since the seventeenth century. Indeed, the religious basis of American nationalism at the time of the Revolution — "the Revolution made prophetic sense" (Stephanson 13) — has been amply demonstrated. Cherrycoke's "Third Testament" is another version of the coming of the New Israel, or Berkeley's "Fifth Act" of Westward progress of which "Time's Noblest Offspring" is the protagonist.[21]

Yet the predestination of the American people and of America's sacred territory is threatened with becoming part of everyday "Despair" through the enlightened scientists' mapping:

> Does Britannia when she sleeps, dream? Is America her dream? — in which all that cannot pass in the metropolitan Wakefulness is allow'd Expression away in the restless Slumber of these Provinces, and on West-ward, wherever 'tis not yet mapp'd, nor written down, nor ever, by the majority of Mankind, seen,— serving as a very Rubbish-Tip for subjunctive Hopes, for all that *may yet be true,*— Earthly Paradise, Fountain of Youth, Realms of Prester John, Christ's Kingdom, ever behind the sunset, safe till the next Territory to the West be seen and recorded, measur'd and tied in, back into the Net-Work of Points already known, that slowly triangulates its Way into the Continent, changing all from subjunctive to declarative, reducing Possibilities to Simplicities that serve the ends of 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. (345)

Cherrycoke's paradise to come in America is incorporated into the "bare mortal World" at once "home" and "Despair." As the "next Territory to the West" is seen and recorded, and Adorno's "line of destruction and civilization" advances, the "Possibilities" of diversity are encroached, becoming Profane "Simplicities that serve the ends of Governments," homogenized into the "declarative" tense/time of the Westward Empire. Jarvis has pointed out a similar aggression of the colonial forces on the "spaces of myth" in *V.*: "Pynchon's geography of the fall away from what is human hinges upon the expansion of profane places — for as colonial dependencies and supermarkets are built up, so too are all spaces of myth and magic razed to the ground" (58).

The loss of myth and magic that Pynchon had also denounced in "Is it OK to be a Luddite?" is developed even further here, and given a new dimension with the use for the first time in Pynchon's fiction of "real" personages, whose "real" records are reinterpreted through the narrative act. In the novel, Mason and Dixon's slow-growing awareness of the loss of the "subjunctive" is accompanied by an increasing hesitation about the righteousness behind the scientific projects in which they are involved.[22] Mason's non-fictional *Journal* also reveals the "restlessness" (705) that they confess at the end of their trip.[23] However, in the novel their early suspicion about why "they have been hired again" (250) turns into Dixon's conviction that they "shouldn't be running this Line" (478), and Mason finally wonders why he is "doing this" (642). Their growing paranoia is one of the many ways in which the shift from personages into characters takes place in the novel. Unlike other apparently unresolved quests by Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* finds here a conclusive opinion: the characters finally perceive the Line as "a conduit for Evil" (701).

The point at which author and narrator coincide is precisely in their shared choice of the historical personages, Mason and Dixon, to talk about "Britannia's Dream," to tell through them a "Tale about America." The Rev[d]'s pondering on the future of the "realm of the Sacred" is one of the most explicit examples in the novel of the fictionalization of history in order to politicize it. It is conveniently inserted as a parenthetical digression in the Lancaster episode in which Mason and Dixon visit the site of a massacre committed the previous year against the Conestoga Indians. Pynchon does not need to invent episodes leading to their awareness of racial hatred toward the non-European. They are all taken from historical sources, and their relevance as milestones in the narration is instructive: they are re-narrated and placed at moments of "Enlightenment." In the novel, Mason's visit to Lancaster is conveniently followed by an extract from Cherrycoke's *Christ and History* where he defines history as neither mere "chronologies," which concern lawyers, nor "Remembrance," which belongs to the people. As we were told at the beginning of the

novel by that "other narrator," Cherrycoke's histories are "an Herodotic Web of Adventures and Curiosities selected, the Rev[d] implies, for their moral usefulness" (7).

Following Cherrycoke's moral theory of history, perhaps the most "morally useful" of the many instances in which Mason the character and the historical Mason coincide is the Lancaster episode. Mason's visit to the scene of the massacre of Conestoga Indians at the hand of the infamous Paxton Boys is recorded in *The Journal* as one of Mason's trips in the winter of '65:

> Left Brandywine and proceeded to Lancaster (distance about 35 miles) a Town in Pennsylvania, distant from Philadelphia 75 Miles, bearing nearly due West. ***What brought me here was my curiosity to see the place where was perpetrated last Winter the Horrid and inhuman murder of 26 Indians, Men, Women and Children, leaving none alive to tell.*** These poor unhappy creatures had always lived under the protection of the Pennsylvania Government and had Lands alloted [*sic*] for them a few Miles from Lancaster by the late celebrated William Penn, Esquire, Proprietor. They had received notice of the intention of some of the back inhabitants and fled to the Gaol (jail) to save themselves. The keeper made the door fast, but it was broken open; and two men went in and executed the bloody scene; while about 50 of their party sat on Horse Back without; armed with Guns, etc. Strange it was that the Town though as large as most Market Towns in England, never offered to oppose them, though its [*sic*] more than probable they on request might have been assisted by a Company of his Majesties Troops who were then in the Town . . . no honor to them! What was laid to the Indians charge was that they held a private correspondence with the Enemy Indians; but this could never be proved against the men and the women and children (some in their Mothers wombs that never saw light) could not be guilty. (66)[24]

Cherrycoke turns the journal entry into a full episode in which both Mason and Dixon go into the jail, though separately. Dixon puts on Mason's clothes, leaving behind for the first time his "real" red army jacket,[25] both as an external sign of their first ideological identification in the novel, and as a way of including Dixon in a fundamental epiphanic moment of the story. Although there is no documented evidence of whether Dixon accompanied Mason or not on this journey,[26] fiction and fact are mixed with Cherrycoke's assurance: "Dixon told me, that Mason had meant to go alone,— but that at the last moment, mindful of the dangers attending Solitude in a Town notorious for Atrocity, he offer'd to add Muscular Emphasis, tho' Mason seem'd unsure of whether he wanted him there or not" (341). Mason's "real" horrified account is inserted in Cherry-

coke's — and Pynchon's — ideological recuperation of history in order to show the way in which the "subjunctive Hopes" may have become "murderous Hopes," and that as the Line progresses, the "indicative" or "declarative" world of the Age of Reason will also advance, wiping out the subjunctive world of the Indians.

Despite Cherrycoke's confessed faith in American exceptionality, in the "subjunctive Hopes" that "may yet be true," Mason and Dixon's comparison between Good Hope and America is constant, even talking about America as just "[a]nother slave-Colony . . ." (248). The Rev[d] is also able to recount Mason's realization of the apparent "connection" between the acts of racial violence in both continents:

> Mason did note as peculiar, that the first mortal acts of Savagery in America after their Arrival should have been committed by the Whites against Indians. Dixon mutter'd, "Why, 'tis the d---'d Butter-Bags all over again."
>
> They saw white Brutality enough, at the Cape of Good Hope. They can no better understand now, than then. Something is eluding them. Whites in both places are become the very Savages of their own worst Dreams, far out of Measure to any Provocation. (306–7)

If "[s]omething is eluding them," it is because they have not yet come to the conclusion that the violent episodes they witness are part of the same project of domination for which they are working. Butter-Bags fill the air every time an act of colonial violence occurs as a metaphysical indication of the outrage, and yet they have not been able to ascertain that "connection." Pynchon's use of Mason and Dixon's African experiences as a preamble for a "Tale about America" becomes clearer: as in *Gravity's Rainbow,* the African element is used in the text as the index of the "original sin" of slavery and domination. In *Mason & Dixon* the comparison between the two colonies re-enacts American utopia just as it was being depleted, turning the "tale about America" into a tale about *the lack of exceptionality of* America.

Mason and Dixon have been made into fictional characters on previous occasions. Susan Lefever, an obscure writer who published an early, bland fictional account of Mason and Dixon's American stay,[27] makes Mason write a letter to Dixon in which he asks: "How did we ever do what we did in that exotic world across the sea?" (326). Mason continues, with a paranoid style familiar to Pynchon's readers, to bluntly confess his close friendship with Dixon:

> And now though I still suffer depression from what we went through and from the ultimate apathy of our superiors I was so sure would honor us, I feel God gave me a greater gift than all the material honors or promotions that should have been awarded us. He gave me you, Jery. He gave me your friendship, your love, your concern. And never, ever do I wish to lose it. (326)

In Pynchon's infinitely subtler and more complex text, the ideas here condensed in a paragraph are slowly developed. The personages/characters are yet again conferred what amounts to distrust for their superiors' "ends," a suspicion that is intractable in any of their published scientific articles or in Mason's *Journal,*[28] and which Pynchon elaborates into a full-blown questioning of western values.

A different case is the first recorded instance to my knowledge in which the two surveyors were fictionalized, on this occasion by a Maryland pro-slavery historian, John H. B. Latrobe in his speech, *The History of the Mason and Dixon Line.* In his 1854 address to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Latrobe analyzed six years before the outbreak of the American Civil War, the long history of tensions and anxieties on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. Latrobe could look back at the moment when the thirteen colonies had declared independence from the British king seventy-eight years earlier and summarize what appeared to him to be a short history of national and intellectual success, the foundation of a Republic "whose rapid development, in all that constituted the true greatness of a people, would be the wonder of the world" (49). Independent American history so far was marked by two geographical events, inscribed on the map of the Mason-Dixon Line East-West and North-South.

The first of these events could be observed in the Line's westward projection, the advance of the country reflected in the replacement of the woodlands' inhabitants, the vanishing Indians, by the "monster and the miracle of modern ingenuity" (37), the train.[29] An achievement which for Latrobe was in marked contrast with the power that the "roving Indians of the wilderness" had had ninety years earlier in cutting thirty-six miles short the assignment of tracing a line between the provinces of Maryland and Pennsylvania.

The other successful event had still to happen and it would consist in the reconciliation of the axis North-South, which the Mason-Dixon Line had come to demarcate: slave holding versus anti-slavery states. In a short history of independence, slavery was to be the major controversy "whose solution, and its consequences, involved the gravest considerations, and had been supposed to threaten the integrity of the Republic" (7). Latrobe's "final" solution to the presence of African slaves is their substitution by cheaper workers: "The slavery question of the United States is a question of interest; and its solution will be found in the increasing white population of the country, the consequent reduction of

wages, and the great ultimate result — the production, by free labor, of the chief staples of the country cheaper than they can be produced by slave-labor" (6). Bringing into the country waged white slaves and shipping the Black population to the recently established colony of Liberia are two of his bright antebellum proposals for the forging of a new national consensus. In Pynchon's novel these solutions are parodied when Dixon summarizes the "Elements common" to all their journeys:

> Slaves. Ev'ry day at the Cape, we lived with Slavery in our faces,— more of it at St. Helena,— and now here we are again, in another Colony, this time having drawn a Line between their Slave-Keepers, and their Wage-Payers, as if doom'd to re-encounter thro' the World this public Secret, this shameful Core. . . . Pretending it to be ever somewhere else, with the Turks, the Russians, the Companies, down there, down where it smells like warm Brine and Gunpowder fumes, they're murdering and dispossessing thousands untallied, the innocent of the World, passing daily into the Hands of Slave-owners and Torturers, but oh, never in Holland, nor in England, that Garden of Fools . . .? Christ, Mason. (692–93)

In Dixon's earlier trip to Virginia "though Slaves passed before his sight, he saw none" (398), but at the moment of summing up their journeys, all the encounters with slavery become connected as the "public Secret," "this shameful Core": the prostitutes in St Helena, who were that "slavery within Slavery" (150), and the American slaves, the chattel and the chained, are part of the same technopolitical system based on different forms of slavery. Even northern waged workers can be considered slaves — at least in this point, Latrobe seems to coincide with Pynchon. But in their explicit realization of the destructive results of their collaboration in the Line's — and with it, Enlightenment's — Westward advance, Pynchon's Mason and Dixon appear to have traveled a long way from other characterizations of the two personages.

Latrobe, worried about the coming civil war, argues in apocalyptic tones that if the "blessed people" are finally divided, it may mean the demise of the American dream of "a united and homogenous people." After enumerating the many scientific and political advances which Mason and Dixon would have missed since their deaths, including the foundation of the Republic,[30] he hypothesizes about their reaction to the news by guessing that they would be astonished "[. . .] could they have been told, that the results of this revolution having been power, and might, and majesty, and boundless prosperity, of which every individual in the land was a participant [. . .]" (51). In contrast to Pynchon's, Latrobe's Mason and Dixon are presented as weak, subservient Britons. After all, the surveyors who traced the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland until

stopped at the "war-path" by the "sylvan monarchs" represent those past times and values banished with the new order to come only with the American Revolution. Latrobe even affirms that "They, probably, were not imaginative men, and it is not likely that they indulged in many reflections as to the future of the world of mountain and forest and boundless plains, on which they thus turned their backs" (48). Quoting Berkeley's famous line about the course of Empire, Latrobe congratulates himself and his audience that now "an observatory [. . .] crown[s] the summit of a hill, looking down on a great city [Cincinnati] near three hundred miles westward of the war-path" (49).[31] Their final reluctance to finish the line into Indian territory was charged to them by Latrobe as a sign of their ignorance of the new Republican imperial values.[32]

In contrast, Pynchon's Mason and Dixon are cast once again as men whose understanding is subject to moral judgment rather than to the colonizing imperatives of the Line: "Having acknowledg'd at the Warpath the Justice of the Indian's Desires, after the two deaths, Mason and Dixon understand as well that the Line is exactly what Capt. Zhang and a number of others have been styling it all along — a conduit for Evil." (701). Mason and Dixon's acknowledgment of the "Justice of the Indian's Desires" in Pynchon's novel credits them with an ability to listen to the Other, and to those other reasons, which is absent from Latrobe's speech. Both Mason and Dixon share their increasingly awed views about the colonial horrors of South African and American slaughter of natives and transported slaves. Their reflection on what they have observed during their journeys leads them to the conclusion that white Europeans are the real savages "out of their own worst Dreams."

Finally, Latrobe puts in the surveyors' mouths "words of prophecy" uttered "for the sake of the unity of [his] discourse" (52) — that is, in order to complete his presentation of the surveyors as weak British "servants" (50); he makes them worry now about the future preservation of the Republic:

> These uses, to which you put the lightning; this erection of cities on river shores, in Indian lands; this tale of battle, and blood-shed and victory; this dethroning of monarchs and uplifting of their subjects, are astounding results that we cannot appreciate, for we see no elements to produce them, and they shock all the prejudices of our education. To time we leave their development. But, that a blessed people beyond all others, in their realization, if realized they *are* to be, and occupying the proudest place among the nations, because of their wondrous unity, under a government that extent of dominion enfeebles not — should willingly permit their Union to be dissolved, we cannot believe; because, here, we are dealing, not with the future of science or politics, but with the principles of humanity common

> to all ages; and, depend upon it, whatever the few may wish, the many will be true; and this, our line of survey, will, after all, owe its notoriety to ephemeral oratory, in which it figures as a mere phrase of cant, or to addresses, which will bring to light the few brief records we have left of our transactions. (51–52)

It is at this point that Pynchon's and Latrobe's Mason and Dixon appear as completely diverse personages through their different perceptions of the Line. Latrobe's reconstruction of their voice remains politicized for the sake of his project to save the union, as the "blessed people" need to "be realized." Pynchon's polyphony is equally politicized, but it is engaged in demonstrating Pynchon's obsession with the predestination of the West to spread its "Kingdom of Death" (*GR* 722) throughout the world. His surveyors encounter numerous opinions favoring that view, such as Captain Zhang's: "Nothing will produce Bad History more directly nor brutally, than drawing a Line, in particular a Right Line, the very Shape of Contempt, through the midst of a People,— to create thus a Distinction betwixt 'em,— 'tis the first stroke. — All else will follow as if predestin'd, unto War and Devastation" (615).

Pynchon's final opposition between the two worlds comes to a halt with the surveyors' stop at the Indian Warpath, the "Membrane that divides their Subjunctive World from our number'd and dreamless Indicative" (677). In their discussion, Dixon uses one of Pynchon's syntactic clichés to describe the Line and to speak for the Indians' fear of "this great invisible Thing that comes crawling Straight on over their Lands" (678). Apart from echoing *Gravity's Rainbow*'s opening image of "a screaming [that] comes across the sky" (*GR* 1), the sentence insists on Dixon's earlier conviction that the real "Proprietors" are the Indians (468). For Dixon the Line is therefore an invasion into "its Life's Blood," similar to the V-2 rockets in *Gravity's Rainbow*. A "living creature, 'tis all of us" (678) says Mason to a disconcerted Dixon, whose hesitation is the ultimate paranoid abashment in the novel: "And what of its intentions, beyond killing ev'rything due west of it? do you know? I don't either" (678).

Cherrycoke's reconstruction of history is not so much directed toward claiming truth as toward finding a space for resistance against the dreamless homogenizing drive of the west. His praise of fictional history could stand as a manifesto of the Postmodern Historical Novel:

> Who claims Truth, Truth abandons. 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,—who need but touch her, and all her Credit is in the instant vanish'd, as if it had never been. She needs rather to be tended lovingly and honorably by fabulists and counterfeiters, Ballad-Mongers and Cranks of ev'ry Radius, Masters of Disguise to provide her the Costume, Toilette, and Bearing, and Speech nimble enough to keep her beyond the Desires, or even the Curiosity, of Government. (350)

Cherrycoke's faith in America could be read as being parodied through the oppositional elements advanced in Mason and Dixon's discoveries. And yet, Mason and Dixon's story seems to have also transformed the narrator as he has told the story. He explains how his approach to history belongs to the "common Duty of Remembering" of which "our Sentiments" are a part. By "Sentiments," Cherrycoke parenthetically explains, he is referring to "how we dream'd of, and were mistaken in, each other," and those "count for at least as much as our poor cold Chronologies" (695–96). His sentimental history is as much a reconstruction of utopian dreams as a realization of their erring. His America is a thing of the past; it exists in the past subjunctive of the utopia that could have been, but was not. As the novel nostalgically underlines the diversity that was erased through conquest and expansion, readers are asked to confront the history of the birth of the American nation not so much as a historical utopian exception in which liberty and equality were fulfilled, but perhaps as "an instructive history of ethnic cleansing" (Stephanson 24).

The surveyors decide to discontinue the Line, to somehow prevent its movement westward, and Dixon, in a heroic though historically accurate act, threatens to thrash a slave conductor who is being violent towards the slaves (chapter 28).[33] As their actions become oppositional to the world they have helped advance, and they reassert their "thoughts," they also conclude that America *could* have been different, exceptional, but it was not: "No matter where in it we go, shall we find all the World Tyrants and Slaves? America was the only place we should *not* have found them." (693). At this point, instead of the utopian space that was being imagined by the eager founders of the nation, America has become for Pynchon's Dixon a thing of the past, subjunctive.

Notes

To my dear friend Burhan Tufail, whose memory shall endure.

[1] The idea that Native Americans were condemned to either extermination or absorption has been thoroughly studied in McNickle. See also Philip J. Deloria for a study of the appropriation of the Indian in American culture.

[2] See particularly "The Ritual of Consensus," 29–67, and "The Typology of Mission, from Edwards to Independence," 147–67.

[3] In his article on *Mason & Dixon,* David Seed also concludes that "the novel demonstrates a postcolonial alertness to mapping as a culturally inflected exercise,

an exercise in territorial appropriation where the first casualties to be displaced are the native Americans" (99).

[4] Berubé is using here an expression coined by Nina Baym.

[5] In his note to p. 204, Bercovitch explicitly mentions Pynchon as one of the modern practitioners of the American anti-jeremiad.

[6] In Pynchon's case this is true even from a biographical viewpoint; in their well-known monographs Steven Weisenburger and Tony Tanner have commented on Pynchon's puritan ancestry.

[7] As Homi Bhabha has suggested, the question of cultural difference offers a radical challenge to both modernity and the national: "From the margins of modernity, at the insurmountable extremes of storytelling, we encounter the question of cultural difference as the perplexity of living, and writing, the nation" (311).

[8] "Could we ever narrativize without moralizing?" asks Hayden White (25).

[9] Linda Hutcheon's defense of parody in historiographic metafiction as a way of articulating a postmodern political critique clearly resonates in this assertion. In reference to Pynchon, Hutcheon affirms: "Pynchon's intertextually overdetermined, discursively overloaded fictions both parody and *enact* the totalizing tendency of all discourses to create systems and structures" (133).

[10] Similar to those described by Benedict Anderson (55).

[11] Recently described in detail by John Clement Ball, see particularly chapter 1 (9–40). Ball argues that the use of such binaries is a key to understanding the novel's satirical intent (23).

[12] For a study of the novel as a manifesto for Pynchon's Luddite agenda see David Cowart's article.

[13] A "Wahlspruch" or "devise" as Foucault remarks (Foucault, *Lumiéres* 565). For a complete study of the evolution of the motto from Horace through Gassendi and Shaftesbury to Kant, see Franco Venturi (6–9). Venturi asserts the predominant place of the German definition of Enlightenment: "From Kant to Cassirer and beyond, our understanding of the European Enlightenment has been dominated by the philosophical interpretation of the German *Aufklärung*" (1).

[14] Jeff Baker has similarly analyzed the novel's critique of "the revolutionary rhetoric with regard to the hypocritical practices of the colonists" (175).

[15] "We can now be certain that Charles Mason, the astronomer, was born at Wherr in the parish of Bisley in Gloucestershire in the early part of 1728, for he was baptized at Sapperton Church on 1 May 1728" (Robinson, "Mason's" 135).

[16] For a short account of Jeremiah Dixon's life, see Robinson, "Dixon": "Jeremiah Dixon was born at Bishop Auckland on 27 July 1733" (272). See also Hollis.

[17] See Cope, Heidel, and Weld.

[18] For the dates and place of Charles Mason's burial see Cope, "Collecting Source . . ." (114). Also, "He was laid to rest on October 26, 1786, in Christ Church Burying Ground at Fifth and Arch Streets, Philadelphia. The grave is not marked and its exact location is unknown. Benjamin Franklin and his wife Deborah rest nearby" (Cope, "Mountain" 231).

[19] For an interesting contribution on authorship and the role of the narrator see Schaub.

[20] Charles Mason's journal was found at Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1860. George W. Corner, preface, p. vii; A Hughlett Mason, introduction, pp. 1–27, transcribed from the original in the U.S. Archives (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1969).

[21] It is still unclear who Berkeley refered to when he talked about this offspring: was it European Americans or Native Americans?

[22] The ideological defense of unconquenred territories is carried out through this opposition of "subjunctive" versus "indicative," rather than through that "sharp line between past and present" noticed by E. J. W. Hinds ("Sari" 206). Brian McHale offers a detailed explanation of the uses of the subjunctive in the novel.

[23] The journal is written in the first person by Charles Mason: "Thus ends my restless progress in America" (*Journal* 211).

[24] I have italicized the section of Charles Mason's entry used verbatim by Cherrycoke in the novel.

[25] Another aspect of Pynchon's accurate historical research: "Dixon wore military uniform from 1760 until his death consisting of a long red coat and a cocked hat" (Robinson, "Dixon" 273).

[26] "Whether Dixon accompanied him is not clear" (Cope, "The Stargazers" 206).

[27] Despite efforts to contact this author, I have been unable to this date to trace her current address.

[28] See Mason's articles published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*.

[29] Unmentioned albeit clearly suggested, the train is an obvious reference given Latrobe's personal investments in the Virginia/Ohio train company. See Semmes.

[30] Latrobe incurs here one of his many historical inaccuracies because both Mason and Dixon lived to see the first episodes of the American Revolution. Charles Mason died in Philadelphia in 1786.

[31] David Bidney, from a contemporary standpoint, comments: "It is of interest in this connection [contemporary reassessment of attitudes towards Indians] to reflect that the typical rationalization employed by nineteenth-century Americans to validate their claim to expansion on the North American continent and to exclude the Indians from participating in their civilization, was duplicated in the twentieth century by the claims of land-hungry nations of Europe, Germany and Italy, before the Second World War. In their quest for *Lebensraum* similar claims were made as to the rights of powerful civilized peoples at the expense of the so-called less civilized, weaker peoples" (102).

[32] Interestingly, Mason and Dixon charted thirty-six miles fewer than contracted.

[33] "A story is told that one day, whilst in America, Dixon came across a slave driver mercilessly beating a poor black woman. Going up to him he said: 'Thou must not do that!' He received the curt answer: 'You be d. . .d! Mind your own business.' Dixon's reply was: 'If thou doesn't desist I'll thrash thee!' Then righteous wrath overcame his Quaker principles. He was a tall and powerful man, and an

imposing figure, so without more ado he seized the slave-driver's whip and with it gave him the sound thrashing that he richly deserved. Dixon kept the whip as a trophy and took it back with him to Cockfield, where it was long regarded as a family treasure" (Robinson, "Dixon" 273).