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CHRISTIAN ALLUSIONS IN THE NOVELS OF THOMAS PYNCHON

by

RUBY VICTORIA PRICE

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

THESIS DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE:

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PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

HOUSTON, TEXAS

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ABSTRACT

Christian Allusions in the Novels of Thomas Pynchon

Ruby Victoria Price

The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, I shall examine, individually or collectively, the almost one thousand allusions to the Bible or to Christian ideas in Thomas Pynchon's novels *V.* and *Gravity's Rainbow*, so as to provide some elucidation of passages in which association with a biblical source enables a reader to glean fuller meaning from the novels. Second, I attempt to show that Pynchon uses the method of montage as a unifying principle for bringing together myriad bits and pieces of information, of which Christian allusions are only one category, to form a "word picture" of the condition of twentieth-century Western man. The meaning that emerges from the literary montage supports certain basic conclusions about the novels: *V.* does not end, as some critics have suggested, in a hopeless void, but on the brink of the unknown; and *Gravity's Rainbow*, finally, accepts with hope a submission to the unknown that is beyond death as man's only remaining
alternative for possible salvation of an order that is beyond finite man's ability to achieve for himself.

Chapter One introduces the study. The broad general categories of allusions made are identified as at least seven: (1) recognizable biblical characters or places; (2) specific verses or chapters of the Bible or of extra-biblical Christian literature; (3) thematic or doctrinal allusions for which there is more than one possible source in the Bible; (4) adaptations, parodies, or perversions of biblical ideas; (5) Christian hymns or dogma based on biblical interpretation; (6) Christian symbols whose origin can be traced directly or indirectly to the Bible; and (7) references that are suggestive of Bible passages, but which cannot be positively identified as such. Pynchon's unique and unconventional use of the Bible is compared and contrasted with some earlier masters who are well-known for using the Bible as a literary source in their work: Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, Melville, and Joyce. The chapter also notes the relationship of Pynchon's early short fiction to his novels with regard to biblical allusion, especially his first published work, "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna." In a sense, the story is something of a microcosm of all the novels, for many of the same methods and subjects are used.
Chapter Two examines Christian references in V. With the exception of certain words or names which have special significance, I discuss each one as it appears on the printed page. The main concerns in each case are to explain the biblical significance, since a reader's familiarity with the Bible cannot be assumed; to discuss its meaning within the immediate context as well as in the context of other allusions in the chapter and to the novel as a whole; and to show how Pynchon's use of montage works to develop a picture of decadence and a trend toward inanimateness.

The final chapter attempts to demonstrate, through the use of representative examples, how Pynchon continues to use the methods employed in V. to construct a montage that supersedes V., and which pictures man as doomed to physical destruction, but as clinging to hope that his death will lead to some new knowledge that he is powerless to obtain as an earthbound, finite, creature.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge with deep appreciation the help provided by my thesis director, Dr. Walter W. Isle, without whose patient counsel the writing of this dissertation would have been considerably more difficult. My gratitude extends further to the other readers of the dissertation, Dr. Max Apple and Dr. John P. Newport, and to Dr. M. LeRoy Ellis, Head of the Department of Modern Languages at Lamar University, who kindly arranged my teaching schedule so as to allow me to pursue my doctoral work.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

It is virtually a commonplace in Pynchon criticism to note the encyclopedic character of Thomas Pynchon's novels, especially of his most recent one, *Gravity's Rainbow*. As Richard Poirier points out, "Really to read Pynchon properly you would have to be astonishingly learned not only about literature but about a vast number of other subjects...."\(^1\) The use of scientific and technological imagery, especially in the field of physics, and specifically the laws of thermodynamics and their relation to entropy, has been frequently treated. Studies have been published on the mathematical imagery in *Gravity's Rainbow*, and on the use of poetry in Pynchon's novels. Paranoia has been discussed as a major theme, both as a psychological phenomenon of the post-modern world and as a secular analog to Calvinism and Puritanism. In drawing an

analogy between Puritanism and paranoia an acknowledgment of Pynchon's use of religious themes is implicit in a general way; however, to date no comprehensive effort has been made to analyze the ways in which Pynchon uses the Bible in his work, certainly the place to start in building the groundwork for understanding those religious themes.²

Richard Poirier warns against doing to Pynchon what he calls the "damage already done to Joyce and Eliot," of "looking at the writing as something to be figured out by a process of translation, a process which omits the weirdness and pleasure of the reading experience as it goes along . . . ."³ This damage, he continues, consists of "treating each of the formal or stylistic or allusive elements of a work as a clue to meaning, a point of possible


³Poirier, p. 155.
stabilization."4 I believe, however, that the damage done to Pynchon by attempting to clarify some of his allusions to Christian literature is infinitely less than that done by ignoring them. Many allusions provide keys to understanding that are not automatically intuited in the "pleasure of the reading experience."

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is two-fold. In the first place, I shall examine the allusions to the Bible or to Christian ideas in Pynchon's first novel, V., and then cite representative examples in Gravity's Rainbow, in order to demonstrate how these references contribute to the creation of a giant literary montage of the twentieth century. In so doing, a second end will be served: since it cannot be assumed that a present-day reader will recognize allusions to the Bible as being such, it is hoped that the study will provide some elucidation of certain passages in which association with a biblical source enables a reader to glean fuller meanings from the novels. My major thesis is that, in V. and Gravity's Rainbow, Pynchon uses montage as a unifying method for bringing together myriad bits and pieces of information, of which biblical allusions are only one category, so that a "word picture" of the

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4Ibid.
condition of twentieth-century man is created. Some explanation of the montage principle is required, and this will be done in a section devoted to a discussion of Pynchon's distinctive contribution to creative uses of the Bible in literature. It is my intention to show that the meaning that emerges from the use of the montage method supports certain basic conclusions about the novels: V. does not end, as some critics have suggested, in a hopeless void, but on the brink of the unknown; and Gravity's Rainbow, finally, accepts with hope a submission to the unknown that is beyond death as man's only remaining alternative for a possible salvation of an order that is beyond finite man's ability to achieve for himself.

Since to do otherwise would result in prohibitive length, my treatment of the novels will be limited to Pynchon's use of the Bible as such, and will not delve into the larger philosophical or theological issues that some of the allusions raise, tempting though it is to do so. That is, I will be concerned with identifying a reference as traceable to a biblical source, or to a source in general Christian writings, and with analyzing how the allusion seems to work in its immediate context and in the larger context of the completed montage. I will not attempt to
make pronouncements, for example, concerning whether or not Pynchon's references to "God" are to an existential God or a personal God, what kind or place or state of being Pynchon has in mind when he refers to Paradise, or whether or not Pynchon believes the crucifixion story to which he alludes several times. I will discuss each Bible-related allusion in *V.* separately, and as it appears in the novel, except in a few cases in which an allusion, such as a biblical name, appears frequently with the same apparent significance each time it is used, or in which the saliency of a reference is such that it merits extended discussion. These allusions in the latter instances will be mentioned only briefly when they appear initially in the text, and will be treated more fully at the end of the chapter. Allusions such as Malta and Street fall into this category. The study necessarily involves an examination of how the juxtaposition of certain images results in a new creation that goes above and beyond the meaning inherent in each individual image.

The frequency with which biblical allusions occur in Pynchon's long novels points to their use as both deliberate and meaningful. While quantity alone does not indicate importance, it hardly seems likely that the use
of over 750 words or phrases relating to the Bible or to Christian ideas in V. alone would have been coincidental or unintentional. Such extensive use of these references results, furthermore, in a general religious overtone in the novels that commands attention. *Gravity's Rainbow* contains fewer biblical allusions--some 250--but the smaller number does not lessen the relative importance of their use.

Pynchon uses biblical and Christian allusions in a number of ways, and a reference may fit into more than one category. In general, the allusions fall into at least seven broad categories: (1) recognizable biblical characters or places, e.g., Solomon or Sodom; (2) specific verses or chapters in the Bible, or extra-biblical Christian literature, which are recognizable in spite of Pynchon's failure ever to identify his sources, such as "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN," which is discussed in Daniel 5; (3) allusions, especially thematic or doctrinal ones, such as Election, for which there is more than one possible source in the Bible, i.e., a single passage cannot be positively identified as the novelist's intended source in preference to one or more equally plausible sources; (4) adaptations, parodies, or perversions of biblical ideas, e.g., a
contraceptive device being used as a mezuzah, and relating to the original passover; (5) the use of Christian hymns ("Onward Christian Solider") or dogma based on biblical interpretation, such as "apostolic succession"; and (6) Christian symbols, e.g., the Cross, or Christian traditions or celebrations whose origin can be traced, directly or indirectly, to the Bible, as in the case of Communion or Lent; and (7) a large group of references which are suggestive of Bible passages although they cannot be positively identified as such. This category of images is possibly one that will be frequently overlooked by a reader because of the greater sublety with which these allusions are used. The fig leaf, mentioned early in V., is an example; only in juxtaposition with other images that point to such an association is the possibility of a biblical source recognizable.

The variety of uses and the unconventional nature of Pynchon's use of the Bible and Christian literature and ideas sets him apart from a number of earlier writers who also used the Bible as a literary source in their work. In itself, the study of biblical influence on the work of great writers is, of course, not a unique practice. Shakespeare's use of the Bible in the sixteenth century
has been remarked in numerous studies, most of which, however, are catalogs of allusions without a discussion of their function in the plays.⁵ One exceptional study examines Shakespeare's allusions and concludes that his references are never doubtful or questionable. One need not look up a passage or study its context in order to understand Shakespeare's purpose for citing biblical incident, for he uses scripture "in its primary, literal, and natural sense."⁶ A typical Shakespearian allusion to the Bible uses a single passage for a direct and immediate effect. For example, in Richard II, Richard points accusingly to Northumberland's record of guilt:

Though some of you with Pilate wash your hands,  
Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates  
Have here deliver'd me to my sour cross  
And water cannot wash away your sins.⁷

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⁷Richard II, IV, i, 239-42. For discussion, see Bartel, p. 389.
King Richard alludes to Matthew 27:24: "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it."

John Milton is numbered among those whose work was substantially dependent on the use of Bible reference. Harris Fletcher states in his introduction to *The Use of the Bible in Milton's Prose* that "most if not quite all of the scholarship of the seventeenth century still centered in Biblical studies." The Bible for most seventeenth-century writers was a source of validation for ideas generally accepted as truth; in fact, the truth of the Bible was assumed, and not seriously questioned. Over five hundred such passages of scriptural origin are noted by Fletcher in Milton's prose alone. *Paradise Lost*, of course, was written "to justify the ways of God to man," but not to question the possibility of doing so.

Tennyson also used a wealth of biblical illustration in his work. It has been demonstrated that Tennyson's

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ways of using scripture parallel the successive stages of his poetic development. In his early work, Tennyson makes reference to single passages, without twisting or distorting the scriptural wording. A biblical passage is sometimes used as a scenic background for a poem, or for a simple simile. Only in his early work does Tennyson elaborate on a biblical passage for its own sake. A second period is marked by the combining of several citations or allusions to form a single unified poetic passage. Later, the poet enters an "allegorical period," in which statements and images from the Bible are altered, mixed with legendary material, and are often indefinite and doubtful. Like Shakespeare, Tennyson experiences a period of satire and pessimism, in which there is a fixed perversion of the Scripture in the meaning of the character who creates it."9

In nineteenth-century America, Poe, Hawthorne, Whitman, and Melville come to mind, among others, as writers who use the Bible in their literary creations. In the case of Melville, it has been concluded that the influence of the Bible goes "beyond quotation and allusion, beyond allegory to true inspiration. . . . The effect on him . . .

[of] the Bible was remarkable for the reason that he... recreated what he found there in terms of his own time and language, of his own vision." Nathalia Wright notes that one common denominator between Melville and Shakespeare is that both are full of "sermons-on-the-mount." Melville is far more concerned with the mythology that the Bible provides him than with the external authority of the scripture that Milton finds important. Compared to Melville, Emerson, who had a ministerial career, and Hawthorne, who was preoccupied with the Puritan tradition, make "slight and straightforward use of Scripture." Melville's mind seems to have been virtually saturated with biblical stories, ideas, and language, which he uses spontaneously, as patterns of his thought. Excluding overtones of language and thought that inevitably creep in to such use of a source, there are almost fourteen hundred allusions to the Bible in his work, taken from forty-four books of the Bible or the Apocrypha.

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11 Ibid., p. 3.

12 Ibid., p. 7.

13 Ibid., pp. 7-10.
James Joyce, to whom Pynchon has been compared, is a twentieth-century writer who has used his extensive theological training to advantage in his writing. According to Virginia Moseley, the Jesuitical method of exegesis, which emphasizes sources and cross-references, seems to inspire Joyce to relate part to whole, and to pack a single word with layers of meaning. This method is undoubtedly one of the distinguishing features of his use of the Bible, and certainly so when compared with Shakespeare's single, literal allusions. Milton does use puns in his work, but there is nothing comparable to the layering of meaning that characterizes Joyce. Joyce's biblical allusions do not depend entirely on a particular translation; where different words are used by two translators, the meanings of both versions seem to apply, e.g., "wilderness" and "desert," or "charity" and "love." Unlike that of Tennyson, Joyce's use of the Bible is not a measure of his development as an artist. That is, the general way in which biblical allusion is used in Stephen Hero and Ulysses, for example, is not noticeably different. Joyce brought his theology to his work from the beginning.

The ways in which Pynchon uses the Bible in his novels show certain similarities to methods of the writers named above; in other ways, they will be shown to be quite different. One of the greatest dissimilarities between earlier writers and Pynchon in using the Bible as a source of allusions can be demonstrated by pointing out some assumptions referred to earlier with regard to Shakespeare's use of scripture. Edna Moore Robinson makes a point of stressing that "one need not look up a passage or study its context" to understand Shakespeare's allusions because he uses scripture "in its primary, literal, and natural sense."\(^{15}\) The assumptions are that Shakespeare's readers know the Bible well enough to recognize an allusion as being biblical, and that they are familiar with the context of the verse cited. No longer are these assumptions possible. This fact is of considerable importance for Pynchon's present-day reader. Prior to the twentieth century, a writer could assume a reader's familiarity with the Bible, in varying degrees, at least. If the reader could not immediately recall a specific passage alluded to, he was at least able to recognize with fair accuracy that a

\(^{15}\)Robinson, pp. 309-10.
reference was biblical in source. The multiplicity of modern translations of the Bible now available, whatever their advantages may be, is unquestionably one reason for a decline in the practice of memorizing scriptural passages from the King James version of 1611, which Pynchon apparently uses. This fact, coupled with a general decline in Christianity that has accompanied the advent of the present age of technology and secularization, has precipitated an acute need for explanatory studies for students of works in which the Bible is an important source of allusions, as is the case with Pynchon's novels. All of these factors compound the problems that a contemporary reader already faces in attempting to comprehend the formidable mass of information in the novels, to say nothing of trying to make meaningful interpretations of material that is often totally unfamiliar. Another difference between Shakespeare and Pynchon with regard to their using the Bible is that Pynchon frequently distorts a passage so that the allusion is far from being literal, and the biblical context does not "fit" a situation in the novel accurately or completely, as it does in the Shakespearian reference cited above.
Likewise, Pynchon differs from Milton in being able to depend on a reader's familiarity with the Bible. Nor can Pynchon rely on his reader to accept the Bible as a final authority that can "justify the ways of God to man"; he cannot even be assured that the reader has a clear concept of God at all. Conversely, the reader of Pynchon is not at all sure about the novelist's theology. Whether a reader agrees with Milton or not, he knows what Milton believes, and is aware that Milton wishes the reader to agree with him. As to the actual mechanics of using the Bible, Milton and Pynchon are poles apart. Whereas Milton frequently cites biblical passages by book and chapter, Pynchon never quotes a complete verse or indicates the origin of his allusions to the Bible or to other Christian writings.

Pynchon is in some ways closer to Tennyson than to the earlier masters. For one thing, the times during which Tennyson wrote were already beginning to show some of the doubts that have plagued man ever since. It is not surprising, therefore, that Tennyson's use of biblical allusion in his early poetry differs in method from Pynchon's more than does his later work. Pynchon shares with Tennyson a propensity for distorting certain passages in
the Bible for his own uses. He differs from Tennyson, however, with regard to the use of the Bible as a gauge of successive stages of his development as an artist to date; it is no doubt too early, of course, to speak conclusively of Pynchon's development. Pynchon's ways of using biblical allusion do not change materially from V. to Gravity's Rainbow, as will be shown.

More important, perhaps, than how Pynchon differs from Milton and from Tennyson, is how Pynchon compares with Melville. Nathalia Wright's conclusion that Melville's use of the Bible is remarkable in that he recreates what he finds there "in terms of his own time and language, of his own vision" could be said, equally, of Pynchon. What differs, of course, is that those times have passed and that idiom has changed. Her comment that Melville is full of "sermons-on-the-mount" applies, in its own, and literal, way to Pynchon, although one might find Pynchon's frequent references to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount more suitably labelled "sermons-in-the-sewer." In quantity alone, Pynchon equals, and perhaps surpasses Melville, for Melville's fourteen hundred allusions represent fourteen works over a period of forty-five years, while Pynchon's thousand come from two novels written within ten years of
each other. The great allegories of the Bible provide for Melville a mythological value in that he wishes to "preserve the deep wisdom embodied in the fable, rather than a fear for the Bible's external authority. . . ." Pynchon uses many of the same kinds of biblical material, e.g., the story of the Garden of Eden, as a source for parody. The total effect achieved by Melville, on the whole, seems highly dissimilar to that of Pynchon because of the differences in the writers' style and method. Melville's allusions are not studied but spontaneous; Pynchon seems to have consciously selected allusions for a particular effect in his montage.

Of the writers mentioned above, Pynchon is possibly most closely akin to James Joyce. The use of reference and cross-reference is important in both V. and Gravity's Rainbow, as are the multi-level meanings that abound in Joyce's work. Like Joyce, Pynchon develops themes associated in the Old and New Testaments with the conflict between many of the paradoxes of life: hate and love, war and peace, sin and salvation, selfishness and sacrifice, the saved (Elect) and the lost (Preterite).

16Wright, p. 17.
While Pynchon shares certain points of similarity and difference with the writers mentioned above, it will be shown that the method which he employs in using the Bible as a source of allusions is very different from the conventional methods exemplified in the works of the earlier writers. One of the reasons for a reader's experiencing a different kind of feeling when he reads V. or Gravity's Rainbow is that Pynchon seems to rely on the principle of montage, used in film-making, to provide a kind of unity in the novels. The manner in which he places biblical allusions and references of an antithetical nature side by side is at once fascinating and repulsive, and is a distinctive feature of Pynchon's work.

Sergei Eisenstein has described the method of montage very clearly:

... The juxtaposition of two shots by splicing them together resembles not so much a simple sum of one shot plus another shot as it does a creation. ... What is essentially involved in such an understanding of montage? In such a case, each montage piece exists no longer as something unrelated, but as a given particular representation of the general theme that in equal measure penetrates all of the shot-pieces. The juxtaposition of these partial details in a given montage construction calls to life and forces into the light that general quality in which each detail has participated, and which binds together all the details into a whole, namely,
into that generalized image, wherein the creator . . . experiences the theme. 17

A number of allusions to the Bible or to some general Christian concept which are used as pieces in Pynchon's literary montage appear only once in the novel, and, in the main, these must be studied in the light of the immediate context, for there are no "second chances" to see how the allusion might work in another context to shed light on its meaning. Such is the case in V. with such allusions as those to Magdalen, associated with a "fallen woman"; to the hymn "O Salutaris Hostia," which is about Christ as "victim"; and to the rib taken from Adam in order to make woman. In Gravity's Rainbow there is a single reference to the Gadarene swine that is clearly alluding to the biblical account in Luke 8:26-36. Much more often, an allusion is made in one form, and later is repeated with alteration in the wording, although the allusion is clearly to the same biblical event. For example, early in V. Pynchon alludes to "Noah's warning of the Flood," and later refers to the same story saying "As the Ark was to Noah," thus reinforcing the implication in

the simile. A substantial number of the allusions, however, occur a number of times, in close proximity, or widely separated, or both. In these cases, a process of gradual revelation may occur as each reference adds to the meaning obtained in the preceding and succeeding contexts. The allusion to God or Jesus Christ implied in Godolphin's name, in \_\_, is a good example. At first, the fact that Godolphin is about thirty years of age seems insignificant, and is insufficient in itself to justify an association of the character with deity. Little by little, however, other pieces of information are added that make the association reasonable: the phrase "Well done" that is a reminder of Jesus' words to the servant in the parable of the ten talents in Matthew 25; the juxtaposition of Godolphin with references to him concerning perfection and, elsewhere, betrayal; and an interchange of conversation between "Father" and "Son" that seems to contain a significance greater than just that of direct address per se. Sheer quantity may tend to "program" a reader to experience certain mental responses every time he sees a certain allusion, as is true with names like Rachel, which on the surface, function simply as characters' names until the contexts suggest symbolic representation beyond mere name-calling. In both \_\_ and
Gravity's Rainbow there are several allusions which are so pervasive as to be significant qualitatively whether they appear a few times or many times, e.g., Puritanism and Malta (Melita in the Bible).

Whatever the case, however, the montage method enables a reader to make a double reading, so to speak. The "surface story" may seem to justify the use of a given allusion, but, in addition, the reader simultaneously creates, as he responds to the images, a new and separate experience of the novel. Again, Eisenstein provides a helpful explanation of what happens. He uses as an illustration his difficulty in remembering the images of New York streets designated by neutral numbers, e.g., "Forty-second," rather than having street names. Consequently, he experienced difficulty in recognizing the streets. To develop the necessary images, he first had to fix in his memory a set of objects characteristic of a given street, so that "Forty-second" would arouse in his consciousness a certain assembly of theaters, buildings, and the like. After that, the various elements had to become consolidated into a single image in his mind.

... Only in the second stage did all the elements begin to fuse into a single, merging, image; at the mention of the street's "number,"
there still arose this host of its separate elements, but now not as a chain, but as something single—as a whole characterization of the street... Further, though the image enters the consciousness and perception through aggregation, every detail is preserved in the sensations and memory as part of the whole... In one way or another, the series of ideas is built up in the perception and consciousness into a whole image, storing up the separate elements.18

As the often disparate elements in V. and Gravity's Rainbow are juxtaposed in the manner described, there emerges an awareness on the part of the reader that he is indeed doing more than reading; he is creating. It should be evident, then, that in a novel requiring this kind of approach, some acquaintance with the biblical source of the allusion is essential if the full effect of the method is to be realized.

While I shall be concerned principally with the ways in which Pynchon uses the Bible in his longer novels, the relationship of the novelist's early short fiction to his novels with regard to biblical allusion is relevant. To analyze each short story would be superfluous; however, not to include a consideration of the nature of certain of the early work would be to overlook the extent to which the stories are like seeds which come to full fruition in the

18Eisenstein, pp. 15-17.
novels. That is to say, the stories help to establish the character of allusions used in the novels, especially of those allusions which are thematically important and which establish names as symbols of larger meanings, such as Cleanth Siegel and Rachel.

Pynchon's first published work was a short story that appeared in Epoch in 1959, entitled "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna." As Joseph Slade notes in his work on Pynchon, the title is taken from Shakespeare's Measure for Measure:

In our remove be thou at full oneself;  
Mortality and mercy in Vienna  
Live in thy tongue and heart . . . (I, i).

The title is singularly appropriate in the parallel drawn between sinful and lawless Vienna where cleansing rests with Angelo (angel of Death?) and the equally lawless Washington, D. C., in America, where Cleanth Siegel will effect a similar task. The protagonist's name points to his role in the story: Cleanth suggests cleansing, or "he cleaneth"; Siegel in German refers to a seal of secrecy. Thus, the protagonist holds the secret of

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cleansing within him, a fact which is borne out explicitly as a major theme in the story. Furthermore, the association of Siegel with the bearing of a secret, and hence all-knowing, is echoed in a reference in the opening paragraph of the story when Siegel carries a fifth of Scotch "as if it were a state secret." Slade has identified, correctly, the obvious influence of T. S. Eliot's wasteland and "The Hollow Men" on Pynchon's story, but his commentary does not go beyond Eliot to a primary source shared by Eliot and Pynchon alike--the Bible, used either directly or indirectly. The title, albeit Shakespearian, also identifies important biblical themes, and partially prepares us for the fact that in the nineteen-page story there are some twenty allusions to the Bible or to some religious orthodoxy. In these references, Pynchon uses many of the same methods that he will use in the novels later, so that, in a sense, his first published story is something of a microcosm of all his novels. The interrelatedness of the canon to date reminds one of James Joyce, who has been described by one critic as "the terrible homo unius libri."20

As in the novels, biblical names are frequently used. Rachel (also in _V._) is a name which means "a female animal, especially a lamb," and is described by the prophet Jeremiah as a mother weeping for her children, the descendants of Joseph. Jeremiah's prophecy finds fulfillment in the slaughter of the innocents at Bethlehem. Rachel is remembered for her hope for the return of her children to the Lord their God and to David their king, as well as for being the beautiful and loving wife of Jacob who had to work for fourteen years for Rachel's father before she was given to him. As is often the case, Pynchon distorts the biblical account to his own purposes, but the use of the name Rachel does not seem accidental in light of her role as the one who sends Cleanth Siegel, a saviour figure, to her friends.

After Siegel's mother advises him to marry some "nice quiet Jewish girl," his roommate ridicules him by calling him Stephen, an obvious allusion to the first Christian martyr mentioned in the New Testament, however Joycean the reference may also be. Siegel, however, will

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21See Jeremiah 31:15, Matthew 2:18, and Genesis 29-30.

22See Acts 7:54-60.
sacrifice, not his life, as Jesus and the biblical Stephen did, but rather he will give up any temptation he may have to marry a "schickseh." He is further taunted about "the still small Jesuit voice" which guarded him from a consciousness of guilt. In addition to Joycean overtones, the allusion is obviously to I Kings 9:12: "And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice." The verse describes the experience of God's appearing to Elijah, who explains that he is fearful because the children of Israel have forsaken God's covenant, thrown down his altars, and slain his prophets. In this context, it is fitting that Pynchon should partly imitate the passage in a story concerned with the godlessness of modern-day America. The "still small Jesuit voice" appears again in the story when the Christ figure, Cleanth Siegel, "realizing that the miracle was in his hands after all," leaves the party knowing that the guests are to be killed, and thereby "saved," thus making an inversion of Jesus' death for the salvation of Man.

One further name is significant in "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna," that of David Lupescu. David, of course, is a major biblical character in his own right. He was the second king over Israel and was among the greatest of the
Old Testament kings; moreover, it is from the line or "house of David" that Jesus is a descendant. Just as Max Schulz has suggested that the Vheissu of V. may well be an alteration of "Wie Heisst du?",\(^{23}\) it is likely that Pynchon does not merely pull the last name of the character David Lupescu out of thin air. While the name is a fairly common Rumanian surname, knowing Pynchon's penchant for distortion and multiple meanings, he may have also seen in the name a corruption of lui pescuitar, a genitive or dative form of the word for fisherman in Rumanian. Internal evidence in the story suggests that the possibility is not as far-fetched as it may seem at first. The fish is known to be an early sign of a Christian; Jesus is often referred to in Christian literature as the Great Fisherman who promises to teach his disciples to be "fishers of men." Furthermore, Jesus was born in the City of David, Bethlehem, following the announcement of the angel to Joseph, "son of David," that Mary will bear a son whose name shall be Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins."\(^{24}\)


\(^{24}\)Matthew 1:21.
Earlier, the prophet Isaiah has said that God is to give a sign, the birth of Jesus.\textsuperscript{25} Pynchon likewise has his David leave, and declare Siegel "a sign, a deliverance," and he calls him a "fisher of Souls." Thus Old and New Testaments are linked as prophecy and fulfillment, and it is in the "house of David" that Siegel, the "saviour," uses his "power to work for those parishioners a kind of miracle, to bring them a very tangible salvation," in the form of a saving death.

Instances of Pynchon's love of adapting and often twisting biblical ideas to his own purposes, or of using a biblical tone in non-religious material, are found in this early short fiction; one example will suffice to illustrate his method. Siegel recalls that in the army he had "lived by a golden rule of Screw the Sergeant before He Screweth Thee," imitating the style of Luke 6:31: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."\textsuperscript{26}

A number of other allusions are made which further associate Cleanth Siegel with Jesus Christ. Pynchon is

\textsuperscript{25}Isaiah 7:14.

\textsuperscript{26}The synoptic version in Matt. 7:12 is: "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets."
careful to note that Siegel is "30 and on the way to becoming a career man," like Jesus who received the Holy Spirit at the beginning of his active ministry on the earth when he was about thirty years of age, according to Luke's gospel. Two pages later in the story, Pynchon has David Lupescu tell Siegel: "'You are now the host. As host you are a trinity: (a) receiver of guests--' ticking them off on his fingers-- '(b) an enemy and (c) an outward manifestation, for them, of the divine body and blood.'" Pynchon evidently has in mind the account of the Last Supper, in Luke 22, at which Jesus is host to his disciples for a passover meal where he observes that his betrayer is present, and at which he initiates what becomes the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in which the bread ("my body") and the wine ("my blood") are partaken. On the surface of the story, of course, Siegel is host to a party, though a reluctant host. At first he feels himself to be an alien among strange guests, but soon he finds himself performing the role of a "father confessor." Obviously, in this extended series of allusions, the parallel between Pynchon's story and the Bible is not exact; yet, even when

\[27\] Also referred to as the Holy Eucharist and Holy Communion by some religious groups.
distorted, the allusions are significant, for a reader who is familiar with the biblical context cannot ignore the connotations implicit in the text. This, basically, will be one of Pynchon's chief methods throughout his novels.

The identification of characters with names that imply certain qualities or abilities is by no means the only way in which Pynchon uses the Bible or general Christian concepts in "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna." Another type of allusion is that which seems to indicate a specific verse in the Bible that identifies, as well, an important thematic concern. For example, in the passage I referred to above, in which Siegel's roommate Grossman taunts Siegel about being willing to "sacrifice" by conquering temptation, Grossman tells Siegel that doing so is the seed of his destruction: "House divided against itself? You know." The comment alludes to Luke 11:17, "... Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth." Jesus speaks these words to a group of people who accuse him of casting out devils through the power of Beelzebub, the chief of the devils. The situation that provides the

28 This also hints of an association of Siegel with Jesus Christ.
context in the story and in the Bible incident is also a continuing concern in Pynchon's novels: the problem of locating and identifying the source of control or power.

Also in his first work, Pynchon refers to Christmas Eve, as he will do both in V. and in Gravity's Rainbow:

"'I hope it [a pig foetus] stays there,' he said, and then turned to face Siegel. 'Fetching, isn't it?' Siegel shrugged. 'Dada exhibit in Paris on Christmas eve, 1919,' Lupescu said." This kind of allusion is typical of several references that Pynchon makes to general Christian ideas which ultimately may be said to be Bible-based, although the term itself is not in the Bible. Obviously, the meaning of Christmas has its origin in the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, which is recorded in two of the synoptic gospels, Matthew and Luke, although the holiday was not established as such until much later. Pynchon could just as easily have referred simply to a "Dada exhibit in Paris in 1919," or "on December 24, 1919," if he is referring to a particular exhibit known to have been on display on that date. Pynchon's use of Christmas Eve is reinforced in the next sentence by a reference to mistletoe, also related in our thinking to the celebration of Christmas. Thus, the allusion seems deliberate, however
slight the actual incident of the reference is. Christian
or non-Christian readers alike automatically associate the
allusion with the celebration of the eve of the birth of a
Saviour figure, the incarnation of God. The juxtaposition
of Christmas Eve and Dada is significant. The Dada move-
ment of the World War I era has as its deliberate and
destructive purpose to pervert and destroy the tenets of
philosophy, art, religion, and logic, and to replace them
with conscious madness. The founder, Tristram Tzara,
declares: "We are a furious wind, tearing the dirty linen
of clouds and prayers, preparing the great spectacle of
disaster, fire, decomposition."\(^{29}\) The allusions contrast,
as Pynchon will do many times and in sundry ways, images
of modern man bent on self-destruction, and of a divine
Saviour, of birth and death. The apocalyptic goal of Dada
("a furious wind . . . preparing the great spectacle of
disaster. . . .") is itself reminiscent of The Apocalypse,
or The Revelation of St. John, the final book of the New
Testament that describes, symbolically, the end of the

\(^{29}\)Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson, Jr., eds.,
The Modern Tradition: Backgrounds of Modern Literature
quotation is taken from the "Dada Manifesto" of Tristram
Tzara in 1918.
world. This apocalyptic theme will run throughout Pynchon's work, and culminate in *Gravity's Rainbow*.

"Mortality and Mercy in Vienna," then, provides a foretaste of all of Pynchon's novels by using virtually all the methods of allusion and by identifying many of the themes that will be repeated frequently in his work. Biblical names are given to certain characters to represent basic qualities which he wishes to portray or to parody, or both; a Bible passage is often distorted or inverted to suit Pynchon's own purposes in the novel; alteration of wording or foreign words are used for achieving certain effects; an imitation of biblical tone in non-biblical material is used in the text as a means of calling attention to the meaning of the Bible verse imitated; double meanings are used deliberately; straightforward, literal references to the Bible are made, as well as allusions to holidays, religious symbols, or extra-biblical orthodoxy for which the Bible is ultimately the source.

A number of themes related to biblical allusion that are important in the novels are introduced in this short story: the necessity for death to effect a needed salvation; the presence of some controlling power, whose identification with Good or Evil is often unclear; and the
picture of an irreversibly sick and decadent society that will no longer respond to correction from within itself, but must be destroyed if there is to be any hope for rebirth and a meaningful life that is beyond rational explanation by a frail humanity that has fallen prey to entropy and inanimateness. To a person unfamiliar with the Bible and Christian literature, these themes may be associated immediately with the influence of T. S. Eliot and James Joyce, and their influence is undoubtedly great. However, to stop with Eliot and Joyce is to be myopic, for both of these modern writers, and Pynchon, ultimately use common sources—the Bible and the great literature of the Christian faith.

It should be evident, then, that the Bible and related Christian writings are an important source of allusion in the novels of Thomas Pynchon. While he uses many of their devices to advantage, the total effect of *V.* and *Gravity's Rainbow* is very different from the works of the earlier writers. The fact that the theme of the perversion of religion in the twentieth century is of great concern to Pynchon, rather than its exemplary features, calls for a different approach to his writing. Pynchon's distinctive method is the cinematic one of montage, in which juxtaposed
images simultaneously give themselves up to becoming part of a whole while retaining their own identifiable meaning. From the beginning of Pynchon's writing career, with the publication of the story "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna," basic themes, characters, and concerns are present, although the montage method as a unifying principle is best illustrated in his two longer works, V. and Gravity's Rainbow. When presented by means of montage, using the Bible as a major source of allusion, these ideas unite to form a formidable word picture of a waning century victimized by a trend toward inanimateness and self-destruction, but whose ultimate end is unknown and unknowable.
Chapter 2

ALLUSIONS TO THE BIBLE OR CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS IN V.

In the foregoing chapter I discussed the fact that an important method employed by Pynchon is that of montage, the production of a rapid succession of images to illustrate an association of ideas. Pynchon makes use of the montage principle on the written page to achieve what Eisenstein identifies as a distinguishing feature in filmmaking:

And now we can say that it is precisely the **montage principle** . . . which obliges spectators themselves to create and the montage principle, by this means, achieves that great power of inner creative excitement in the **spectator** which distinguishes an emotionally exciting work from one that stops without going further than giving information or recording events.¹

If the word "reader" is substituted for the word "spectator" in Eisenstein's statement, we find a singularly accurate description of what Pynchon achieves by the use of the

montage principle in his work. While the idea of montage as it is used in film-making is analogous to placing words on the page, in that one word follows another in a planned succession of associations, montage is also defined as a composite picture made by juxtaposing and/or superimposing pictures, letters, or words which may have been collected from a number of sources, each one of which usually conveys a single idea. The result of assembling the pieces is that, somehow, a series of ideas is built up in a whole image, storing up the separate elements. Whether we conceive of V. as a literary montage in terms of a film being rolled, which is especially applicable to the placing of a succession of words on a page, or as a large picture created by the assembling of smaller images, which is a natural analogy for the completed novel as a montage, the principle, according to Eisenstein, is the same:

... though the image enters the consciousness and perception through aggregation, every detail is preserved in the sensations and memory as part of the whole. This obtains whether it be a sound image--some rhythmic or melodic sequence of sounds, or whether it be a plastic, a visual image, embracing in pictorial form a remembered series of separate elements.\(^2\)

\(^2\)Eisenstein, pp. 16-17.
I shall attempt to adhere to the spirit, if not the letter, of Eisenstein's explanation of montage as I discuss the biblical and Christian allusions in V. The purpose of this study is two-fold: in addition to identifying the pieces that compose Pynchon's montage and showing how each piece functions in its immediate context as well as in the larger context of the whole, I will also be concerned with an explanation of the biblical significance of the allusions, since it cannot be assumed that my reader is familiar with the Bible. In fact, part of the task will be pointing out that certain allusions could be Bible-related, for many of the references are understandable in other contexts as well.

In order to provide a framework in which to analyze the Bible-related allusions in V., it seems advisable to discuss each one as it appears in the text on a given page, in its immediate context, then to relate it to other allusions in the chapter, and, finally, to consider its relation to the novel as a whole. Some modifications to this method seem to be indicated in dealing with certain allusions which, by virtue of quantitative or qualitative significance, or both, merit special attention. In these cases, where it seems feasible, the allusion will be
referred to briefly as it appears in the novel, and a full discussion will be deferred until the last part of the chapter. By so doing, I hope to preserve some sense of where the more pervasive allusions fit into their immediate contexts, while the later discussions will relate more to their composite effect as one topic in the completed picture.

One further word is indicated with regard to the relative importance of one allusion compared to another. By no means does each allusion appear to bear an equal weight of significance in V. Just as a very small part of a picture, e.g., a person's eye, may convey a sense of love or anger, so that the effect of the entire picture is profoundly influenced by that expression, so some allusions in Pynchon's montage will seem slight in themselves, but will take on considerable weight of meaning when viewed in relation to the completed picture. Pynchon's allusion to Job, occurring only once in the context of a discussion of victimization, is one of these. The converse is also true, perhaps to a lesser extent. Esther, for instance, is mentioned some seventy-five times in V. Because of certain qualities that seem to associate her with the biblical Queen Esther, we cannot ignore that possibility. At the
same time, since Esther is a character's name, we expect to see it often, thus lessening its impact on our perception of its significance as a Bible-related allusion. Nevertheless, it does have its place in the montage, for every time we see the name, our original biblical association is reinforced. We become "conditioned" to its use, and the name soon elicits certain mental responses regarding its use.

I

On the opening page of V., the first of nine allusions to Christmas is made: six of them appear in chapter 1, one in chapter 6, and two in chapter 9.\(^3\) The word Christmas, of course, is not contained in the Bible; thus, the allusion belongs to category 6 which contains references to Christian holidays whose meaning is derived from a biblical event, in this case the birth of Jesus Christ, which is recorded in Matthew 1:2:15 and Luke 2:1-20. Although the words "Christmas Eve" are the

\(^3\)For other allusions to Christmas, see pp. 15/7, 17/9, 19/11, 144/131, 247/229, and 419/393 in V.. For further discussion in this study see pp. 41-44, 47-51, 141-42, and 177-78. For an index of allusions in V., see Appendix A. Appendix B contains a catalog of Bible passages cited in this study.
opening words of the novel, in a sense they may also be considered to be juxtaposed between the chapter title, "In which Benny Profane, a schlemihl and human yo-yo, gets to an apocheir," and the date 1955. After one has read Pynchon's work to any extent, he learns that everything "counts" toward meaning: chapter titles, epigraphs (as will be seen in Gravity's Rainbow), the arrangement of letters and words on a page—nothing, finally, seems purposeless. Here, the configuration of the chapter title in the shape of "V" can be associated with "V for victory" or with an almost opposite idea of destruction, since the "V" resembles a falling bomb as well. In the same manner, the word "apocheir," coming at the end of the title, and at the point of "V" allows us an "end of the way," i.e., hopeless, interpretation in contrast to the promise of hope implicit in the birth of a Saviour. Christmas Eve, of course, calls to mind certain general images and meanings to one whose heritage is, historically at least, a Christian one. The day before the birth of Jesus, the Christ, signifies the last day that man will be without hope, i.e., lacking a

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knowledge of the identity of the saviour of the world. In the text of *V.*, Christmas Eve is placed between the word "apocheir," the furthest point from a center, and information that places a situation in time—1955, identifies the character in the situation by name (Benny Profane)—even to describing his clothing (black levis), and names his geographical location (Norfolk, Virginia). Pynchon juxtaposes Christmas Eve on one side with an image of modern secular man, represented by Benny Profane, approaching the "end of his rope" like a yo-yo unwound to the end of the string to which it is attached. On the other hand, and literally on the other side of the allusion to Christmas Eve, however, there appear words which identify and set man apart as distinctive, describable, and locatable. The advent of Christmas heralds the coming of the Word, and the birth of the Christ is a bridge between man's despair, his point of apocheir, and a point of identity and potential for meaningfulness inherent in the birth of a saviour. Pynchon could have chosen another day in 1955 for his opening words in *V.*, but, just as an apocheir indicates the point farthest from a central core, but not severed from it, so the novelist chooses to keep the strand of connection that an almost hopeless world has with a source of
hope that is represented by the eve of the birth of the Christ by deliberately using Christmas as the time for the action in the narrative at this point. In so doing, the contrast between the original meaning of Christmas, the hope provided in a saviour's birth, and modern man's despair, is emphasized.

On the same page, Christmas Eve is alluded to again, this time in a song. At the same time that Pynchon reminds us of Christ as the hope of the world, he simultaneously describes what secular man has done to bend the original significance of the holiday. Benny Profane, an ex-sailor, visits a tavern that he remembers from his days as an enlisted man, where some of his old associates are sure to be found. Nearby, a street singer is singing to a tune that William Vesterman has identified as that of an outdated song, "Every Day's a Holiday in Old New York":

Every night is Christmas Eve on old East Main, Sailors and their sweethearts all agree. Neon signs of red and green Shine upon the friendly scene, Welcoming you in from off the sea. Santa's bag is filled with all your dreams come true: Nickel beers that sparkle like champagne,

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Barmaids who all love to screw,
All of them reminding you
It's Christmas Eve on old East Main.

(V. 9/1)

Christmas Eve is placed beside a description of the short-lived pleasures of a night at the tavern, a "Santa's bag" of "nickel beers" and "barmaids." The allusion to Christmas Eve in close proximity to the word "tavern" reminds us that it was outside an inn, also a place of temporary use, that Jesus Christ was born. 6 Rather than the light of an eastern star hovering over the place "where the young child was," 7 the sailors are led from the sea to the bar by "neon signs of red and green," the traditional Christmas colors. The "dreams come true" for the sailors are passing delights, remote from the long-awaited dream of Israel come true in the birth of an eternal Saviour. The promise of Christmas, therefore, is empty of substantive and lasting meaning for Benny Profane, and by extension, to the twentieth-century secularized man.


7In Matt. 2:1-11 an account is given of wise men coming to inquire about the location of Jesus, the King of the Jews, for they had seen a star believed to be a sign of his birth. The position of the star guides the wise men to where Jesus is.
The next six allusions in \textit{V.} fall into that category of references I described earlier in the chapter that merit a different kind of treatment because of their preponderance in the novel: "Street" and "Strait Street"; "God" and "Oh God," as expletives; and "Malta," which is used two times. Apart from a brief observation regarding the initial appearance of these allusions, a full discussion will be deferred to the last pages of this chapter.

On the second page of the novel, we are told that for Profane, who has been "yo-yoing" up and down east coast streets for over a year, the streets have fused "into a single abstracted Street" (10/2). Other than the fact that "Street" is capitalized and some larger meaning hinted in the use of the word "abstracted," there is no evidence of any relation to the Bible in this reference. Later, however, some form of "Street," especially "Strait Street," is used in six chapters of \textit{V.} in ways that suggest an association with the biblical use of "strait" and the words of Jesus, "I am the way . . . ."\textsuperscript{8}

The first of over eighty-five expletives scattered throughout the text of \textit{V.} appears on page 11/3. Although

\textsuperscript{8}John 14:6. See pp. 251-59 for this discussion.
these words, such as "God," and "Oh God," serve the usual purpose of the expletive, to fill in without adding sense to the sentence, it should be remembered that, in a montage, in which every piece contributes something to the whole effect, the generous sprinkling of these "senseless" words is to the point: that is, the very fact that these highly religious terms, whose source is the Bible, are used without "meaning" in the usual sense, contributes to an over-all message that Pynchon is communicating regarding the meaninglessness of words, the inability of modern-day man to convey, any longer, with words, the deepest thoughts that he longs to communicate. As the expletives sometimes seem to "jump out" from the page, a thoughtful reader may become aware of the changing of the times that has allowed these formerly sacred words to degenerate to a level of profane meaninglessness. In addition to the use of the expletives to demonstrate a failure in communication, however, they seem to serve other purposes as well. Because of the large number of these words, appearing in every chapter of the novel in what appears to be certain prescribed ways, these
aspects of expletives as a single group will be considered later. 9

The third allusion which requires further examination in a separate discussion is "Malta." 10 When we are told that the buildings containing Paola'a records was destroyed "like most other buildings on the island of Malta" (14/6), no hint is given that Malta is anything more than a geographical setting in V. Nor are the brief references in chapters 2, 3, and 10 any more indicative of a biblical relationship other than the single fact that Malta is the Melita of the Bible, and this is not mentioned in V. at this point. Only from chapter 11 and following does Malta take on a significance that, finally, pervades a large part of the novel, as will be demonstrated.

Following this group of allusions that figure more importantly as the novel progresses, several allusions related to Christmas recur toward the end of the first section of chapter 1. Amid a rowdy interchange between "jarheads and sailors," Mrs. Buffo's announcement to the group that "it's Christmas Eve" (15/7) signals a brief instant when

9See pp. 246-51 for this discussion.

10See pp. 259-64 for this discussion.
the merry-making sailors give momentary attention to the original meaning of the day. "A hush fell over the place [and] there was a momentary truce between the jarheads and sailors blocking the doorway" (15/7). Mrs. Buffo, the owner of the tavern, proceeds to play on the boatswain's pipe the Christmas carol "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear," as a reserve sailor sings the words. For a fleeting instant the group is entranced. "Ploy's eyes shone. 'It's the voice of an angel,' he said." The song continues with "Peace on earth, good will toward men, /From Heav'n's all-gracious King," which is the version of Luke 2:13-14 that is given by the Unitarian clergyman who composed the Christmas carol in 1849:11 "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Like a bubble of champagne that bursts and is gone forever, the magic moment is broken by Profane's former shipmate Pig Bodine, who, Pynchon notes, is a "militant atheist," and in a moment the revelry continues. This juxtaposition of Christmas Eve, the night

before the birth of Jesus Christ, and the song admonishing "peace" and "goodwill" between a scene containing words that suggest war, "momentary truce" and "militant atheist," and which describe a secular celebration, provides a striking image of contrast; in addition to the secular-religious contrast, however, Pynchon achieves an effect that will be repeated in his work: he rises above the parodic or comic level to intimate, seriously, that beneath the surface frivolity of the moment, a now-decadent West would like to retrieve the faith that it has lost.

As in section 1, the first paragraph of section 2 of the first chapter of \textit{V.} alludes to Christmas. This time the allusion is placed beside a reference to New Year's Day. "The week between Christmas and New Year's Day was spent drunk enough to know that's what they were" (17/9). The small spark of hope that Mrs. Buffo's announcement of Christmas Eve had brought before Ploy "broke the spell" cannot be recaptured, and the final days of an old year are spent in a sort of neutral, half-conscious state. Christmas seems little more here than a day on the calendar, marking time until a new year that promises little that is "new" begins. While New Year's Day in itself is not a biblical allusion, its juxtaposition with Christmas
tends to suggest what is implicit in the designation of New Year's Day: the fact that, in the so-called "Christian world" the dating of a new year is based on the year Jesus Christ was born, as seen in the use of the abbreviations of "before Christ" (B.C.) and "anno Domini," i.e., "in the year of our Lord."

A final reference to Christmas in chapter 1 uses a popular abbreviated form of the word. Returning to Morris Teflon's apartment, Profane and Paola find the place "lit up all Xmasy" (19/11). This time, Christmas suggests an artificial and secularized display of color and light that is empty of further meaning. Especially during the post-war years of the 1950s in America, certain groups of people criticized this use of the abbreviated form "X" in the word Christmas. Ignoring the literal significance of "X" as the first letter of the Greek word XPICTOC (pronounced Christos), it was frequently remarked that, in a world steadily becoming secularized, the "Christ has been taken out of Christmas." Bearing this fact in mind, Pynchon uses the abbreviated form fittingly; in the context of the novel, he does picture a Christmas devoid of Christ, but at the same time, the reader cannot avoid completely some sense of religious overtone associated with the allusion. Since "X" is also
associated with the mark of the illiterate, the "unknowing," so to speak, this form of the allusion is especially apropos. For, however much the present-day world no longer "knows" the Christ of Christmas, the word cannot but retain, in whatever form it appears, a fragment of its original significance which must be confronted in a reader's consciousness.

Up to this point (the first two sections of chapter 1), Pynchon's use of the Bible has centered around the birth of Jesus Christ as celebrated in the observance of Christmas and recorded in the New Testament. Apart from this primary emphasis, he has introduced some highly abstract ideas, as yet undeveloped, which will become meaningful only in the process of "aggregation," to use Eisenstein's word. In the remaining sections of the chapter, Pynchon turns to predominantly Old Testament subjects that suggest important thematic concerns in the novel.

In section 3 Pynchon names a major character Rachel, a name which, it will be recalled, is also given to an important character in "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna." With the exception of Paola, it is the first name in the novel thus far that is "straight," i.e., Profane, Pig, and Morris Teflon, for example, are absurd
and unrealistic names. The name Rachel, of course, is a common Jewish name, and is not automatically associated with the Bible otherwise. Like Malta and Strait Street, however, a suggestion that the character's name may be related to the biblical Rachel comes into focus gradually as the novel progresses. The very fact that it is a character's name makes its frequent appearance (over one hundred times) unsurprising. Yet, when the novel is complete, and the passages in which the name figures often are viewed as a whole, the possibility that Pynchon used the name with its biblical association in mind is not so remote. Because of the fact that Rachel's name appears in nine of the novel's seventeen chapters, importantly in several, the apparent function of the name beyond its surface role can best be demonstrated by looking at examples taken from selected passages rather than by discussing its use each time it appears in the text. Therefore, I shall forego further discussion of the possible allusive import of the name at this point.\textsuperscript{12}

Having introduced Rachel briefly, Pynchon focuses next on a scene involving Profane's employer, and which

\textsuperscript{12}See pp. 264-68 for this discussion.
provides a context for two Bible-related allusions. DaConho, a restaurant owner for whom Profane works as assistant salad man, bargains for, and obtains, a machine gun. It is noted that the gun is displayed with other items that are of value to him. "To the mezuzah nailed up over the vegetable reefer and the Zionist banner hanging in back of the salad table DaConho added this prize" (22/14). Several elements of importance are touched on in the passage. The machine gun, an inanimate thing, as an object of someone's highest value is thematically important in itself; however, as the passage relates to the Bible, the juxtaposition of a symbol of destruction with the mezuzah, a symbol of divine protection, is noteworthy. The Zionist banner combines both religious and militant political elements, thus complementing the other two items. In context, these juxtapositions are apropos.

The word "mezuzah," as such, does not appear in the Bible. Any reference to a dictionary, however, reveals that the word is a Hewbrew term meaning "doorpost," and refers to the biblical mandate in Exodus 12:7. "And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." The blood is that of a slain lamb
which is to be roasted and eaten that night. The occasion
is the institution of the Passover feast, as recorded in
Exodus 12:11-14.

And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins
girdled, your shoes on your feet, and your
staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in
haste: it is the Lord's passover.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt
this night, and will smite all the firstborn
in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and
against all the gods of Egypt I will execute
judgment; I am the Lord.

And the blood shall be to you for a token
upon the houses where ye are: and when I see
the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague
shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I
smite the land of Egypt.

And this day shall be unto you for a
memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the
Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep
it a feast by an ordinance forever.

Against this background, the mezuzah stands as a symbol of
faith. A tubular case made of wood, glass, or metal about
three or four inches long, the mezuzah contains a small
rectangular piece of parchment on which are inscribed in
twenty-two lines of Hebrew the verses of Deuteronomy 6:4-9
and 11:13-21, which are a part of the Shema, the central
prayer of Judaism that was originally an affirmation of
God's unity, and, as such, was a protest against idolatry.
Through a small opening near the top, there is visible the
word Shaddai, meaning "Almighty." The amulet is hung in a
slanting position on the upper part of the right doorpost at the entrance of a Jewish home to remind him of the goodness of God. In V.4, the mezuzah is hung over a "vegetable reefer," as if to parody the Jewish rite that is observed with great reverence. Elsewhere in V., the mezuzah is referred to again in a more explicit context regarding its purpose. It seems significant here, however, that a symbol of faith in God's goodness to protect and sustain is included among the items that DaConho values most.

In close proximity to the mezuzah is a Zionist banner "hanging in back of the salad table" (22/14). Zionism today, of course, is readily associated with politics: "Zionism is the national liberation movement of a people exiled from its historic homeland and dispersed among the nations of the world."13 Even so, behind the politically oriented surface, there is always a realization of its religious overtones. Yigal Allon continues his foregoing definition of Zionism by concluding that "Zionism is, in sum, the constant and unrelenting effort to

realize the national and universal vision of the prophets of Israel."14 While "Zionism" per se is not in the Bible, the ultimate source of the term is known to be biblical. Zion, meaning "fortress," or an alternate form, Sion, meaning "protecting," refers to the city of Jerusalem, which means "possession of peace." Zion appears in the Bible over 140 times, as well as in numerous religious works in which the term is loosely translated as the "city of God." The juxtaposition of the mezuzah, a symbol of God's goodness in sparing a people (while destroying another), with a machine gun, an explicit symbol of destruction, and with Zionism, which simultaneously reflects both ideas, evokes a picture of confusion, of hope amid hopelessness, and of a struggle for peace by means of war and death. It is also an effective image of the chaos that Pynchon sees as characteristic of the declining years of the twentieth century. The faith in God's goodness and protection that is symbolized in the mezuzah is somehow cancelled by the need for modern man to require a machine-gun for self-protection. Likewise, the idea of Zionism is paradoxical, for it represents, in part, a militant effort to recapture by

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14 Ibid.
force the "fortress" of Zion and thereby gain the "pos-
session of peace" that is Jerusalem. On the same page,
Pynchon refers again to Zionism: DaConho "knew no more
than that he was a Zionist, suffered, was confused, was
daft to stand rooted socktop deep in the loam of any
kibbutz, a hemisphere away" (23/14). To this modern New
York Jew, the idea of opting for persecution and victimi-
zation for the sake of roots in a far-distant land seems
foolish; yet, denying those ancient roots is unthinkable
to DaConho. Confusion results, for he is torn between
allegiance to God, represented by the mezuzah, and to
secular man bent toward destruction, epitomized by the gun.

That the mezuzah remains in place behind the salad
table, however, hints of a longing for a sense of divine
protection that defies rational explanation. Thus, DaConho
is willing to appear "daft" rather than to risk forfeiting
the hope that somehow, that faith will ultimately be effi-
cacious, even though the machine gun, with its immediate
and tangible demonstration of self-protection, seems a
more pragmatic, rational approach today. The use of these
Bible-related terms serves to emphasize themes that are
developed as well by other means in the novel: the con-
fusion of a society who has largely replaced religious
faith with man-made objects of protection; who has chosen Caesar (man) over God; and who is unsure of the nature of the source of his salvation. Since man has not been able, using his own means, to claim a Zion, he is made to question the possibility that the discarded God may be the hope of salvation after all. Better to keep the mezuzah along with the gun, just in case.

Returning to the relationship between Profane and Rachel Owlglass in a playful and somewhat suggestive scene, Pynchon makes reference to the fig leaf:

He and Rachel, both covered with lettuce leaves, looked at each other, wary. "How romantic," she said. "For all I know you may be the man of my dreams. Take that lettuce leaf off your face so I can see." Like doffing a cap—remembering his place—he removed the leaf.
"No," she said, "you're not him."
"Maybe," said Profane, "we can try it next time with a fig leaf."
"Ha, ha," she said and roared off.

(V. 24/15)

One might well question whether or not the novelist intends an association with the biblical account in what seems almost a passing reference of no consequence; in fact, it could easily be missed. Yet, in the parodic, but ever so slightly sensual context, the image evokes in the consciousness of a reader familiar with the Bible an
association, if a tenuous one, with the Eden story in
Genesis. When allusions to Adam and Eve appear early in
chapter 2, to be followed by a reference in chapter 3 to
"Ezbekiyeh Garden . . . created by north Europeans in
their own image" (88/76), and by references in chapters 7
and 13 to Eden and to Adam's rib, the possibility of the
fig leaf as a biblical allusion and not just a common term
in our culture is less questionable. The fig leaf is
associated with Adam and Eve after the Fall, as recorded
in Genesis 3:7: "And the eyes of them both were opened,
and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig
leaves together, and made themselves aprons." In the
completed montage, this tiny piece is a reminder of man's
depravity, i.e., ever since Adam's transgression, human
flesh has been the seat of sin. The need for aprons of
fig leaves, of course, is the result of bodily shame,
which symbolizes anxiety about a broken relationship with
God. In context, the Edenic relationship of Adam and Eve
stands in contrast to that of Profane and Rachel: Profane,
as his name and behavior indicate, is, ultimately, in-
capable of meaningful commitment;¹⁵ Rachel, shown in this

¹⁵This idea is expressed explicitly on page 373/359
in V. in another encounter between Profane and Rachel.
particular passage as a perversion of her biblical name-sake, receives more pleasure from a metallic, inanimate, mechanical MG car than from an animate being. Rachel's "Ha, ha" to the idea of a symbolic covering of fig leaves tends to emphasize the degeneracy of natural and meaningful sexual desire that Pynchon sees as characteristic in present-day society. No fig leaves are needed in a shameless world.

In the next scene, Rachel returns in her MG and takes Profane for a ride to an abandoned rock quarry. "Irregular chunks of stone were scattered around. He didn't know what kind, but it was all inanimate" (25/16). To add to the unattractive setting, the "sun beat down out of a cloudless, unprotective heaven." It would be impossible to try to pinpoint a specific Bible reference to heaven as "protective," and yet the idea of comfort and solace, of physical and spiritual protection, is implicit throughout the scriptures.\(^\text{16}\) Thus, an allusion to "a cloudless, unprotective heaven" (25/16) implies the

\(^{16}\text{Any number of verses could provide examples, e.g., Deut. 26:15, "Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel. . . ."; Ps. 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?"; or Ps. 85:11, " . . . righteousness shall look down from heaven."}
absence of an all-knowing and all-seeing God who dwells in heaven, but enters into the affairs of man and intervenes in his behalf. In a world without God, however, heaven is empty, uninhibited, and, consequently, unprotective.

Juxtaposed with this picture of a seemingly uncaring heaven, however, Pynchon refers to the concept of predestination. In a passage describing more of Rachel's background, a parenthetical clause is inserted to explain that in the Five Towns from which Rachel comes, a girl need not go off to college to husband-hunt, for there has always been a certain "understanding" by which "a nice boy can be predestined for husband as early as sixteen or seventeen," and thereby a girl is "granted the illusion at least of having 'played the field'--so necessary to a girl's emotional development" (25/16). Obviously, the use of "predestined" is ostensibly a secular usage to describe a fairly commonplace situation. Yet, in the context of all of Pynchon's work, and especially of Gravity's Rainbow, in which the idea of control is an overriding theme, this early use of a term that will be used in the biblical sense later, does not go unnoticed. The idea of an illusion, at least,
of having "played the field" becomes thematically sign-
nificant as a part of the concept of man's free will. ¹⁷

Later on in the summer Profane wanders up to
Rachel's cabin and overhears her talking lovingly to her
MG as she washes the car, and he sees her fondling the
gearshift. "He didn't want to see anymore" (29/20).
Profane returns to the restaurant where he works and
searches for a box of thumbtacks, returns to the group of
cabins surrounding Rachel's, and tacks male contraceptive
devices on each door.

No one interrupted him. He felt like the Angel
of Death marking the doors of tomorrow's victims
in blood. The purpose of a mezuzah was to fake
the Angel out so he'd pass by. On these hundred
or so cabins Profane didn't see mezuzah one. So
much the worse.

(V. 29/20)

Unlike several of the foregoing allusions which
cannot be positively identified as biblical in source, the
above passage is undoubtedly alluding to an account in
Exodus of the passover event that provides the occasion for
the memorial feast bearing the same name. In the earlier
discussion of the mezuzah reference, I quoted the verse

¹⁷This allusion is closely related to a reference
to "God's elect" (50/40), discussed on pp. 77-80.
most often associated with the passover story. However, the wording of the above passage from V. suggests a later verse that repeats much of what is said in Exodus 12:1-17, in which the passover feast of unleavened bread is instituted. In Exodus 12:23 we read: "For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians: and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." The clue to Pynchon's choice of this specific verse is found in the use of the word "destroyer," which is not found in the earlier version. In the King James version of the Bible, a note beside the word "destroyer" is identified as Abaddon ("destruction," i.e., the destroyer), the Hebrew name for the Greek Apollyon, "angel of the bottomless pit." The recently discovered Dead Sea scrolls refer to Abaddon as a place, i.e., as sheol, or hell. According to Gustar Davidson, who has done extensive research on angels, it was St. John who first personified the term to stand for an

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18See p. 54 for the quotation of Exod. 12:11-14 which explains the Lord's passover.
Even among astute scholars of the Bible there seems to be no hesitation in translating "the destroyer" as the "Angel of Death."

As is frequently the case, Pynchon inverts the allusion for his own purposes. Rather than marking the doors so that victims will be spared destruction, he marks them to indicate that they are victims, and there is no mezuzah to "fake the angel out so he'd pass by." Although the passage is a repulsive one, it speaks to the condition that exists wherein fertility and productivity have corroded to a point that making love to an inanimate automobile is more to be desired than having a relationship of warmth and love with another human being that could result in the bringing forth of new life. In the context of the narrative, the fact that Profane uses the surplus rubbers for marking "victims" of inanimateness is underscored by the fact that, earlier in the evening, Profane has won them from Wedge who remarks to the table, also an inanimate object, "He'll never use them... That's the bitch of it. Never in his lifetime" (28/19).

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In the fourth section of chapter 1, Benny Profane lies idly on a platform while sirens alert Ex-Scaffold sailors to duty. He says to a sea gull, "Suppose," . . . "suppose I was God." After a moment he continues in a reverie:

"If I was God . . ." He pointed at an SP. "Zap, SP, your ass has had it." The SP kept on at what he'd been doing. . . . "Zap," said Profane, "cattle car, keep going and drive off the end of the pier," which it almost did but braked in time. "Patsy Pagano, grow wings and fly out of here." But a final clobber sent Patsy down for good. . . . "What's the matter," Profane wondered. . . . Maybe, Profane thought, God is supposed to be more positive instead of throwing thunderbolts all the time. Carefully he pointed a finger. "Dewey Gland. Sing them that Algerian pacifist song." Dewey . . . began to sing Blue Suede Shoes, after Elvis Presley. Profane flopped over on his back, blinking up into the snow. "Well, almost," he said, to the gone bird, to the snow.

(V. 31/22)

The above passage is one of several allusions to God in V. that is not expletive in function, and cannot be discussed in that category of references. Nor are the references directly related to the Bible in the sense that the passage alludes to an account of a specific biblical event, as in the case of the passover allusion above. Nevertheless, the concept of God as all-powerful is pervasive in all Christian literature as a part of the nature of God. This general
idea provides a source for Pynchon's parody of God as an omnipotent miracle-worker who can use his power to bring destruction or not, at will. An important point that is made in the quoted passage relates to themes in ___ as well as in the other novels: man is not God; playing God is--just playing. While modern man has declared that God is dead, he is himself powerless to take God's place. This being the case, in ___ man seems victimized by the disappearance of God, for he is left unprotected and helpless to stay the trend toward the animateness that is leading to his destruction.

Apart from some expletive expressions, the final allusion having Christian significance in chapter 1 is contained in a passage in which Benny Profane is heading toward an "apocheir" in his yo-yoing activities. Slouched "bumlike" on a wooden bench "worn pallid and greasy with

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20 One well-known example in the Bible of the concept of God's omnipotence that could provide a basis for such a parody, however, is recorded in Matthew 17. The disciples are unable to exorcise a devil from a child, so they bring him to Jesus, who immediately effects a cure. In reply to the disciples' question "Why could not we cast him out?", Jesus says in Matt. 17:20, "... Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."
a generation of random duffs," he receives a call from Rachel on New Year's night, significantly, asking him to "come home." Pynchon continues: "[Rachel's] the only one he would allow to tell him this except for an internal voice he would rather disown as prodigal than listen to" (34/25). In this brief passage, there are three references that can easily be taken as terms used commonly in our culture: "come home," "internal voice," and "prodigal." If a reader is familiar with the Bible, however, it is hard to ignore the biblical overtones in them. While it cannot be said conclusively that Pynchon intended a biblical association, the words occur rather commonly in Christian literature. The admonition of Rachel to "come home" is not only a plea that is echoed in various situations throughout the Bible, but its juxtaposition with the word "Rachel" also provides an example of her acting in accordance with the significance of her biblical name, thus strengthening the possibility of an intended association with the Bible. The frequency with which the idea is expressed in religious writings has resulted in the composition of several hymns that have popularized the words. The one most frequently sung among Protestant groups is "Softly and Tenderly," and uses the plea in the chorus:
Come home . . . come home, . . .
Ye who are weary, come home; . . .
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home! 21

Profane does not go home. He is homeless and incapable of making a lasting commitment to anything or anyone. He is a yo-yo. Like much of today's populace, he is actively going nowhere in particular.

Interestingly, however, Profane acknowledges an "internal voice," which has been variously interpreted as the "conscience," the admonition of the superego to the ego, or the "still, small voice" of God, to which Pynchon alludes in his first story, "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna." 22 Yet, like modern western man, Pynchon seems to say, Profane prefers to ignore any inner promptings and go his own way, unlike the biblical "prodigal son," of which we are reminded in the third of this group of allusions, who "came to himself" and returned penitently homeward.

21 The hymn appears in a number of widely used hymnals, such as The Broadman Hymnal, ed. B. C. McKinney (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1940), p. 100. The words and music were written by Will L. Thompson.

22 Thomas Pynchon, "Mortality and Mercy in Vienna," Epoch, IX, No. 4 (1959), 195-213. The allusion is to 1 Kings 9:12, "And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice."
Among those of the Christian persuasion, in whatever immediate context the word occurs, it is not a gross overstatement to suggest that the term "prodigal" is almost automatically associated with the biblical story of the "prodigal son" in Luke 15:11-24:

And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.
A major point of significance in this story is that, though prodigal, the son was not disowned; on the contrary, the father (God) welcomes lavishly the return of a child who has strayed. As the allusion relates to V., the story is applicable to present-day man who is also approaching the "end of his rope," living in a wasteland amid a spiritual "famine." Profane stands in contrast, however, to the prodigal son who "comes to himself."

The above group of allusions is typical of a method used often by Pynchon: he uses words quite inconspicuously which are loaded with connotations of great import in the novel, so that in the montage, their presence conveys meanings that go beyond what may be initially perceived. It is appropriate that it is on New Year's night, a time of new beginnings, that Rachel, in character here with her biblical counterpart, pleads with Profane to "come home." The juxtaposition of the allusions in this scene in V. works, by the montage principle, to register a ray of hope for a world gone wrong. As yet, of course, Profane persists in his rejection of Rachel's plea, but it is significant that the possibility of man's reconciliation is not ruled out.

Not yet ready to "come home" to Rachel, chapter I ends with Profane's being taken in by Fina, who insists
that he get a job. On learning of a need for volunteers to go down into the sewers and shoot unwanted alligators, Profane reflects that since the work is "under the Street, . . . maybe it would be all right. He could try" (43/33). Thus, the chapter closes as the chapter title suggests, getting "to an apocheir," which Pynchon explains as analogous with aphelion, "the point farthest from the sun" (36/26). The description seems an accurate one both physically and spiritually, for Profane.

At this point, some recapitulation of the nature and function of the fifty Bible-related allusions, comprising about fifteen different subjects, that appear in the opening chapter of V. is in order. In general, it can be said that the allusions form something of a dichotomy; that is to say, those allusions suggesting hope, new birth, and security, e.g., Christmas, Rachel as a symbol of hope, God, and the mezuzah, are counterbalanced with references associated with broken relationships, death, and alienation, e.g., the fig leaf, unprotective heaven, prodigal, and the Angel of Death. As pieces of a montage, however, a number of the allusions which convey positive meanings may be perverted or distorted in the surface narrative; this is not surprising, of course, since parody is used to
a great extent. Thus, just to divide a list into categories is too simplistic a method for "seeing" what the novel is saying. It is the very intertwining of meanings, the paradox, and the multi-meaning that is the texture of the novel. The mezuzah, for example, associated with protection, is made to look ineffective when displayed beside a machine gun, also used for protection, but of a different order. And yet, the meaning of the mezuzah is retained at the same time that it is altered by the juxtaposition with another object alien to it. Taking all of these factors into consideration, the overall implication of the biblical allusions in the chapter, for all their negative aspects, tends toward hope and possibility when the montage pieces are placed side by side. The text itself seems to lend assent to the conclusion. Profane gets "to an apocheir," but this fact, in itself, implies that the next step, when one has gone as far down as is possible, can only be upward—or nothing. Profane opts for possibility: "maybe it would be all right. He could try," even if he must go under the Street to do so.
II

Chapter 2 opens with a new scene in which Rachel is a link between the characters in the opening chapter and a group collectively known as "The Whole Sick Crew," which provides the chapter title. One of the "Crew" is Esther Harvitz, Rachel's roommate. Esther, of course, is a common Jewish name; it is also a biblical name that is the title name for an Old Testament book. As with Rachel, the possibility of an intended association with the biblical Esther is not inconceivable, for there are several similarities between the two, as well as a number of contrasts that suggest a present-day perversion of desirable qualities possessed by Esther in the Bible.

Rachel has come to the office of Dr. Schoenmaker, a plastic surgeon who has removed the characteristic Jewish "hump" from Esther's nose, for the purpose of paying Esther's bill. Later, when Slab and Rachel are discussing her generosity to Esther, Slab picks up a portrait taken prior to Esther's surgery. "It was Esther, leaning against a wall, looking straight out of the picture, at someone approaching her. And there, that look in her eyes--half victim, half in control" (50/39). This passage provides one possible clue to Pynchon's use of the name. In the Old
Testament Esther is a beautiful maiden who was early orphaned and adopted by her cousin Mordecai. When the Persian king Xerxes orders his queen Vashti to submit to the indignity of being displayed to revelers in the banquet hall, Vashti refuses, and the king installs Esther as queen, not knowing that she is Jewish. Later, risking her own safety, Esther successfully intervenes for the Jews after learning of a plan for their destruction by tactfully manipulating the king into granting her wishes. 23

Though greatly distorted under Pynchon's pen, some parallels can be drawn between the two characters. In a sense, Esther is "adopted" by Rachel, who continuously bails her out of financial crises. The biblical Esther is queen, and, as such, is the king's "mistress," a role frequently filled by Esther Harvitz with various members of the "Whole Sick Crew," we are told (103/90). Esther in V. seeks to have signs of her Jewishness removed; the biblical Esther wishes to hide her Jewishness for a time in order to save her people. Queen Esther is "manipulative" for a worthwhile and selfless purpose, while Pynchon's Esther is manipulative in that she tends to be a "sponge" on others

23 See Esther 2-9.
who sympathize with her and continue to help her even though she never repays her benefactors. It appears, then, that Pynchon's choice of the name Esther for this character is appropriate. The use of the biblical name is a reminder of by-gone days when the name Esther could be equated with noble selflessness. No longer so, one of the major functions of the name in Pynchon's montage appears to be that of emphasizing the gulf that divides a courageous Queen Esther in 479 B.C. and Esther Harvitz, a symbol of decadence in 1955.24

While Rachel is discussing Esther's nose job with Dr. Schoenmaker, the surgeon refers to Adam and Eve, an allusion that suggests Genesis 3:20. "And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living." In the particular reference in V., however, the emphasis is upon the Jewishness of Eve, and of the continuity of Jewish motherhood from the first woman to present-day women, rather than Eve as general mother of all:

They believe, I believe, that whatever your father is, as long as your mother is Jewish, you are Jewish too because we all come from our mother's womb. A long unbroken chain of Jewish mothers going all the way back to Eve... Eve was the first Jewish mother, the one who set the pattern. The words she said to Adam have been repeated ever since by her daughters. . . .

(V. 47/37)

The generations of Adam are begun in Genesis 5 and are continued in subsequent chapters. In Genesis 29:35, the birth of Jacob's fourth son by Leah is recorded: "And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing." The Jew is, as a general definition, a descendant of Judah; in later times the term "Jew" was also synonymous with the Israelite, since God changed Jacob's name to Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus, a descendant of Jacob (Israel), is referred to as the "king of the Jews." Thus, it is not without reason that Dr.

25 Pynchon makes the common mistake of implying that Eve's words to Adam are known. In Gen. 3:6 we are only told that she ate, and "gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat." It is the serpent who says to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4).

26 Gen. 32:28. "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed."
Schoenmaker assumes the Jewishness of the genealogical line back to Eve to the exclusion of the meaning of Eve as "life," and thus the generic mother of all, Jew and non-Jew alike. The emphasis on the "long unbroken chain" as Jewish relates the allusion to Eve to a later allusion to Job, who is credited by Profane with founding a line of "schlemihls," i.e., Job is a victim of suffering as the Jews are victims of racial persecution. Pynchon's reference to the genealogy of Eve is juxtaposed with a rather lengthy discussion between Rachel and Dr. Schoenmaker a "grand unbroken chain"; thus, the image reinforces an idea that is ever-present in the novels, of continuity and connectedness.

Continuing the discussion of Esther's nose, Pynchon notes that "the gauze beak was gone, the nose now a proud sickle, pointing you felt, at the big Westchester in the sky where all God's elect, soon or late, ended up" (50/40). With the introduction of an allusion to the doctrine of election, Pynchon places in position a significant piece in his montage. The elect, as opposed to the "preterite" or the "passed over," is highly important thematically in Pynchon's novels. In chapter 1 the "passed over," or
"non-Elect," of the present world are identified in secular and social terms:

The shuttle after morning rush hour is near empty, like a littered beach after tourists have all gone home. In the hours between nine and noon the permanent residents come creeping back up their strand, shy and tentative. Since sunup all manner of with a sense of summer and life; now sleeping bums and old ladies on relief, who have been there all along unnoticed, re-establish a kind of property right, and the coming on of a falling season.

In chapter 2, "all God's elect" are also identified with social affluence (the big Westchester), but the element of Jewishness contains religious as well as social connotations, and the concept of "God's elect" is itself biblical in source.

The doctrine of election is still a controversial one today; the problem of foreordained election and freedom of choice occupies volumes of theological commentary. The facts of the problem, however, can be stated fairly simply. God originally chose Israel as his people, and established the conditions of their salvation, i.e., filling the requirements of the law under the old covenant. However, God later extended his favor to non-Israelites, rejected Israel as his people, and established the church as the true people of God, the Elect.
In context, it seems that Esther's removal of an identifying feature of her Jewishness symbolizes an advance toward joining the ranks of the elect. The surgery erases an ever-present reminder that Esther is numbered among those who rejected Christ as Messiah, and are therefore passed over for election. With her "Anglo-Saxon Protestant" nose, she may become eligible for inclusion in the Heaven promised to a Christian Western civilization. As is so often true in Pynchon's work, an inversion of the biblical idea is also made. While the "passed over" of the Old Testament are Jewish, they are being saved, not lost, by having the Angel of Death pass them by; thus, they are the favored ones.\textsuperscript{27} Likewise, when the Jews are rejected by God in favor of a largely Gentile population as the "elect," those in the Christian church come into the favored position. Yet, Pynchon indicates in numerous ways his censure of the organized Christian church for having become decadent, corrupt, and ineffectual. This being so, Esther's so-called "progress" toward joining the ranks of the "elect" may not really be progress at all, for she is

\textsuperscript{27}See pp. 54-55 for a discussion of the institution of the Passover, which Pynchon seems to treat punningly in his idea of the "passed over."
only moving toward a group characterized by decadence. Being one of the elect, then, really becomes meaningless; she may as well have remained among the rejected. Slab questions her action: "Why does she want to get that changed. With the nose she is a human being" (50/39). That the inverse is true is implied: with the changed nose she is not a human being. The effect of the allusion is to emphasize the meaninglessness of contemporary man's actions and values, and more than that, to demonstrate the trend toward dehumanization or inanimativeness.

Inherent in any discussion of the so-called Puritan Work Ethic are the concepts of predestination (25/16) and election (50/40). Thus, the allusions to "work" and to the "Puritans" that appear next in V. provide another point of focus for the three interrelated terms. The random movements of Stencil, we are told, have been replaced with constant activity. "Work, the chase--for it was V. he hunted--far from being a means to glorify God and one's own godliness (as the Puritans believe) was for Stencil grim, joyless . . ." (55/44). Today's concept of the Puritan attitude toward work is often rather unfairly paraphrased as being "the Lord helps those who help themselves," implying that salvation can be obtained by good works. Pynchon's
allusion to work appears, however, to be in keeping with the more accurate idea of joy in labor which he contrasts with Stencil's lack of joy in his work. As Edmund S. Morgan has observed, the Puritans "had fixed their eyes on a heavenly goal, which directed and informed their lives." The relationship between the heavenly goal and their own earthly lives provided them direction for ordering their lives according to the light of God's plans and promises as they understood them to be. Martin Luther and John Calvin provided the sources for their interpretations. Luther declares that men are essentially wicked, and God all-powerful; no human actions—no "good works" are of the slightest value in gaining redemption. Calvin, in his Institutes of the Christian Religion insists that it is not possible in this world to know for sure whether or not a man is one of the elect or not, and he advances the doctrine of predestination, the theory that God quite arbitrarily chooses those who will receive salvation.

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28 Edmund S. Morgan, The Puritan Family (Boston: Published by Trustees of the Public Library, 1944), p. 27.


30 See Institutes, III, xvii, 2, and III, xviii, 1 in particular.
Cleanth Brooks notes that the Puritans were not appalled by this theory; rather they found the "idea of predestination oddly invigorating, they saw themselves caught up in an extraordinary divine enterprise. Far from taking predestination as an argument against hard work . . . the Puritans undoubtedly found the doctrine a tremendous spur to moral and practical achievement."\(^{31}\)

While Pynchon parodies the Puritan attitude through the character of Stencil, who also has his eyes fixed on a goal which directs and informs his life, he also uses the allusion to contrast the purposeful labor of days past with the purposeless, joyless, and meaningless activity associated elsewhere in Pynchon's work with entropy, and in V. with inanimateness.

As small pieces in a montage, the religious allusions in chapter 2 function in several ways. A large majority of the references in this chapter are to names: Rachel, Esther, Adam, and Eve. Earl Shorris expresses the opinion that "almost all of the names are also clues" to a mystery "in which everyone wears a mask. . . ." Using the

analogy of a dramatic production, in which masks are worn by the players, to discuss characters and their roles in V., Shorris suggests that Pynchon "sometimes repaints the masks during the intermission." Thus, one side of Rachel's "mask" is that of the hopeful Rachel of the Bible, for she does not give up on Esther, but assures Slab, "frostily," that "she has been right on time" with her payments (50/39). The "repainted" mask is a distortion of the biblical Rachel, whose name evokes a mental picture of warm, wholesome love; it depicts a sensual Rachel who sings in a "red-hot mama voice" (51/40). Likewise, Esther demonstrates qualities that are both like and unlike her biblical namesake. The names Adam and Eve are juxtaposed with allusions to "chains," which are important in developing the theme of control and connection in the novels. The references to the Elect, and the related Puritan Work Ethic, also highlight important themes: the Elect versus the Preterite, or passed over of the world, and the purposeful

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33 Variations on the theme are seen in other biblical allusions in V., e.g., apostolic succession and Job.
work of the Puritan in contrast to the joyless chase of Stencil and the inanimateness of the "Whole Sick Crew."
The remaining allusions in the chapter which seem somehow related to the Bible are to Malta, suggestive of both inanimateness as well as of endurance, and to God in the expression "God knew," which is juxtaposed with Stencil's reflection that the members of the "Whole Sick Crew" are "not alone" (57/46). The overtones of such expressions will be discussed later along with expletives.  

III

In the introductory section of the third chapter of V., in which Stencil does eight impersonations, Pynchon refers to apostolic succession: "Had Porpentine gone to Egypt like old Stencil to Malta, perhaps having written his own son that he felt like some other spy, who'd in turn gone off to die . . . ? Apostolic succession" (63/52). In using the term "apostolic succession" to emphasize the idea of passing down things from one generation to another, Pynchon cites a doctrine in church history. While the

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34See pp. 246-51 for this discussion.
doctrine is not named, as such, in the Bible it has a biblical foundation in such verses as Acts 8:14-17.

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

The doctrine of apostolic succession holds that the ministry of the Church is handed down from one apostle to another by the laying on of hands, and has been passed down in this manner from the twelve apostles to succeeding generations to the present day. The doctrine is held by the Roman Catholic, the Eastern Orthodox, and the Anglican churches in particular; most Protestant groups reject it. Originally, the term was not limited to sacramental validity or administrative authority, but included a guarantee of authentic teaching.\(^{35}\) As a piece of Pynchon's montage, the allusion registers the idea of connectedness that is expressed in various other allusions throughout the novel, e.g., the Great Chain of Being, the genealogical lines of Adam and Eve, and Job as progenitor of a line of schlemihls. Further, the allusion provides a point of contrast between

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the acknowledgment of the early church fathers of an unquestioned source of control and authority, and the failure of modern man to identify sources or to trust authority. The source of the line of succession established in the Bible for the passing on of the word of God is that of the divine authority of God himself. In V., however, that unbroken line is parodied: in the case of the elder Stencil and his son, "neither of them had communicated" since a picture post-card was sent (63/52); most importantly, the identity of V., first introduced in this chapter, with the mention of Victoria Wren, remains, finally, unestablished. Thus, the long line of tradition behind apostolic succession stands in contrast to the abortive attempts to establish meaningful connections in V.

While the doctrine of apostolic succession is clearly identifiable in church history, the next allusion with religious implications is quite vague, and, at best, only suggestive. The overtones are too strong to ignore, however. Speaking of Victoria Wren, presumably one of the manifestations of V., the narrator comments on her Catholic religious affiliation:

She talked perhaps overmuch about her religion, had indeed for a long time considered the Son of God as a young lady will consider any eligible
bachelor. But had realized eventually that of course he was not but maintained instead a great harem clad in black, decked only with rosaries.

(V. 72/61)

In addition to obvious allusions to Catholic nuns in their black habits, the reference to Victoria's attitude toward the Son of God is not without some biblical foundation, although a single scripture cannot be clearly identified as Pynchon's intended source. Christian tradition has it that the biblical book The Song of Solomon is a collection of some twenty-five lyric poems of love and courtship which are allegories of the love of Christ for his bride, the Church. The interpretation is strengthened by references in Revelation 21:2 and 21:9. Such an interpretation is openly acknowledged, in at least some Catholic orders of nuns, in the practice of wearing gold wedding bands to signify the marriage of Christ, the Son of God, to his Church, of which the nun is representative. Hence Pynchon's parodic passage. As Raymond Olderman has pointed out, "Two major symptoms of the twentieth century . . . are the

36Rev. 21:2 refers to the new Jerusalem (the Church) "coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Rev. 21:9 speaks of an angel saying to the writer of the book, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."
inversion of love and the inversion of religion. In keeping with this fact, Pynchon's irreverent treatment of a traditionally sacred symbol serves the purpose of illustrating decadence as well as reminding a reader of the original significance of the allusion.

In the same paragraph, a reference to God is made that contains Miltonic as well as biblical overtones behind the jibe: "So it came about that God wore a wide awake hat and fought skirmishes with an aboriginal Satan out at the antipodes of the firmament, in the name and for the safekeeping of Victoria" (73/61). This allusion is typical of those in the large category of references which uses general Christian ideas that cannot be positively attributed to specific Bible verses. The idea of God battling Satan is frequently developed in literature, as in Paradise Lost, for example, but since the Bible is the source for Milton's interpretation, to that extent, at least, it is impossible to separate completely the general Christian idea from its debt to the Bible. The passage quoted above could be related to any one of a number of passages which Merritt Y. Hughes suggests as Milton's probable biblical sources for

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37 Olderman, p. 132.
his account of the battle between God and Satan. A number of passages range from the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament to Jude in the New Testament, but a likely one is Isaiah 14:12-15.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the Pit.

The general tone of the passage in V. suggests that the triumph of Good over Evil, i.e., God over Satan, can be taken seriously today only by someone like Victoria Wren, who "talked perhaps overmuch about her religion," and who has remained in the Church, an institution associated by Pynchon with decadence and as being full of mindless masses. In a world full of violence, inhumanity, and inanimateness, evil seems to have gained the upper hand over a God that has been declared dead.

The problem of determining Pynchon's source is alleviated in the next religious allusion in V. Using an

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Egyptian setting as a background, Pynchon alludes to a passage in the Apocrypha:

But Alexandria was a special case. In the Jewish year 3554 Ptolemy Philopater, having been refused entrance to the temple at Jerusalem, returned to Alexandria and imprisoned many of the Jewish colony there. Christians were not the first to be put on exhibition and mass-murdered for the amusement of a mob. Here, Ptolemy, after ordering Alexandria's Jews confined in the Hippodrome, embarked on a two-day debauch. The king, his guests and a herd of killer elephants fed on wine and aphrodisiacs: when all had been worked up to the proper level of blood-lust, the elephants were turned loose into the arena and driven upon the prisoners. But turned (goes the tale) on the guards and spectators instead, trampling many to death. So impressed was Ptolemy that he released the condemned, restored their privileges, and gave them leave to kill their enemies.

(V. 77/65-66)

The story is a fair summary of the first six chapters of 3 Macabees. In the novel, the account seems to have two main foci: anti-Semitism and divine intervention. As a montage piece, the example of persecution of Jews joins other allusions to victimization, Jewish and otherwise. In chapter 1, the Zionist allusion serves a similar purpose; in chapter 2, Esther is seen as "half-victim" because of her Jewishness; and in other chapters to be discussed, several allusions either complement or contrast with the idea of victimization, e.g., the sacrifice of the "Lamb of God,"
and the Herero extermination effort that foreshadows the Hitler era and its mass murder of Jews.

Through Waldetar, Pynchon makes light of the idea of divine intervention implied in the apocryphal story. We are told that Waldetar is "inclined to take the common-sense view. If there is no telling what a drunken human will do, so much less a herd of drunken elephants. Why put it down to God's intervention?" (77-78/66). Again, the allusion is interrelated with others in V. that point to a failure in faith in the twentieth century, so that the idea of God's intervention, or "miracles," is made to look ridiculous. Waldetar's comment illustrates well the attempts of many people in recent years to discount miracles or divine intervention by seeking to provide rational explanations, especially scientific or technological ones, for seemingly irrational phenomena.

Viewed from another angle, this particular allusion to the extracanonical book shows an instance in which the victimized, i.e., the persecuted Jew, is victorious. In this light, the reference is related to an earlier allusion in which the blood on the Jewish doorpost is a sign that ensures that the Angel of Death will pass over the house, leaving the Jews unharmed. In a larger sense, the allusion
hints of an idea that is developing gradually in the novel, that Pynchon is, finally, on the side of the "passed-over" of this world who may ultimately find salvation through death. With the failure of organized religion in an age of decadence, the novelist seems to suggest, there may be something to be said for siding with the "passed over," rather than with the so-called Elect in today's ineffectual Church.

Juxtaposed with the reference in which divine intervention is called into question is a series of allusions that acknowledge the presence of God's presence in human events:

Why put it down to God's intervention? There were enough instances of that in history, all regarded by Waldestar with terror and a sense of his own smallness: Noah's warning of the Flood, the parting of the Red Sea, Lot's escape from annihilated Sodom. Men, he felt, . . . are at the mercy of the earth and its seas. Whether a cataclysm is accident or design, they need a God to keep them from harm.

(V. 78/66)

That Waldestar feels "terror and a sense of his own smallness" in the face of such events as the destruction of all but a remnant of God's creatures, the miraculous changing of natural phenomena, and the devastation of a flourishing but wicked city, is a significant comment on the place that man occupies in the universe. Having been told that
Waldetar is a "highly religious man," we sense something of an Old Testament view of God and man in which God is a wrathful God who is to be feared, obeyed, and worshipped. In Psalm 8:3-4, the attitude is articulated in this way: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou are mindful of him?" The fear of God is not without recompense, however, for as the writer of Psalm 111:10 states, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The dominion of God over his creation is not questioned; on the contrary, man's fundamental claim to wisdom stems from the acknowledgment of an order of priority that places God in control. It is precisely this ordering of things that stands in stark contrast to the twentieth-century existentialist man who finds it embarrassing that God does not exist, since the disappearance of God precludes all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven. On a plane where there are only men, there is no higher, perfect, trustworthy source of authority to depend on outside oneself.  

39 Such a view is expanded upon in the discussion of Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1946).
the result is a feeling of abandonment and insignificance: lacking the perspective of a controller-controlled relationship, man is made to see himself as a tiny, meaningless speck in an uncaring cosmos. Terrified of God or not, Waldepur, however, concludes that "whether a cataclysm is accident or design, they need a God to keep them from harm" (78/66).

The allusion to Noah’s warning of the Flood is to Genesis 6:13-7:5. Seeing that man’s wickedness was great, it "repented the Lord that he had made man," but for Noah, who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Thus, God commands Noah to make an ark and gives him precise instructions for its construction. The ark is to house Noah and his family, along with a pair of "every living thing of all flesh," when a flood of forty days and forty nights' rain destroys all other living creatures.

Again, an example of divine intervention coupled with an act that is salvation for a chosen group and destruction for another is alluded to in the story of the parting of the Red Sea. The Lord instructs Moses in this story to camp at a given location, and then tells him that the Israelites whom he is leading will be followed by the Egyptian Pharaoh. Moses obeys, and the children of Israel
upbrade Moses for his action, saying, "It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." Moses soothes them with the promise that they will not see the Egyptians any more thereafter. Then God speaks to Moses: "But lift up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." A second time Moses is instructed to stretch out his hand over the sea, at which the waters return, destroying the Egyptians to the extent that "there remained not so much as one of them." For the time, at least, the Israelites' faith in God and in Moses is restored.

Likewise, Pynchon's allusion to Lot and the destruction of Sodom points to an example of God's intervention to spare the lives of a small group, while at the same time visiting destruction upon another. In Genesis 19 the account is given of Lot's visit by angels to warn him of the coming devastation. The townspeople demand entrance to Lot's house to meet the strangers, and when they are refused admission, they begin to force an entrance. God again intervenes by blinding the men in order to keep the

40Exod. 14:16.
angels safe; they reveal their mission to be the destruction of Sodom, but instruct Lot to escape with his family and thereby avoid destruction.

In addition to the immediate value of the allusions in recalling bygone days when divine intervention is acknowledged, they serve, in the total montage that constitutes V., as threads that are interwoven with others in the novel to communicate the possibility of the idea that destruction and salvation may be of the same source. The God who provides for Noah's salvation is the same God who then destroys the rest of his creation; God saves the Israelites by causing the Egyptian pursuers to drown; Lot, a just man, is spared the destruction meted out to the wicked in Sodom. Furthermore, the allusions are related closely to those that focus on the thematic concern in V., as well as in Gravity's Rainbow, with the Elect versus the "passed-over."

Following the provocative statement of man's need for God, the narrator declares that "soul cannot commend no-soul. Only God can." The word choice here echoes the words spoken on the occasion of Christ's crucifixion; they are, in fact, the final words of Christ recorded in the Bible before death comes: "Father, into thy hands I commend
my spirit." The words of the dying Christ are, of course, an instance of soul commending soul, in contrast to man's inability to control nature, whose forces can be controlled only by a higher power. In a fleeting moment, and fleeting it is, Pynchon strikes a solemn tone, and we feel with Waldetar the awe, or "terror and a sense of his own smallness," with which he contemplates the power of God. In the next instant, however, Pynchon returns to a scornful tune, twisting the profound implications of his allusion to conclude that "events between soul and soul are not God's direct province," suggesting that even if a power beyond man controls nature, it does not intervene for man, who must look to Fortune. "Fortune," he says, "had saved the Jews in the Hippodrome." The juxtaposition of the contrasting views of God's power as it relates to man provides a picture of the broken relationship that now exists between man and God. Twentieth-century men may yet "need a God to keep them from harm," but the need remains unfilled in a day when man has rejected that God, and must, therefore, rely on the whimsy of Fortune.

As Waldetar performs his duties as a train conductor, he now daydreams about his wife Nita, who is soon to bear a child. Hoping for a boy for "women outnumber us now," he nevertheless admits that "I'm not against it," for it is "God's will, is it not? Look at Solomon, at many great kings. One man, several wives" (79/67). The phrase "God's will" is used popularly by religiously oriented groups everywhere, with various interpretations and degrees of understanding, to be sure. The source of the term is undeniably biblical, but to cite any one verse as Pynchon's intended source is impossible, for the Bible contains a large number of references which teach, by example and by precept, that doing the will of God, or being "in God's will," is a necessary part of the Christian life. "Thy will be done," is, for example, one of the elements of the Lord's Prayer, which is frequently cited as a model prayer for a Christian believer.42 Pynchon seems to use the term in parodic fashion to imitate the idea to which many unthinking people subscribe, that whatever is contained in the Bible must be acceptable: "if it's good enough for Solomon, it's good enough for me." The practice of using

42 See Matt. 6:10. Among other frequently quoted verses in this regard are Matt. 7:21; Mark 3:25; and Luke 22:42.
the Bible as a proof-text for almost every conceivable notion is itself indicative of the kind of "mindlessness" that Pynchon deplores.

Pynchon's reference to Solomon does not seem to be accidental. The tenth son of David, Solomon was the third king of Israel, having been crowned in 1015.\textsuperscript{43} He is best known, perhaps, for his choice of wisdom over all other virtues or possessions. In 1 Kings 3:7-9, there is an account of God's appearing to Solomon in a dream, and saying, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon replies:

And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

God is pleased with Solomon's answer, and he tells Solomon: "Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked for riches for thyself nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words. . . ." God goes far

beyond Solomon's request by granting him both wisdom and riches and honor.

As time passes, however, Solomon cannot resist the temptation to mingle with "many strange women"; his disobedience is recorded in 1 Kings 11:2-6.

Of the nations concerning which the Lord said . . . Ye shall not go in to them . . . for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and thirty concubines, and his wives turned away his heart. . . .

When Solomon became old, his "heart was not perfect with the Lord his God. . . . Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord." The allusion to Solomon in an ostensibly offhand way to illustrate a point in his thinking is, beneath the surface, a powerful and appropriate parallel to western days of the twentieth century. Like Solomon, he has turned away from wisdom available through a higher power, to worship wealth and power that is man-made; like Solomon, he has become decadent and unregenerate. Actually, the single image of Solomon in Pynchon's montage evokes a picture of present-day society: the appearance of the name of the biblical Solomon, in itself, bears connotations of sexual perversion, and a gradual turning away from a religious faith that was once a source of strength and wisdom, but is now abandoned for temporal pleasures.
Unlike the biblical character Solomon, who is identifiable and whose name consistently evokes certain associations, the next group of allusions in chapter 3 cannot be attributed to the Bible as such, for they seem to refer to Islamic interpretation of the Koran in the immediate context of the novel. However, because of certain elements that are common to great world religions such as Islam and Christianity, and to their sacred writings, the inclusion of the references seems to be in order. The section records the reverie of Waldetar, now referred to by the given name of Gebrail, which is, according to tradition, the name of the Lord's angel who dictated the Koran to Mohammed his prophet. Gebrail describes the hopeless waste land that is the desert. Nothing can long survive the sand. Goats and melons, i.e., animal life and vegetation alike, perish. "Never more can you give comfort in the summer, cool abdelawi, shaped like the Angel's trumpet!" (82/70). The angel Gabriel (an alternate spelling of Gebrail; Jibril in Islamic), is one of the two highest-ranking angels in Judaeo-Christian and Mohammedan religious lore. Davidson, in his A Dictionary of Angels, 44 provides a helpful

44Davidson, pp. 117-18.
discussion of Gabriel. He is considered the angel of annunciation, resurrection, mercy, vengeance, death, and revelation. As such, the name itself suggests many of the paradoxical elements that are so important in Pynchon's work: death and salvation attributable to the same source of control. Except for Michael, who is mentioned in Daniel, Jude, and Revelation, and Raphael, who appears in the apocryphal book of Tobit, Gabriel is the only angel named in the Bible. To the Muslims, Gabriel is the spirit of truth; to the Jews, Gabriel is the angel who dealt death and destruction to Sodom and Gomorrah, and he it is who prevented Queen Vashti from appearing naked before King Ahaseurus and his guests, resulting in the election of Esther in her place. Davidson also notes that, "according to the Encyclopedia of Islam I, 502, Mohammed confused Gabriel with the Holy Ghost—a confusion understandable or explainable by virtue of the conflicting accounts in Matthew 1:20 and Luke 1:26." The Matthew account states that the Holy Spirit begets Mary with Child, while Luke says that it is Gabriel who "came into her," and informs her that "she had found

45 See pp. 95-96 and 206-207 for further discussion of Lot and Sodom.

46 See pp. 73-74 for further discussion of Esther.
favor with the Lord," and "would conceive in her womb." It would appear, then, that Pynchon's reference to Gebrail is not a random one.

The reference to the "cool abdelawi, shaped like the Angel's trumpet," that is shaped like a melon that brings cool comfort in the arid summer, could possibly refer to the trumpet of Isaiah 27:13, in which Christ's coming is prophesied: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." By contrast, twentieth-century man, whom Pynchon sees as heading toward destruction in the Western world, does not hear an "Angel's trumpet," for it too has been consumed in the waste land that is the present world. In this Eliotic passage set in Egypt, Pynchon likens the empty nothingness, the approaching inanimateness, that characterizes the contemporary world, to the arid desert sand that silently, almost imperceptibly "creeps in on a man's land," and renders it a

47 I have adhered to Pynchon's apparent use of abdelawi to mean a kind of melon, although it is possible that the word more accurately describes a species of the squash family.
waste land. By the time the impending destruction is noticed, it is too late to escape it or to reverse the process. No "Angel's trumpet" now heralds the coming of a Christ who has been rejected; no salvation seems to be forthcoming for a world that is "ready to perish." The prophecy remains unfulfilled.

That Pynchon intends a biblical association in the above passage is hinted further when it is noted that Gebrail is in the Ezbekiyeh Garden, which, in the next section, I shall suggest is to be identified with the Garden of Eden. Thus, the obvious connotations of the waste land image made famous by T. S. Eliot, are enhanced by the implied contrast with the lush vitality of the original Eden of the Bible.

Meanwhile, more references to Gebrail are made which seem to be related to the Bible indirectly:

The Lord's angel, Gebrail, dictated the Koran to Mohammed the Lord's Prophet. What a joke if all that holy book were only twenty-three years of listening to the desert. A desert which has no voice. If the Koran were nothing, then Islam was nothing. Then Allah was a story, and his Paradise wishful thinking.

While Pynchon refers to the Koran here, the passage seems to apply, by extension, to the Christian Bible as well. The paragraph can be restated in Christian terms as well
to express the novelist's concern with the authenticity of
the source of man's faith before its "failure" in recent
days: "If the Koran [the Bible] were nothing, then Islam
[Christianity] was nothing. Then Allah [God] was a story
and his Paradise wishful thinking" (82/71). At this point
in V., Pynchon tends toward an affirmative answer to the
question that Raymond Olderman poses: ". . . is it possible
that deep in the soul of our century we will discover not
the American Dream but a dream which proves we ourselves are
the source of a waste land world gone mad?"48 Yet, the
passage also hints, by its use of the conditional clause,
at the possibility of a positive answer to the other half
of Olderman's question: "Is there really an unknown Master
Conspiracy . . . ?" Or, to go a step further, is it possi-
ble that there is a higher Power, after all, that will
eventually prove Paradise not to be "wishful thinking"? No
answers are forthcoming yet.

The "Paradise" alluded to in the quoted passage
above is used frequently in literature, but the idea is
also biblical in source. Possibly the verse quoted most
often with regard to the term "paradise" is that of Jesus

48 Olderman, p. 128.
promising one of the thieves hanging on crosses placed on either side of his that "to day shalt thou be with me in paradise." As the word is used in this passage, however, a more likely source is Revelation 2:7, a portion of which states that "to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Cross-references, not surprisingly, refer to Genesis 2:9, which speaks of the garden of Eden. The origin of the word is the Persian word for an enclosed space or garden. The juxtaposition of Paradise, a place which epitomizes sufficiency and completeness of comfort, with the earth-bound desert that can "no longer give comfort" serves to underscore the contrast between things divine and human, religious and secular, alive and dead, fertile and sterile, contrasts which are at the heart of Pynchon's novels.

Continuing his reflection, Gebrail thinks as he watches the English tourists with disdain: "How could you

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49 See Luke 23:43. The word "paradise" occurs only three times each in the Old and New Testaments. While the Old Testament does not explicitly equate paradise with the garden of Eden, Frederick Grant and H. H. Rowley concur in the opinion that "it is unquestionable that Eden serves as the basis for the later conception," referring to the concept of paradise. See James Hastings, ed. Dictionary of the Bible by Frederick C. Grant and H. H. Rowley (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963).
say they were people: they were money. What did he care about the love affairs of the English? Charity--selfless or erotic--was as much a lie as the Koran. Did not exist" (84/72). Pynchon's reference to "Charity" in this context evokes, to one familiar with the Bible, the King James version of a well-known passage in 1 Corinthians. The word is often translated "love" in more modern versions of the Bible. The addition of the elliptical phrase "selfless or erotic" strengthens the possibility that the novelist is alluding to the Bible, for numerous commentaries are concerned with the different types of love that are rendered "love" in English, but which require separate words in the Greek New Testament, e.g., *agape*, selfless love; *phileo*, brotherly love; and *eros*, sensual love. The concept of selfless love is the word translated "charity" in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians.\(^{50}\) The apparent allusion to what is commonly called the "love chapter" of the Bible, followed by the phrase "selfless or erotic," emphasizes both the failure of the *agape* type of love and the perversion of sexual love in today's world.

\(^{50}\)See Appendix C for a quotation of 1 Corinthians 13.
The narrative returns now to another passage that seems to have its source in the Koran, concerning the prophecy of events to occur on the Last Day with regard to the opposing powers of Christ and antichrist. Gebrail's reverie is recorded:

And on the Last Day, when the prophet Christ re-establishes el-Islam as the religion of the world he will return to life to slay Dejal the antichrist at a churchgate somewhere in Palestine. The Angel Asrafil will trumpet a blast to kill everything on earth, and another to awaken the dead.

(V. 84/72)

References to antichrist in the Bible are confined to the letters of John, but the book of the Revelation records a final battle, at Armageddon, to be fought between the forces of Good and Evil, concepts implicit in the Christ-antichrist designation; the "victory of the Lamb," i.e., Christ or Good, is prophesied on that final day of reckoning. The reference stands in stark contrast to the picture of desolation on a desert which is "prophecy enough of the Last Day" (84/72). "Nothing was coming. Nothing was already here," Gebrail concludes. In this passage the

51 See 1 John 2:18 and 22; 1 John 4:3; and 2 John 7.

52 See Rev. 16:16. See also pp. 110-12 and 150-51 for further discussion of Pynchon's use of the allusion to Armageddon.
fragments of hope that appear elsewhere in Pynchon's montage are not to be seen. In using the allusion, those parts of the twentieth century that are characterized by disbelief and by a trend toward annihilation are depicted forcefully; no victory seems imminent.

As for the allusion to the Last Day in the passage quoted above, a Christian version of what is to occur is recorded in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 in the New Testament:

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpe of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

But, thinks Gebrail, "the desert's angel had hidden all the trumpets beneath the sand. The desert was prophecy enough of the Last Day" (85/72). In Gebrail's mind, there is no comfort to be found in the desert, i.e., the waste land that is today's world, in which man is becoming inanimate and thus incapable of productivity, just as life is choked out on an arid desert when there is no way to check the encroaching sands that gradually take over. Furthermore, present-day man cannot hope for a final revival, for the trumpet that would herald such a "second coming" is not
"beneath the sand," i.e., all means of communication between man and God have been severed.

Gebrail continues to ponder what he feels to be the prophetic omen of the desert. "He watched the hindquarters of the poor horse. A poor horse's ass. He nearly laughed. Was this a revelation then from God? Haze hung over the city" (85/72). The crude reference to the "horse's ass" as a possible vehicle of "revelation" pictures Gebrail, like modern man, in the position of finding himself "at the tail end" of a century in a world that is running down. Pynchon's reduction of a feeling of exaltation generally associated with receiving a divine revelation to an absurd intuition of an "exhausted" carriage driver is indicative of the low estate to which twentieth-century man has fallen. The idea of divine revelation (the communication of truth by God to man) is a common religious concept; we can only speculate as to whether Pynchon intends a biblical association. Juxtaposed with allusions to imminent apocalypse that have religious overtones, however, it is not inconceivable that Pynchon has in mind one or more of numerous passages throughout the Bible in which divine revelation is mentioned. If so, his emphasis on events associated with the book of Revelation, e.g., the Last Day and Armageddon,
suggests that the opening words of The Revelation are a possible source:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.\textsuperscript{53}

Linked to the Last Day imagery is a reference to Fashoda, a place where "the Franks--Inglizi, Feransawi--will fight a great battle there, which will spread in all directions to engulf the world" (85/73). On the surface, the reference is to an actual and historically verifiable event, the Fashoda Crisis of 1898, in which Great Britain and France clashed over control of the Upper Nile. The incident is the first of several crises named in V. that forebode imminent devastation on a large scale. Actually, a final showdown was narrowly averted by diplomatic resolution. However, as Max Schulz has noted, "the novel purports to be a record of verifiable political incidents; but the factual is so skillfully joined with the fanciful

\textsuperscript{53}Rev. 1:1-3.
that one is unable offhand to tell them apart." The addition of the word "Franks" identifies the Germans both as a potential British ally in the Fashoda crisis and as one of the powers in the two world wars of later decades. After World War I failed to be the "war to end war," the possibility that World War II could be a final apocalypse seemed more than mere conjecture to many people. Thus, the juxtaposition of what appear to be references to historical events with allusions such as the Last Day and the Christ and antichrist, evokes an association with the final battle between the forces of Good and Evil at Armageddon, that is prophesied in the Bible. To recapitulate briefly Eisenstein's explanation of the montage principle, the juxtaposition of two separate images in a given context "inevitably combine into a new concept, a new quality, arising out of that juxtaposition." When an explicit allusion to Armageddon is made later, in chapter 7 of V, it lends

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55 Eisenstein, p. 4.

56 See pp. 150-51 for a discussion of the allusion to Armageddon.
validity to the concept created in the passage here discussed.

The section concludes with another reference that, by itself, does not appear to be related to the Bible at all. As night falls, the narrator notes that "this haze [the same haze that "hung over the city" in the passage quoted above concerning a revelation from God] would make the stars invisible. . . Gebrail enjoyed starless nights. As if a great lie were finally to be exposed . . ." (85/73). Coming as it does after a number of allusions to the coming of Christ that appear in the immediate context, and recalling earlier allusions to an event in which the visibility of a star was welcomed ("And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy"), the reference to "starless nights" acquires significance as a possible biblical allusion. Earlier, the star of Bethlehem guided the wise men to where Jesus lay, enabling them to locate him and to worship him; here, the truth of God's existence has been questioned since the desert wasteland seems devoid of God's presence. Thus, Gebrail does not wish to be reminded of a hope which he sees as a lie, a lie to which the waste land around him seems to give approbation. Viewed in this way, the possibility that the "starless nights" reference has biblical overtones is not mere conjecture. The section
is surely one of the bleakest passages in the novel; Pynchon uses various biblical allusions to provide a contrast between what is, i.e., nothingness, and the "wishful thinking" that orthodox religion provides to refute the nothingness that has swept over the present century like the sands of the empty desert. Organized religion has failed, in Pynchon's view, to keep alive the hope that was promised in Christ.

Contrasted with the desolation and hopelessness of section 5, section 7 of chapter 3 begins with a reference that suggests Eden.\textsuperscript{57} The opening words of this final section seem to be a parody of the events of the sixth day of creation as recorded in Genesis: "The bierhalle north of the Ezekideh Garden had been created by north European tourists in their own image. One memory of home among the dark-skinned and tropical. But so German as to be ultimately a parody of home" (88/76). Genesis 1:26-27 states that God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . so God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he

\textsuperscript{57}I have omitted section 6 in this discussion because the allusions in that section are all expletive expressions, which will be discussed as a group on pp. 246-51.
them." A few verses later, in Genesis 2:8, we are told that "the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed." The allusion seems to function as a reminder of what man has made of the world since he adopted the existentialist view that, with God's disappearance, man must become whatever he can without the help of God and, by extension, the Church, the symbolic agent of God. The man-made version of the church that he has fashioned without God's help is finally but a weak parody of the Paradise that God created and intended for mankind, as represented by Adam and Eve. William Barrett speaks to the problem that Pynchon is addressing:

The decline of religion in modern times means simply that religion is no longer the uncontested center and ruler of man's life, and that the Church is no longer the final and unquestioned home and asylum of his being. . . . The waning of religion is a much more concrete and complex fact than a mere change in conscious outlook; it penetrates the deepest strata of man's total psychic life. . . . The loss of the Church was the loss of a whole system of symbols, images, dogmas, and rites which had the psychological validity of immediate experience. . . . In losing religion, man lost the concrete connection with a transcendent objectivity. But he was bound to feel homeless in such a world, which no longer answered the needs of his spirit. . . . To lose
one's psychic container is to be cast adrift, to become a wanderer on the face of the earth.58

While the reference to the Ezekideh Garden in itself may seem fairly trivial, the associations evoked when it is juxtaposed with an allusion to a well-known Bible event, the Creation story, are an important contribution to Pynchon's montage. This method is one which Pynchon uses frequently; in so doing, he is able to treat, in an ostensibly playful manner, matters that are at the heart of his concern with the deplorable condition of the present-day world.

As if to underline his emphasis on the deterioration that characterizes the world today, Pynchon next likens the barmaid's soap-bleached, "dishwasher hands" to leprosy. The thought in Hanne's (pun on Hansen's Disease, or leprosy?) mind that the soap-bleached, "soggy white" hand "looked like leprosy," extends to include all the people in the beer-hall: "Was it a change in the light, or were the skins of the others actually beginning to show the blotches of disease?" (90/78). Leprosy is a disease that

is frequently associated with biblical times.\textsuperscript{59} Obviously, a reference to leprosy does not automatically evoke a biblical association for everyone, especially if a person is not familiar with the Bible. Even so, it is not unusual for a secular book to note the fact that the disease dates back to biblical times and to comment on the horror attached to leprosy because of the numerous biblical laws on the subject.\textsuperscript{60} In \textit{V.}, the juxtaposition of the references to leprosy in close proximity to those of the creation story in Genesis, on the one hand, and allusions to Pentecost, on the other, points to a reasonable possibility that a biblical association is intended. Even if it were not, however, the principle of montage in the passage works toward such a use. The Bible refers to the disease leprosy, or to the victim, the leper, over sixty times; its victims are outcasts, and are considered unclean, a fact that relates the allusion to those concerned with victims. The disease is

\textsuperscript{59}Historians believe leprosy existed in Egypt, China, and India more than 2,500 years ago, although its place of origin is unknown.

\textsuperscript{60}This was true in my own earlier experience as a nursing student, both in the classroom lectures and in the textbook. For example, see Edgar Hull and Cecilia M. Perrodin, \textit{Medical Nursing} (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Co., 1952), p. 671.
the subject of some of the Old Testament laws, and on several occasions a leper is the object of Jesus' healing power, e.g., Naaman, a military leader of Syria, as well as a number of unnamed lepers. 61 The Bible may have popularized the idea of the leper becoming "white as snow," as in the account in Numbers 12:10 of Miriam, who "became leprous, white as snow." Typically, the "leper spots" that characterize Hansen's Disease (leprosy) are dusky-red at first, and as granulomatous infiltration progresses, and produces nerve lesions with a resulting dermal anesthesia, the anesthetic spots become pale or "white." 62 Pynchon's allusion to leprosy was carefully chosen, I believe, for its biblical overtones are complemented by its inherent definition: "A chronic disease . . . characterized by the formation of nodules . . . that enlarge and spread accompanied by the loss of sensation with eventual paralysis, wasting . . . , and production of deformities and mutilations." 63 What better description of the condition of the

61 See 2 Kings 5:1 and 14. See also p. 198 where lepers are again referred to.


world Pynchon describes in *V.* could be found? The emphasis on physical qualities that are roughly analogous to the medical symptoms of leprosy, e.g., "inanimateness," "paralysis," and "waste," that pervades all of the novels, is capsuled in this allusion to an ancient and dreaded disease.64 To make his point unmistakably clear, Hanne's comment that all the guests in the beer-hall (which is "made in their own image," we must remember), are "beginning to show the blotches of disease" (90/78) serves to emphasize the extent to which our society is deteriorating. No one seems to be exempt, or "clean."

While Hanne washes dishes and notices the leprous blanching of her skin, she also discovers a stain that is "roughly triangular" on a plate. Examining the plate further, she notes that the "stain flickered twice in and out of existence" (90/78), as if it were a flame. There follows a largely incoherent conversation (as if in tongues, one critic suggests), filled with snatches of words and phrases, and containing few complete sentences, but for one: "The triangular stain swam somewhere over the crowd like a tongue..."

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64 Paradoxically, the expression "white as snow" is also used with regard to cleansing (from sin) in the Bible.
on Pentecost" (92/79). The allusion is to the occasion of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2, at which time the Holy Spirit descends on the Apostles, giving them power to expound God's works to the assembled people of many lands in their own native tongues. According to the Bible, St. Peter preaches that day, and many are baptized. Thus, the "gift of tongues" is a sign that the Holy Ghost is present in the believer. The account is recorded in Acts 2:104, 6, 12, and 13:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. . . . Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. . . . And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying to one another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

Hanne is a girl whom Pynchon describes as a character much like Faulkner's Lena Grove:65 "Bred to patience . . . she had cultivated and perfected a vast cow-like calm which

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served her in good stead among the drunkenness, sex for
sale and general fatuousness of the bierhalle" (88/76).
The vast, cow-like calm of Hanne hints of a certain mind-
lessness; thus, the introduction of the stain resembling a
tongue, as well as a flickering flame, is upsetting to her,
for she cannot comprehend whatever message it is intended
to convey. Nor can the revelers in the bierhalle. As
W. T. Lhamon, Jr. notes, "the feeling through the bulk of
the novel is of a longing for transcendence, and an immi-
nence of the spirit, but of no chance for it to occur.
Signs of spirit swim 'over the crowd, like a tongue on
Pentecost,' . . . but they are not yet revealed to the
people."66 That the signs are not revealed to the group
should come as no surprise if we realize that Pentecost
represents the presence of the Holy Spirit, and is depend-
ent upon a faith in the efficacy of the God-head whom the
Spirit represents. Pentecost represents ultimate life and
the gift of communication, the very things that the
twentieth-century man lacks. The rush toward self-
destruction, amid the "drunkenness, sex for sale, and

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66 W. T. Lhamon, Jr., "Pentecost, Promiscuity, and
Pynchon's V.: From the Scaffold to the Impulsive,"
Twentieth Century Literature, XXI (May, 1975), 167.
general fatuousness of the bierhalle," on the one hand, and the "cow-likeness" on the other, provide no worthy receptacles for the Holy Spirit.

Whereas chapter 1 ends on a faint note of hope, chapter 3 closes with apocalyptic overtones that hint doom without transcendence. As W. T. Lhamon suggests, "Pentecost . . . means ultimate life to those who accept it," for it describes "an ultimate ascent into the spiritual." Yet, at this point in V., there is no transcendence, since the "signs of the spirit swim 'over the crowd . . . ', but . . . are not yet revealed to the people."  

In addition to the continuity provided by the appearance of recurring allusions, or variations of allusions made in the earlier chapters, chapter 3 is important for the introduction of about twenty new allusions in the novel. A number of expletives (to be discussed later) are used; Malta is mentioned, still without an obvious relationship to Christian ideas as yet. The "starless night" reference in this chapter can be related to the star of Bethlehem as a contrasting image, and to the "unprotective heaven" as a

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67 Ibid., p. 164.

68 Ibid., p. 167.
parallel reference in chapter 1. In chapter 2, the names of Adam and Eve are associated with Paradise and the garden of Eden in chapter 3, as well as to the idea of apostolic succession, signifying continuity from one generation to another.

In addition to a growing network of interrelatedness, certain themes are predominant in the biblical allusions in the chapter that are pervasive in V. as well as in Pynchon's other novels. The struggle between Good and Evil is seen in allusions to God and Satan, and to Christ versus antichrist. The apocalyptic note is sounded with Gebrail and the trumpet, the Last Day, and the tongues at Pentecost, which Lhamon and others associate with the end of the world. Decadence is connoted in such allusions as those to Solomon, to leprosy, and to the non-Edenic garden of Ezekideh. Election, which promises salvation to the chosen only is echoed in allusions to divine intervention, e.g., Noah, the Red Sea, and Lot and Sodom. Love, or the failure of love, in this waning century, is shown in the allusion to Charity. Using the vehicle of a narrator describing Stencil, a "quick change artist," doing "eight impersonations," Pynchon juxtaposes biblical and secular
images which create, by means of the montage principle, a picture of approaching doom.

IV

While chapters 1 and 3 can be considered complementary in the sense that the Bible-related allusions convey contrasting messages of hope versus hopelessness, respectively, so chapters 2 and 4 tend to complement one another, so far as Christian references are concerned, in the use of names that are suggestive of biblical ideas rather more than being clearly allusive. Other than the mention of "life after death," which is important as a general Christian idea (though not confined to Christianity) whose source the Christian traces ultimately to biblical teaching, and the use of an expletive, "O God," the names of Esther and Godolphin are preponderant; Rachel is mentioned one time. The brief chapter is important in its own way to the development of the novel as montage, however.

The concept of immortality is introduced in a completely secular way. We are told that Esther "divided her attention between the delinquent wilderness and a paperback copy of The Search for Bridey Murphy," a book that "had been written by a Colorado businessman to tell people there
was life after death" (95/83). In a novel that is so generously sprinkled with biblical allusions and concepts, the very fact that "life after death" is here discussed in the context of a controversial paperback that contains "a weird canon of twentieth-century metaphysics we've come to associate with the city of Los Angeles and similar regions" (95/83), seems significant. As the reference is seen in relation to the overall contrast of the secular and religious in the novel, the fact that today it is a newsstand paperback, rather than the sacred scripture, that is consulted on the subject of immortality, reinforces a theme that runs throughout the novel, the failure of religious faith and the ascendancy of secularism. The reference is an example of what could be said to parallel roughly what Eisenstein calls "the filmic fourth dimension," or "over-tonal montage." That is, the concept of life after death

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69 Morey Bernstein, The Search for Bridey Murphy (Rev. ed.; Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday and Co., 1965). While using hypnosis, the author urges his subject to go back before her birth. He then hears the story of Bridey Murphy, an Irish woman who lived and died in the nineteenth century. Bernstein believes his subject, Ruth Simmons, to be a reincarnation of Bridey Murphy.

has certain religious associations which, though not exclusively biblical, acquire such a significance when used in combination with other pieces that are explicitly so.

The "overtonal" quality applies as well to references such as the names of Esther, Rachel, and Godolphin. The noble selflessness of the Jewish queen of the Bible is seen in an inverted form in this chapter which focuses at close range on a decadent Esther Harvitz;\textsuperscript{71} the lone reference to Rachel, who does not appear in chapter 3 at all, nudges our memory concerning the associations made earlier in chapters 1 and 2. The name of a new character, GODolphin (capitals not in the original), which appears about fifteen times in this chapter, is in some vague way suggestive of a religious significance that is not yet clearly identifiable.\textsuperscript{72}

\section{V}

Chapter 5 returns to the adventures of Benny Profane as he chases alligators in the sewers of New York City. He

\textsuperscript{71}The "queenly" connotation of the name Esther is enhanced by Pynchon's use of the word "handmaiden" (104/91) to describe Irving, who prepares Esther for nose surgery.

\textsuperscript{72}See pp. 268-81 for further discussion of the Godolphins.
realizes that he is out of his own territory, and that he has entered Fairing's Parish, an area encompassing the sewers "between Lexington and the East River and between 86th and 79th Streets" (118/105). Deciding that the "rats were going to take over after New York died, Father Fairing decides to evangelize them, i.e., to convert them to Roman Catholicism. In so doing, the priest would soon be "spiritual leader of the inheritors of the earth" (118/106).

Both in the Old and New Testaments there are well-known accounts of spiritual leaders over people who are promised an inheritance by God. Notable in the Old Testament are the accounts, beginning in Genesis 15, of Abraham, whose seed is promised an inheritance of land; of his son Isaac, and of Isaac's son Jacob, whose name is changed to Israel by God. It is perhaps Moses who is most closely associated with being a spiritual leader of the children of Israel, however. Exodus 3 records the choosing of Moses to deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt. Moses is not allowed to see the Promised Land because of a disobedience along the way, and Jacob continues the task, but throughout all history, it is Moses who is most remembered as the spiritual leader of the Israelites, a downtrodden people. In the New Testament, the third Beatitude in Jesus' Sermon on the
Mount reads: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Somehow this seems the more likely source for Pynchon's reference, although we can only speculate at this point. In the allusion Pynchon blends the image of a people chosen for a great inheritance, a people, however, who will later reject God's son, and that of a people who, "rat-like," i.e., preterite, have gone underground, choosing life in a sewer among the wastes of the world, to the environment of a decadent "elect" roaming the streets above. Here, as in a number of passages in the novel, there is the suggestion that ultimately, the down-trodden of today's world will prevail, while the so-called "elect" move toward self-annihilation.

A passage in Father Fairing's diary likens the "common charity and sharing of goods" found in the early Church to Marxist communism. A number of verses could be cited to verify the quality of unselfish sharing in the New Testament church. All of them could be said to be

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73 Matt. 5:5. Pynchon seems to opt for the popular notion that equates meekness with weakness, rather than as a disciplined strength, i.e., strength submitted to another's control. Such a concept of meekness may be applied to those who can submit to injustice without retaliation, e.g., Jesus, the Hereros, the Christian martyr Stephen. These ultimately seem to demonstrate a kind of strength rather than weakness in their meekness.
predicated on Christ's teaching in the gospels concerning selfless giving as well as the promise of reward for practicing true communion:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.\textsuperscript{74}

Evidence of the disciples putting Christ's teachings to practice are seen in verses such as 2 Corinthians 8:13-14, in which Paul writes of the church in Macedonia: "For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that there be equality." The comparison that Pynchon makes of the early Church with communism is based on general interpretations in Christian orthodoxy regarding verses such as those quoted above. It is impossible, of course, to know what specific passages the novelist may have been thinking of in this regard. From the truism that he uses as a nutshell summary of the Marxist doctrine of communism, "To each according to his needs, from each according to his abilities," however, it

\textsuperscript{74}Matt. 25:34-40.
appears that Ignatius' purpose for making the comparison may be to infer that the Marxist version of communism is a perversion of 2 Corinthians 8:13-14, a farce. Since Marxist communism is administered in a totalitarian manner, rather than in a spirit of love and voluntary selflessness, true "communism," in the sense of the biblical "communion of saints," is not at the heart of Marxist theory, and is thus another sign of decadence or falling away, in the twentieth century, from the ideal inherent in the biblical teaching. That decadence within the Church, that has made way for a perverted form of "common charity and sharing of goods" is the target of Pynchon's censure is emphasized by the fact that the "spiritual leader" himself, Father Fairing, consumes his unfortunate subject Teresa, after a fight, rationalizing that he is doing so from humanitarian motives. The modern Church, Pynchon seems to say, is not above succumbing to the grasping, cut-throat practices that abound in the secular society it seeks to "save."

A final entry in Father Fairing's diary further hints of the failure of the Church today, as well as touching on the Puritan doctrine discussed earlier,\textsuperscript{75} and

\textsuperscript{75}See pp. 80-81 for this discussion.
alluding to another biblical concept that is unrelated to the Puritan doctrine. As the narrator notes, Father Fairing's underground ministry seems to have been no great improvement on life above the ground, and the optimistic notes in the diary are self-delusion. This delusion, however, will be treated more sympathetically later in the novel, in relation to a discussion of Malta. 76 As a number of critics, including Charles B. Harris, have suggested, delusion is essential to survival in today's world. Harris sees one of Pynchon's major points in V. to be that, although man's attempts to prevent entropy will fail, "the delusion that disintegration can be resisted results in a humanism that . . . is necessary." 77 One of the "delusions" which Father Fairing holds is that, "... though devotion to God is rewarded in Heaven and just as surely is not rewarded on this earth, some spiritual satisfaction will be found in the New City whose foundations we lay here . . . ." (120/107). This latter phrase appears to be an allusion to Hebrews 11:10, a verse that is frequently quoted in regard

76 See pp. 259-64 for this discussion.

to the second coming of Christ: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."78 In choosing to mimic this Bible verse, a sharp contrast is drawn between the heavenly domain whose ruler is God, and a subterranean, man-made city of rats ruled by an earthly Augustine. In rejecting an orthodox concept of heaven, man has attempted to build his own "kingdom," but his efforts have failed so miserably that they show little resemblance to the biblical description of the holy city, the New Jerusalem. That Father Fairing dares to cling to a possibly delusory hope of a New Jerusalem, however, is testimony to the note of possibility that Pynchon sounds in a novel that otherwise forebodes doom.

As Profane continues to pursue an alligator, he sees "scrawled on the walls . . . occasional quotes from the Gospels, Latin tags (Angus Dei, qui tollis preccata mundi, dona nobis pacem--Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, grant us peace)" (120/108). This Catholic prayer is an almost direct quotation of John 1:29,

78The King James version of the Bible provides a cross reference to the word "city" that directs the reader to Heb. 12:22, where "city" is identified as Jerusalem. In Rev. 3:12, there is also a cross-reference to Heb. 12:22, and the verse refers to the city of God, which is the "new Jerusalem."
in which John speaks the words as a greeting to Jesus.\textsuperscript{79} The petition for peace that is added to the prayer, but which does not appear in the biblical version, reflects the bitter irony that the very opposite has occurred: the "sins of the world" are everywhere evident, while the sought-for peace remains unfound. The very priest who has scratched the words on the wall is killing the rats he preached to "three a day." Thus, the prayers of the Church today are shown to be empty words, ineffectual and meaningless.

Juxtaposed to the allusion to the Lamb of God, which, throughout the Bible, symbolizes sacrifice, is a reference to a crucifix. "He swung the beam over the old inscriptions, saw a dark stain shaped like a crucifix and broke out in goose bumps. For the first time since leaving the manhole, Profane realized he was all alone" (121/108). It is possible that the reference to the "old inscriptions" on the walls of the sewer are also a parody of the superscriptions written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew over Jesus' head as he hung on the cross, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF

\textsuperscript{79}"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
THE JEWS, since the reference occurs in the context of allusions to the crucifix. The "dark stain shaped like a crucifix" is easily associated with the crucifix of Jesus, who is the "Lamb of God" that has just been mentioned. In alluding to the death of Christ, it is appropriate that Profane realize that "now he was all alone," and that he "broke out in goose bumps." The reaction of Benny Profane to seeing the outline of a crucifix is representative of what modern existential man experiences when he realizes that, without God, he is "all alone" in a world that has not found a satisfactory substitute for the crucified Christ, whose resurrection he does not accept. William Barrett aptly articulates the situation of modern man that is pictured by a panic-stricken Profane, realizing that he is alone:

He learns that the solitude of the self is an irreducible dimension of human life no matter how completely that self had seemed to be contained in its social milieu. In the end, he sees each man as solitary and unsheltered before his own death.81


81 Barrett, p. 30.
Continuing his account of Profane's sewer chase, Pynchon mentions that "one of the apocrypha dealt with an unnatural relationship between the priest and this female rat who was described as a kind of voluptuous Magdalen" (121/108). The term "apocrypha" refers to fifteen books that are excluded from the Hebrew canon of holy scripture. As such, they are sometimes labelled "extra-biblical." That Pynchon uses the word "apocrypha" is appropriate, since his allusion to the "relationship" with Magdalen is based on popular tradition outside what the Bible actually says. The reference to Magdalen, in the context in which it appears, seems to be to two passages, Luke 7:36-50 and Luke 8:2. The former reference tells of a "woman in the city, which was a sinner," who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, and dried them with her hair, and anointed his feet with costly ointment. Jesus forgives her sins, "for she loved much." The woman is never identified by name. The latter passage speaks of some women "who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities," including "Mary Magdalene [alternate spelling], out of whom went seven devils." Certain commentators have mistakenly concluded that the sinful woman of the earlier passage is also Mary Magdalene. So widespread is the misconception that the word "Magdalen"
is now defined in some dictionaries as "a prostitute." 82

As such, the use of the name Magdalen elicits an association with sexual abuse that has been alluded to in various other ways in V.

Quoting further from Father Fairing's diary, Pynchon notes:

V. came to me tonight, upset. She and Paul have been at it again. The weight of guilt is so heavy on the child. She almost sees it: as a huge, white, lumbering beast, pursuing her, wanting to devour her. We discussed Satan and his wiles for several hours.

(V. 121/109)

Two fragments here seem to carry biblical significance; one is somewhat tenuous, the other is clearly biblical in source. While the name Paul is a common given name in many parts of the world, the context in which it here appears points, by connotation, to the possibility of an association with the great biblical apostle, St. Paul. For one thing, the "weight of guilt" that V. feels is suggestive of the subject matter of a large part of Paul's teaching in the New Testament letters attributed to him, that of justification by faith, forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation to

God, in order to be free from the weight of sin. Pynchon's "weight of guilt" further echoes the "weight" of the "sin which doth so easily beset us," that is one of the best-known passages attributed to Paul in Hebrews 12:1. Moreover, the discussion between Father Fairing and V. regarding "Satan and his wiles" elicits an association with another of St. Paul's most famous statements in Ephesians 6:11, "Put on the whole armour of God, that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil [italics mine]."

Finally, the juxtaposition of phrases with Pauline overtones with an allusion that is apparently to the teaching of St. Peter, repeats a general pattern in Christian writings, of contrasting and comparing Peter and Paul. Likewise, critics have linked the two. W. T. Lhamon, for example, has commented to the effect that Peter is associated with tongues and Pentecost; Paul with order and reason.\textsuperscript{83} The allusion to the "huge, white, lumbering beast, pursuing her, to devour her" is likely to 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." In her manifestation as the rat Veronica,

\textsuperscript{83}W. T. Lhamon, Jr., p. 165.
Profane surmises that V. must have been "the only member of his flock Father Fairing felt to have a soul worth saving" (121/108). Yet, as the novel progressively reveals, that feeling is not enough to ward off the gradual deterioration of V. to an inanimate, almost mechanized non-being. In Pynchon's montage the quoted passage relates to other references that are concerned with the Pentecostal or apocalyptic, and with the failures of twentieth-century man.

The diary excerpt is followed by a second reference to the Lamb of God. 84 "Lamb of God, Profane thought. Did the Priest teach them 'rat of God'?' (121/109). The necessary and meaningful sacrifice of Christ juxtaposed with killing of innocent victims by Father Fairing for selfish purposes (his own sustenance), under the guise of humanitarianism, points an accusing finger at the modern Church that Pynchon sees as one part of the general decadence in today's world.

There follows a description of an eerie light, not that of a rainy evening in the city, but "paler, less certain" (122/109). Suddenly, Profane comes to a wide space like the nave of a church, an arched roof overhead, a

84See pp. 132-33 for the initial discussion of this allusion.
phosphorescent light. . . . Something otherworldly, of course. . . . Surely the alligator would receive the gift of tongues, the body of Father Fairing be resurrected . . ." (122/110). The cathedral-like image hints of well-known cathedrals throughout the world, but by its juxtaposition with the pentecostal allusion, generally associated with Peter, is suggestive of St. Peter's church in Vatican City, the largest Christian church in the world. The magnificent cathedral, which has an arched dome, is shaped like a cross, and is famous for its great nave. Thus, the contrast of the underground church-like section of the sewer is all the more striking for its being juxtaposed with the "ultimate" of churches, that of the Pope himself. The structure, moreover, is built over a crypt that is believed by some to contain the body of St. Peter. The light images suggest any of several references to light as the presence of Christ. At Jesus' transfiguration, for example, it is recorded that Jesus was "transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."85 Following shortly upon the account of Christ's resurrection is the record of Pentecost, discussed

85Matt. 17:2.
earlier, at which time is is Peter who stands to deliver a sermon with the result that about "three thousand souls were added to the church." This group of allusions, largely related to the Roman Catholic church, though by no means confined to any one group, suggests that the church has descended into the gutter, i.e., the sewer, and the gospel of Christ, the Light of the World, which has been preached from magnificent cathedrals, emanates now only from the otherwise inanimate walls of a sewer, and is not a light that is "paler, less certain" than the light of the sun formerly associated with the Christ.

Bible-related allusions in Part 2 of chapter 5 are of a different order from those in the first half of the chapter, yielding something of a counterpoint effect. They are confined to expletives, to be discussed later, and to the names Rachel and Esther, which do not seem to require further discussion here, since their apparent functions have been identified earlier, and remain fairly constant.

The main target of Pynchon's parody in chapter 5 is the Church, especially the Roman Catholic church, symbolized in the figure of Father Fairing. A perversion of

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\(^{86}\)Acts 2:41.
the kind of "communion of saints" found in the early church is shown by a comparison with Marxist communism. Other important themes in V. are represented as well, however. The Magdalen allusion registers in the literary montage the perversion of sex that Pynchon shows in other ways in other chapters. The recurring theme of the apocalyptic is seen in the pentecostal allusion and in the reference to the New City of Revelation. The repetition of expletive expressions and the biblical names in the latter part of the chapter provide continuity in the overall montage. The appearances of the names Rachel and Esther continue to signal almost stock connotations of hope amid hopelessness, and of victim-victimizer, respectively.

VI

Like chapters 2 and 4, chapter 6, "In which Profane returns to street level," is short, but it is important for its repetition of themes introduced earlier, as well as for themes which reappear throughout the novel. As Profane leaves the sewer for a time, he returns to activities much like those described in the opening chapter of V. Indeed, echoing the scene at Christmas time, Pynchon repeats the image. "Like tinsel suddenly tossed on a Christmas tree,
the merry twinkling of switchblades, the tire irons and the filed-down garrison belt buckles appeared among the crowd in the street" (144/131). As is intimated in the sentence, this mention of Christmas, with its trappings of "tinsel," relates to a mob scene at which one girl is heard to say that "somebody is going to get burned." The "merry twinkling," far from being that of stars in Bethlehem or of Christmas tree lights, is of the agents of death and violence, the very antithesis of the symbols traditionally used to celebrate the mass of a Prince of Peace. Continuing the parallel found in chapter 1 (15/7), there is suddenly a pause. "It never happened, whatever they were waiting for: not tonight." Instead of the strains of a Christmas carol, "a boys' choir on a brilliant mauve cloud came floating over from the direction of Canal Street singing 0 Salutaris Hostia" (144/131). As usual, Pynchon's choice of a hymn title is neither random nor accidental; because of its relevance, the text bears quoting. In the New Catholic Hymnal, a paraphrase of the early latin hymn is rendered thus:

Christ, victim for the sins of men,
Your death brings hope to our despair;
With your new life we live again,
Your heav'nly joy is ours to share.

Yet still in many things we fail,
And fall again in sin and shame;
Let not our sinfulness prevail,
Let not your saving be in vain.

Lor God, eternal Trinity,
We praise you for yourself alone;
And pray that we may ever be
Blest in that kingdom of your own.

The allusion to Christ as victim parallels Pynchon's description of Profane: "Women had always happened to Profane the schlemihl like accidents: broken shoelaces, dropped dishes, pins in new shirts. Fina was no exception" (134/121). The victim-victimizer theme is, of course, among the most important in V.: Christ, the Hereros, Job, the Jews, for example. Whereas Christ is "victim for [italics mine] the sins of men," providing hope and life, however, Profane is victim of the trend toward meaningless activity exercised in an effort to survive. The hymn juxtaposes a number of other contrasting ideas that pervade the novel: death-life; despair-hope; sin-salvation. Thus, in the montage, the hymn title signifies what can be termed a "node" or "cluster" of meanings that are vitally related to the novel as a whole.
With the choir music as background, Fina, we are told, "came walking her sexy walk," and is then "borne up by a swarm of . . . cherubs, to hover over the sudden peace she'd created, beaming serene" (144/131). While there is no biblical allusion per se here, Fina's hovering over the "peace she'd created" echoes the Matthew account of the bright star which "stood over where the young child was," the child being the Prince of Peace. Profane, however, slinks away, aware that the hushed moment is illusory and transient, and that the angelic role will be shattered shortly to be replaced with the "wanton behind the saint." As in the bar scene in chapter 1, for an instant we are held by the allusion, and even dare to hope that it is real. The parodic passage functions in the montage as a reminder of the illusory nature of finite man's effort to produce only what a higher power can create, the essence of peace. Having rejected the Prince of Peace, twentieth-century man's efforts to create a lasting peace appear to be fruitless and hopeless. Nevertheless, those brief moments of hope that appear sporadically in a predomi-
nantly despairing world, are caught and preserved in Pynchon's montage in passages such as the one above.

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88 See pp. 47-49 for discussion of this allusion.
Profane cannot be content above street level, however. In Part 2, he is working part time in the sewer, and, as the alligator population declines, he feels that he is "losing contact with a circle of friends." Yet, he reasons with himself, he is not a "St. Francis for alligators"; he shoots them. His "devil's advocate" argues back: "Did it ever occur to you they want to be shot?" (146/132). It was as if "there had been this agreement, this covenant, Profane giving death, the alligators giving him employment: tit for tat" (146/133). One day, however, an alligator does not submit meekly to being shot, but turns and attacks. After shooting it, Profane tells the corpse, "You didn't play it right. You don't fight back. That's not in the contract" (146/133). The passage is one of several in V. which seems to be "heightened," to use a term frequently applied to passages in the works of Faulkner and Joyce. The tone seems suddenly serious rather than parodic; moreover, important implications for man's living in a messed-up world seem to be contained here beneath the guise of the fantastic surface account of a human working in a sewer and talking with alligators. Profane is scolded for talking to the alligators because "it set a bad example for the Patrol" (146/133). Thereafter, we are told, Profane
"remembered . . . to say what he was coming to believe he had to say under his breath" (146/133). With the longing to communicate squelched, Pynchon seems to be saying that quietly going our way, keeping our thoughts to ourselves, and following a path of non-resistance may be the only way to survive in today's world. There is a faint intimation that, by some unwritten and unspoken "contract" with some unseen higher power, any possibility of an ultimate transcendence of the present state of affairs in the world, lies in following this path. While no direct reference is made, this stance is exactly parallel to that of Jesus, as recorded in the prophecy concerning Christ's sufferings in Isaiah 53:3, 6-7:

He is despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. . . . All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearsers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

Pynchon's choice of the word "covenant" with regard to an agreement with the alligators is one that generally has religious connotations, even though the word can be used in other contexts. Appearing as it does in a context in
which other religious-oriented words are used, and in which the Christian ideal of meekness and non-resistance in the face of danger is advocated, a person who is familiar with biblical teachings is likely to make the biblical association. For example, the popular idiom, "tit for tat," is a secular one that is synonymous with the Old Testament law of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." A few paragraphs later, Pynchon comments that Fina is "grace-happy" because she is "turning the other cheek" (147/134). These words are associated with the New Testament. Jesus is described in Hebrews 9:24 as "the mediator of the new covenant, which is a covenant of love and grace. By themselves, each of these words or phrases contains its own specific meaning, but, juxtaposed as they are, the montage principle works toward the creation of a larger general association with the covenants that God has made with man throughout the ages, based on Old and New Testament laws. Elsewhere in Pynchon's novels, some of these covenants are referred to, e.g., Noah and the flood are related to a covenant sealed with the token of the rainbow; sabbath observance is declared a sign of "perpetual covenant" with

89See Exod. 21:24.
Moses. Pynchon uses the word "covenant" or "agreement" with God some five times in V. Each time he does so, the reference reminds us of a covenant that has been broken with man's denial of God. Profane's hypothetical covenant is that of the old covenant, "tit for tat," rather than of the new covenant of grace that is set forth in Matthew 6:38-39: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." The new covenant of grace and love finds no place in a profane society in which a failure of love has taken place. For whatever sense of duty performed that Profane may experience when he kills the alligator, there is conveyed in the passage the idea that even Profane, who has "lost sense of direction," is profoundly affected by the incident, and that he feels regret that communication and something akin to love had to be replaced with bullets of death and retaliation in order for him to survive.

Chapter 6, then, provides a number of links with other allusions of great thematic significance in V.:

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90 In addition to the above reference, see pp. 196/180; 328/307; 330/310; and 345/323 in V.
peace, both as non-violence and as spiritual or inward peace; victimization; broken relationships, and a concern with the possibility that true meekness, that may be misread by most of today's society as weakness, might ultimately emerge as the quality that determines who are to be the "inheritors of the earth."

VII

The longest chapter in _V_4, chapter 7, is among the most important in the novel with regard to its overtontal value in Pynchon's giant montage. By any measure, the references that dominate the chapter are those of Evan and Hugh Godolphin, and they account for about three-fourths of the allusions that have some kind of religious significance in the chapter. Evan, the son, was introduced in chapter 4, and the pair figure importantly again in chapter 9. As I indicated in my discussion of chapter 4, however, it seems best to omit these particular references at this point in my discussion, so that their importance in all of the chapters in which they are key figures can be pulled together later as a single discussion. Bits and pieces of information that seem insignificant in an immediate context become more meaningful in the overall montage when they are seen
as a whole. The remaining allusions in the chapter give further emphasis to topics introduced earlier, as well as introducing new materials to be fitted into the growing montage.

The first of these is an explicit allusion to Armageddon, which was foreshadowed in chapter 3 in connection with the Fashoda crisis.\textsuperscript{91} Regarding Stencil's search for V., we are told that "she'd been connected, though perhaps only tangentially, with one of those grand conspiracies or foretastes of Armageddon which seemed to have captivated all diplomatic sensibilities in the years preceding the Great War" (155/141). The allusion to Armageddon is to the purported place where the kings of the Earth, under demonic leadership, will wage war on the forces of God at the end of world history.\textsuperscript{92} The term, then, is synonymous with apocalypse, which is associated in V. with events in recent history and with the character V., and which is one of the preponderant themes throughout Pynchon's work. In the novel, some manifestation of V. is always at hand, and involved, it appears, in destructive events in history, e.g.,

\textsuperscript{91}See pp. 108 and 111-12 for this discussion.

\textsuperscript{92}See Rev. 16:16.
the Fashoda Crisis and Victoria Wren; a Venezuelan uprising and Victoria Wren; South-West African uprisings and Vera Meroving, and so on. Beyond its surface significance, however, the term points to a final apocalyptic battle yet to come, at an undetermined time, perhaps not far off. It should be remembered, though, that the victor of this battle has already been declared, in Revelation, as the Lamb, symbolic of God or Good. By contrast, the wars and atrocities that have been a part of modern experience, and which are a major concern of Pynchon, seem to point only to a progressive move toward annihilation by self-destruction. The victor enjoys only a temporary and ultimately fruitless victory, which may be overturned in the next conflict. There is no decisive victory in which Right clearly overcomes Wrong. Each war does not contribute to some final realization of lasting peace. As the narrator notes, we, like Stencil, seem to be "situated . . . at the bottom of a fold," where it is impossible to determine "warp, woof or pattern anywhere else" (155/141). Rather, modern man engages in a constant struggle to keep one jack-in-the-box lid pushed down, as it were, before another, or many, jumps up.
Following a section devoted to the Godolphins, the first of several references to the Judas tree is made.\textsuperscript{93} The immediate context on page 164/150 is that of using a hollowed out Judas tree to provide a hiding place for a stolen canvas of the "Birth of Venus." Even those who are not well-versed in biblical teaching associate the word "Judas" with Judas Iscariot, who betrays Jesus, an act that results in the arrest and crucifixion of Christ. The Judas tree, or redbud, receives its name from a legend that it was a redbud tree from which Judas hangs himself after his deed of betrayal is complete.\textsuperscript{94} Thus, the word is popularly associated with betrayal. The association is conveniently appropriate to the "story" of the novel, since conspiracy is the subject of the narrative in much of chapter 7. The further associations of the name in its religious context, that of Christ's betrayal, is significant in the montage. The appearance of the name Judas signals an awareness that modern man, too, has "betrayed" the Christ by denying him a central place in his life. Furthermore, the Church, as the

\textsuperscript{93}See also pp. 187/171 and 207/191. I shall treat these as one in the above discussion since the purpose of the allusions is the same.

\textsuperscript{94}See Matt. 26:14-16 or Matt. 27:5.
body of Christ,\textsuperscript{95} has betrayed Him by becoming "mindless," static, and ineffectual, incapable of any longer representing Christ meaningfully in today's world.

As is often true in \textit{V.}, Pynchon's censure of organized religion is accompanied by a reference that focuses on the sexual degeneracy that he feels to be symptomatic of the times. This time Victoria Wren's illicit meetings with Goodfellow provide an example: "Now she did not regard her time with Goodfellow or the three since him as sinful . . . : it was implicit acceptance of the four episodes as outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace belonging to Victoria alone" (167/152). While Pynchon, typically, does not acknowledge his source, the phrase "outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace" is a part of the definition of The Sacrament in the Episcopal catechism.\textsuperscript{96} Obviously, Pynchon has taken the phrase out of its specific context, which concerns the institution of the Lord's Supper, as recorded in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, and to baptism, as recorded in a number of passages in the New Testament, such as Matthew 28:19, which is generally cited

\textsuperscript{95} See Rom. 12:4-5 and 1 Cor. 12:27 for Paul's identification of the Church as the body of Christ.

\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Book of Common Prayer}, 1928 ed., p. 292.
as a source for baptism as a sacrament of the Church. That the novelist uses the phrase which relates to ordinances sacred to the Christian church in a distorted context, to speak of sexual promiscuity, is itself indicative of the perversion that has taken place in the twentieth-century, and this appears to be its chief function in the montage.

Continuing a description of Victoria Wren, the narrator comments that "whether she had taken the veil or not, it was as if she felt Christ were her husband and that the marriage's physical consummation must be achieved through imperfect, mortal versions of himself--of which there had been, to date, four" (167/152). Several passages in the New Testament allude to the idea of physical union as symbolizing a higher, spiritual union. When the symbolic meaning of such a union is forgotten, then perversion results, as evidenced by Victoria Wren's situation. In 1 Corinthians 6:16-17, the danger is identified: "What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." The symbolism of Christ as husband and Church as wife, or bride, is further emphasized in Ephesians 5:23-25: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church;
and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church
is subject unto Christ so let the wives be to their own
husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as
Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it."
Once again, Pynchon has V., as Victoria Wren, to parody the
biblical teaching by applying, physically and literally,
what is intended as a spiritual and figurative, meaning of
the Bible passages. In so doing, Pynchon is able to use
the allusion in his montage to reinforce other references
to the perversion of sex as a symptom of the illness of
today's world.

In section 9 of the chapter, Hugh Godolphin awakens
in Victoria's room to find a note of betrayal, and Pynchon
comments: "Even taking a Christian view of the situation

... , informing Chapman was a fatal error" (183/167).
While the idea of "a Christian view" may be used by some as
a general phrase somewhat synonymous with being charitable,
it should be noted that the word "Christian" means "pertaining
to Christ" or "Christ-like," and, as such, means taking
the kind of view Christ would take. To this extent, the
reference points to the Bible, since man's knowledge of
Christ's "views" are contained in the scriptures. It is
likely, therefore, that the "Christian view" in the above
passage is that of forgiveness for having made a serious blunder. The ultimate lesson in forgiveness, made by example, is, of course, that of Christ himself after he is placed on the cross: "Then said Jesus, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." 97

A cluster of allusions to the Judas tree appears next (187/171), calling to mind the contrasting ideas of the betrayal of Christ into the hands of his destroyers, over against the betrayal of God by modern man who has sought also to destroy him by denial of his sovereignty. The fact that one of the Judas trees contains a stolen painting of "The Birth of Venus" provides a parallel between Venus, or Aphrodite, the goddess of love, who experienced a supernatural birth in spring from the sea-foam, and the virgin birth of Christ, also a supernatural phenomenon. Thus, love (as the painting of Venus) has disappeared, as has God, leaving the world desolate and empty of meaning. Pynchon carries his parody so far as to parallel the matter of the money (thirty pieces of silver) that Judas Iscariot received for betraying Jesus. 98


98See Matt. 26:15 and Mark 14:11.
Discussing the purchase of the second Judas tree, Cesare says, "He's holding out. Two hundred and fifty lire he wants, this time" (187/171). Not content, Pynchon apparently means also to parody the biblical account of Christ's betrayal in which one of Jesus' followers draws a sword and cuts off the ear of the high priest's servant in an attempt to defend Jesus from those who come to take him away. 99 In Pynchon's version, when Godolphin asks if there would be room for one more on a barge departing at midnight, Signor Rafael (guardian angel) Mantissa assures him that "you need not even have asked." 100 If you had come along even without a word I would have slain the barge captain at his first protest" (187/171). A little later, Mantissa again assures Godolphin: "I will defend your life as long as I have my own" (187/172). The assurances of Rafael Mantissa cause the old man "to feel at least halfway secure for the first time in weeks" (187/171). In the montage, then, this rather unexpected moment of optimism works toward inserting a ray of hope in the air of conspiracy that otherwise

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100 Raphael (Rafael) is not named in the canonical Bible, but he appears in the apocryphal Book of Tobit in the role of guardian angel.
characterizes the section. For all of the so-called "black" humor in V., some of Pynchon's dark clouds are not without a silver lining.

Pynchon, appropriately, uses an English hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers," in the next allusion, one which is related to the Fashoda crisis, the 1898 clash between Great Britain and France over control of the Upper Nile. As Stencil sits contemplating The Situation, he is reminded of an old school friend with whom he had later served in the diplomatic service. When the Fashoda crisis develops, for some unknown reason his friend Cavess dons a uniform and begins trying to recruit volunteers to invade France. We are told that "Stencil remembered painfully that they had all been singing Onward Christian Soldiers in various keys and tempi" (189/174). The military title is obviously suitable in the context, and refers to a highly popular and often sung gospel song found in hymnals of various church denominations. Both the St. Gertrude tune by Sir Arthur Sullivan in 1871, and especially a later hymn tune by W. H. Jude, in a tempo de marcia, are appropriate to a military processional.101 The song is apparently based on several

101 See Appendix 4 for the text of the hymn.
Bible passages which speak of the Christian life as a battle, in which the faithful follower will be victorious, e.g., 1 Timothy 6:12, in which Paul urges young Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called." 102 The central message of the hymn is the victory of the believer in the battle against good and evil. It is very likely based on one of the most famous passages in the Bible that pictures the Christian as a soldier wearing the armor of war, Ephesians 6:11-13:

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

While the cause of the "Christian soldier" is considered a worthy one of combating Evil, the cause for which Cavess manages to enlist "several costermongers, two streetwalkers,

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102 Soon after, Paul, now at the end of his career, pens his farewell words to Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:7-8, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
and a music-hall comedian" (189/173) for a war that is squelched (Fashoda crisis), stands in contrast as a sign of a decadent world that refuses to make sense.

I mentioned in chapter 1 that one category of Pynchon's allusions is that of church-related or Bible-related terms which may or may not appear in the Bible per se. On page 195/179, two of these terms appear, "parable," and "articles of faith." The first one is, of course, included in the Bible as well as in most dictionaries of literary terms. Few of these references fail to note that the most famous parables, in the so-called "Christian" countries, are those told by Christ, in which a moral or religious truth is illustrated by comparison with a common experience. It is a well-known fact that an important part of Christ's teaching employed this method; there are over thirty parables in the Gospels, as well as a number of significant ones in the Old Testament. The phrase "articles of faith" does not appear in the Bible, although the creeds thus described certainly derive from biblical teaching. The expression is used extensively in religious and church-related literature to refer to the fundamental beliefs or doctrines of a group. For a reader of V. who is not familiar with the Bible or Christian literature, a brief
explanation is in order. Two statements or "articles of faith" are considered especially important today. The Apostles' Creed, used as early as A.D. 150, is supposed to have been used by the apostles. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches use similar forms of the creed. The Nicene Creed, formulated in 325, makes clear the position of the Christian Church on the matter of the unity of God and Christ. Thus, when the terms "parable" and "articles of faith" appear in V. as montage pieces, some understanding of the religious associations of the words makes all the more obvious the intended parody in the passage. Rather than being a lesson in moral or religious truth, the "parable" is used to label a sick joke. Likewise, a solemn statement of a religious creed is parodied by using instead some extremist neo-Machiavillian political views, as if the secular world had discarded the religious connotations implicit in the terms. On the next page, a similar parody is made of the word "covenant," which has been discussed earlier with regard to God's sacred promises to man. Today, however, Ferrante seems the commitment inherent in the idea of a covenant in a different light: "But he reasoned that

as long as you'd made an alliance in the first place you might as well comply with its rules as long as was expedient" (196/180). Although the passage parodies the terms, it nevertheless emphasizes, in doing so, the lack of permanent commitment in today's world, a point on which Pynchon focuses more precisely later in V.

Some pages later, juxtaposed between a number of references to the Godolphins, Pynchon speaks through Hugh Godolphin to say that "if Eden was the creation of God, God only knows what evil created Vheissu. . . . Vheissu itself, a gaudy dream. Of what the Antarctic in this world is closest to: a dream of annihilation" (206/190). This reference to Eden, which has its source in Genesis, functions in the narrative as an antithesis of Vheissu, and can be more simply stated as a contrast between creation and destruction. In God's hands, Eden represents a state of perfection that is marred only by man's disobedience. Man's continuing disregard for the law of God and, finally, for the very existence of God, has resulted in a state of chaotic imperfection that is presided over by the power of evil whose "creation" is the epitome of destruction: "a dream of annihilation."
The next allusion, other than those to the Godolphins, is to the two Judas trees referred to earlier. It is fitting that the symbol of betrayal appear again in the montage at this point, for it is followed shortly by the comment that old Godolphin is "feeling betrayed once again" (208/192), since his son seems to prefer the company of Victoria, a manifestation of V. who is associated with plotting and violence, to his company. The reference is again a reminder of the betrayal of God that modern man has accomplished in his steady drift toward secularization and godless living.

The closing words of the chapter are again to "a hollow Judas tree" (212/196), symbol of betrayal, which come to the fore as an overriding theme in the chapter. Other Bible-related allusions in the chapter seem to support this theme, for they too contribute pieces to the montage that connote broken relationships, e.g., "covenants" and "Eden." It should be recalled, however, that, in this long chapter, the opening allusion is to Armageddon, the final battle in which the victory of Good over Evil is already foretold. Once again, Pynchon allows his bleak picture to be imbued with a breath of hope.
Chapter 8 returns to the activities of Profane, Rachel, and the Whole Sick Crew. In the second section an incident is related in which Pig Bodine has managed to escape being caught when he plays with the Task Force 60 teletype machines and sends non-job related messages late at night. We are told that later, however, since "initial sin entails eventual retribution,... evil days fell on Pig" (219/203). As usual, Pynchon's allusion fits logically into the context of the "story," but has overtones that function, by means of the montage principle, to provide larger and more profound meanings in the completed montage. The "initial sin" is presumably that of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, as related in Genesis. The sin of disobedience leads to punishment in several forms: to Eve, God says, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shalt be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."\textsuperscript{104} To Adam, he says, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee...; 

\textsuperscript{104} Gen. 3:16.
in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground. . . ."  

In addition to this, verse 23 adds, "... the Lord God sent him from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." While the "retribution" that Pig receives is of a different order from that of Adam and Eve, the allusion functions as a reminder of the consequences of man's first disobedience and its continuation down to the present day. Sometimes Pynchon adds some comment that seems to nullify the meaning of an allusion, but he does not do so here. There is no indication that man's sin does not still find him out, even if it is seen as a move toward self-destruction rather than the wrath of an angry God meting out punishment.

Awaking with a hangover one Sunday morning, Rachel hears Winsome pounding on the door, and she growls, "It's a day of rest" (223/206), as she lets him in, her rest interrupted. The concept of Sunday as a day of rest that is held by most Christians is, of course, biblical in origin: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which


106This expression is itself a biblical allusion. See Num. 32:23, "... be sure your sin will find you out."
he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it. . . ."  

The changes that have occurred in our society with regard to the sanctity of Sunday are seen as another sign of secularization and a trend toward sameness. More and more, Sunday has become "just another day," rather than a sign of God's covenant with man, as it was originally intended to be.  

Following a number of references to Rachel, an allusion to Job is made in a conversation between Profane and Mafia regarding social class, and the idea that Profane "may be a descendent of kings." Profane thinks to himself, "I know. I am a descendent of schlemihls, Job founded my line." (224/208). Throughout Western literature, the mention of Job is equated with undeserved suffering, with patience and longsuffering, and, we should be reminded, with ultimate victory. In V., the allusion to Job, primarily in the "victim" role, focuses on a theme that is pervasive

107Gen. 2:2-3.

108Exod. 31:16-17, "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever. . . ."  

109See Appendix E for a brief summary of the book of Job.
in Pynchon's work. While Job's victimization is for a purpose, to make a better man of him, Profane's identity as a schlemihl is to no apparent purpose. Unlike Job, who analyzes his behavior and concludes that he is innocent of wrong-doing, Profane is "given to sentimental impulses" (9/1). Rather than placing his faith in a God he trusts implicitly, Profane chooses to disown even the "internal voice" that he admits to having. Whereas Job searches for a reason to explain what he believes to be purposeful suffering, Profane is constantly the victim of random accidents, to the point of absurdity. Unable to make lasting commitments, he remains like a yo-yo which "has a path marked out for it over which it has no control" (217/201); thus, Profane has begun to doubt his own animateness, even though he knew that "being a schlemihl, . . . inanimate objects and he could not live in peace" (37/28). In losing his humanity, he is dependent on some power beyond himself, but, lacking faith, he feels, not the security that comes with the acceptance of his "accidents" as a purifying process, but rather, the uncertainty of feeling controlled by an alien power that he cannot identify or trust. At this point in the novel, there is little hope for deliverance from his situation.
Other than a few expletives and a number of references to Rachel, who appears for the first time since chapter 5, the biblical allusions in this brief chapter are confined to the themes of sin and punishment, the sabbath as a day of rest, and Job. It is as if Pynchon uses the shorter chapters to focus at short range on a selected number of subjects which he treats more broadly or generally in the more lengthy sections of the novel. While no new topics are introduced, variants of old themes are used as "pieces" in the montage. That is to say, Pig's "retribution" parallels that of Adam and Eve that is explicitly alluded to elsewhere; Sunday as a day of rest is related to the idea of broken covenants treated in the previous chapter; and the parallel between Profane and Job as victims relates to other "victim" allusions, e.g., Esther as a Jew, the "passed over" or "preterite" in general; Christ, the sacrificial Lamb of God, and the Hereros. Thus, the chapter strengthens the overall montage while retaining its value as a discrete "piece" in the picture.

IX

In chapter 9, "Mondaugen's story," Pynchon combines historical fact with fancy regarding the German South-West
African conflicts earlier in the century. Scattered throughout his narrative are a number of references relevant to this study, some of which are clearly biblical allusions, and some of which have overtones that suggest Bible passages vaguely. For example, early in the chapter, word is brought to Mondaugen that "Abraham Morris has crossed the Orange," and that he is not just a man, but a "Messiah" (231/214). Van Wijk adds that "Abraham Morris has joined forces by now with Jacobus Christian and Tim Beukes" (232/214). We can only speculate that Pynchon's names may be take-offs on names of South-West African leaders in the Herero and Bondelzwart rebellions between 1904 and 1907; earlier in the history of South-West Africa, for instance, a Hottentot chief was known, after his conversion, as Christian Afrikander.\footnote{"German South-West Africa," Encyclopedia Britannica (1926), XI, 802.} Be that as it may, the juxtaposition of names commonly associated with the Old Testament and with the lineage of Christ with the term "Messiah" elicits biblical connotations. The reference to Abraham Morris as a Messiah implies the coming of a "saviour" who will free the Bondelzwarts from German bondage,
as does Jesus Christ, the Messiah or "Anointed One," who is sent by God to save his people from the bondage of sin.\textsuperscript{111}

There follows an allusion to a "stained-glass window portraying an early Christian martyr being devoured by wild beasts" (237/220). To be sure, the Bible does not specifically mention a martyr being "devoured by wild beasts," but it is well-known in extra-biblical history that the latter half of the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero during the first century of the Christian era is characterized by the persecution of Christians. Presumably one method employed was that of releasing hungry lions into an amphitheatre in which Christians were placed, while crowds viewed the spectacle as entertainment. Thus, Christians are linked with other "preterite" groups such as Hereros and Jews, who have suffered persecution in modern history.

Soon, however, Pynchon changes tactics, and perverts an allusion for his own purposes. As Mondaugen comes upon a South African being beaten, and showing scars of previous whippings, he listens to Foppl talking to the victim:

\textsuperscript{111}John 1:41 interprets "Messias" as "the Christ," and a marginal reference translates "Christ" as "the Anointed."
"You like the sjambok, don't you Andreas."
Andreas moved his head feebly and whispered,
"Baas... ."
"Your people have defied the Government,"
Foppel continued, "they've rebelled, they have
sinned. General von Trotha will have to come
back to punish you all. . . . Like Jesus return-
ing to earth, von Trotha is coming to deliver you.
Be joyful; sing hymns of thanks."

(V. 240/222)

There seem to be merged here two contrasting incidents of
biblical origin. On the one hand, the vicious beating of
the Bondel who remains silent except for the single re-
sponse "Baas," suggests Isaiah 53:5, 7, in which Christ's
sufferings are foretold:

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was
bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of
our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we
are healed. . . . He was oppressed, and he was
afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is
brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a
sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth
not his mouth.

The prophecy is fulfilled in the New Testament when, in
similar accounts in one or more of the synoptic gospels,
the fact is recorded that Jesus answers only "Thou sayest"
when asked if he is the King of the Jews,\textsuperscript{112} and thereafter

\textsuperscript{112}Matt. 27:11. In Mark 15:2, the parallel ac-
count reads, "Thou sayest it."
"he answered him to never a word."\textsuperscript{113} After the sentencing by Pilate and the release of Barabas, Jesus is scourged.\textsuperscript{114} The reply of "Baas" by the native means "leader," i.e., master, in Africaans, the Bondel's native tongue, but the spelling allows Pynchon to take advantage of its English meaning of a lamb's cry, which emphasizes the references in Isaiah to Christ as the sacrificial lamb.

This part of the allusion, then, links Christ and the South African as victims, persecuted unjustly. On the other hand, Pynchon now switches identities, and links Christ with General von Trotha as a returning Messiah, and as a judge; in biblical terms, the return can be likened to Judgment Day, with punishment for the unbelievers, or to the Second Coming of Christ, when he will fulfill his promise of John 14:22-3, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The admonition to "be joyful, sing hymns of thanks," at once parodies the idea of the return of the

\textsuperscript{113} Matt. 27:14. In Mark 15:3, the parallel account reads, "But he answered nothing."

\textsuperscript{114} See Matt. 27:26, Mark 15:15, and John 19:1.
Messiah, Jesus Christ, by comparing him with a ruthless German conqueror, and, at the same time hints, for the first time in Pynchon's novel, that, even if the punishment for the Bondel (and for man) is death, the hope of life beyond this miserable one makes it a death without sting. The vanquished, then, could ultimately be the victor. Foppl's sarcastic urging to look forward to the return of von Trotha, which will bring sure death, further echoes a number of Christian ideas. Notably, however, it is a reminder of a tradition which holds that during the period of the persecution of Christians by Nero, those awaiting death would sing hymns in a joyful spirit, both as evidence of their belief that death would bring them face to face with their Saviour, and as a means of bolstering the morale of the group. A number of Christian hymns reinforce the idea, e.g., "Rejoice, ye pure in heart,
/Rejoice, give thanks and sing."¹¹⁵

Among his several allusions to Christian holidays, especially to Christmas, Pynchon also refers to Shrove Tuesday, or Mardi Gras, and the period following, Lent.

Mondaugen dreams that he is in Munich at the time of the celebrations, and notes the severe rise of inflation and economic depression that has characterized post-war days, "taking human depravity as ordinate" (243/225). The idea of the "feast before the fast" is, of course, what Mardi Gras and Lent literally represent. Following the long carnival season, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, lasts for forty days excluding Sundays, and ends on Easter Sunday. Many Christians observe Lent by fasting, giving alms, doing penance, and abstaining from certain "worldly pleasure," as a means of spiritual preparation for Easter, at which time the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated. Lent symbolizes, too, the mourning of the Church, the bride, for the departure of Christ, the bridegroom.

The human depravity which Mondaugen views as "ordinate" since the war is so, he reasons, because "no one in the city knew if he'd be alive or well come next Fasching. Any windfall--flood, firewood, coal--was consumed as quickly as possible. Why hoard, why ration?" (243/225). Living in a day characterized by the occurrence or threat of apocalyptic events, the dictum to "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you may die," seems practical. Pynchon's concern is with Fasching as a metaphor
for today; Lent is equated with the Depression that "hung in the gray strata of clouds, looked at you out of faces waiting in bread queues and dehumanized by the bitter cold."

Also in his dream, Mondaugen likens the Depression to "a figure with an old woman's face, bent against the wind off the Isar and wrapped tightly in a frayed black coat; who might, like some angel of death, mark in pink spittle the doorsteps of those who'd starve tomorrow" (243/225). Again, Pynchon refers to the original Passover, but inverts the allusion. In Exodus, the Israelites are to mark their doors with the blood of a slain lamb; the Lord says that "when I see the blood, I will pass over, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you."\textsuperscript{116} Pynchon, however, represents the Lord as the destroyer, and the mark identifies the victim. The allusion is closely related to other references in the novels that are concerned with the problem of differentiating between creator and destroyer, victor and victim, elect, and preterite, and with the possibility that one is the other, i.e., the same God both creates and destroys; the victim in this life may ultimately

\textsuperscript{116}Exod. 12:13.
be the victor in another; the passed-over of this world may ultimately be the saved ones; death may be the only means to a new life; thus, the angel of death may be a saviour in disguise.

Recalling to Vera Meroving the 1904 Japanese siege of Port Arthur, Godolphin relates how Japanese spotlights, moving over the positions at night are described by a maimed soldier as looking "like the fingers of God, seeking soft throats to strangle" (247/229). It appears that Pynchon has distorted fragments of three widely separated biblical passages for his own use. The "fingers of God" reference hints of the "finger of God" that writes God's law on the tables of stone given to Moses, as well as of the finger of God that writes a message of doom which Daniel interprets to Belshazzar. Pynchon refers elsewhere to both of these incidents.\footnote{See pp. 236-37 and p. 223 for his explicit allusions to Exod. 31:18 and Dan. 5:5.} The idea of God's "seeking soft throats to strangle" may be a perversion of 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be diligent; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, \underline{seeking whom he may devour} [italics mine]." In V., the phrase occurs in
connection with a conversation between V. as Vera Meroving and the elder Godolphin regarding the siege of Port Arthur by the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, in which the Japanese were victorious. Vera explains that, although she was elsewhere, "a year and a place don't have to include the physical person for there to be a certain ownership" (246/228). Since Godolphin refers to the siege as Vera's "beloved 1904," the implication is that Vera is champion for the Japanese in the defeat of the Russians, for whom Godolphin is an advisor. The "Adversary" or "devil" of the Bible becomes, in V., the "fingers of God" that, in the Bible, write both laws for life and messages of doom. If, as I shall suggest later, one role of the elder Godolphin is that of God, then Pynchon's clever parody of the biblical passages suggests a battle between Evil (V.) and Good (Godolphin), in which Evil wins out, since V.'s champion is victorious, while the Russians, Godolphin reflects, "didn't take my advice . . ." (247/229), and lose the war. In the montage, then, the passage emphasizes the theme of doom that runs throughout the novel.

A final allusion to Christmas is made in Chapter 9 in relation to a siege at Christmastime. "We were in Fiume. Another siege. The Christmas before last, he
called it the Christmas of blood" (247/229). In addition to simply placing an event in time, the idea of the "Christmas of blood" provides, once again, in the montage, a vivid contrast between the original meaning of Christmas as the advent of "peace on earth," and the present-day fact of war and unrest that has characterized so much of the twentieth century. Having rejected the Prince of Peace, modern man has not been able, in his own strength, to effect a lasting peace.

As Mondaugen is sleeping one night, he hears, or dreams that he hears, the sound of a chorus who "had begun to sing a Dies Irae in plainsong" (252/234). Both times that Pynchon alludes to this thirteenth-century medieval hymn, we know that it signals a death scene, for the hymn is still sung in requiem masses.\textsuperscript{118} Thus, its use is obviously justified in the text. As it functions in the montage of the twentieth century, the implications are spelled out in the words of the hymn. The hymn is actually about the Day of Judgment, i.e., the wrath of God, and it is a plea for mercy at the hands of a "Righteous Judge."\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{118}On page 255/237 he hears it again when an old man bearing scars from whippings dies from a heart attack.

\textsuperscript{119}See Appendix F for the text of the hymn.
The hymn title, that registers the idea of guilty man standing in need of mercy from a judge, is juxtaposed to a scene in which the antithetical image of a man free of all guilt feeling regarding his indignity to others:

It's impossible to describe the sudden release; the comfort, the luxury; when you know you could safely forget all the rote-lessons you'd had to learn about the value and dignity of human life. . . . 'Till we've done it, we're taught that it's evil. Having done it, then's the struggle: to admit to yourself that it's not really evil at all. That like forbidden sex its enjoyable.

(V. 253/234)

Rather than Christ the Messiah interceding with God the "Righteous Judge" for mercy in dealing with sinful man, Pynchon identifies von Trotha, referred to earlier as a messiah or a "Jesus returning to earth" as one who has taught modern man to put away the old values about human life, to discard feelings of guilt about atrocities to one's fellow man, and to think of his inhumanity as enjoyable, "like forbidden sex." As Raymond Olderman notes, passages like these give "intimations of Hitler." Without God, conscience is unnecessary; and without conscience, no differentiation between good and evil is necessary; without

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120 See Rom. 8:34.

121 Olderman, p. 126.
identity, anything goes. Thus, the extent to which the
trend toward inanimateness, or sameness, has penetrated the
very fiber of western civilization is powerfully illus-
trated in the contrast between the prayerful plea of a
conscience-stricken "sinner" and the modern with his "new
freedom," who need no longer feel guilt for evil-doing.

Using another song, ostensibly in a lighter key,
Pynchon points to the illusory nature of orthodox religious
belief. Tucking in the elder Godolphin with a "black satin
comforter," Mondaugen sings to the old man as a mother would
to a child at bedtime, about dream, e.g., "But dreams to-
night will shelter you," and "Dreams will keep you safe and
strong." The final stanza, however, could possibly be
a parody of a well-known children's prayer of earlier days,
since the meter is identical and they both speak of death
coming in one's sleep:123

122 The song can also be sung to the tune of a
nostalgic tune of the thirties era, "Silver Threads Among
the Gold," which begins, "Darling I am growing old,"
appropriate for a song to an old man.

123 The author is unknown. It appeared as "Prayer
at Lying Down" in the New England Primer of 1737. The
prayer has been criticized in recent years as unsuitable
for a young child at bedtime because of its association
of sleep with death.
Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Pynchon's version:

And should the Angel come this night
To fetch your soul away from light,
Cross yourself, and face the wall;
Dreams will help you not at all.

(v. 254/236)

No one Bible verse can be quoted as a source for the bedtime prayer, but the use of sleep as a euphemism for death is frequently used both in biblical and secular literature. The Angel is likely the Angel of Death of the passover, discussed earlier. In mocking the children's prayer, Mondaugen rejects faith in immortality by labelling it a dream, an illusion that will vanish when one awakens.

That the unhelpful illusion does vanish upon awaking, however, is called into question when the image of Dies Irae appears again, signalling the death of a whip-scarred merchant from a heart attack (255/237). Immediately preceding and following the scornful mockery of the idea of a faith in an eternal refuge for the soul, the hymn on the Wrath of God serves to enclose the prayer on both sides, as if an angry God stands, literally surrounding
the mocking singer, warning him that He will not, finally, tolerate man's failure to acknowledge Him.

Reminiscing on the utter senselessness of the massacre of the Hereros in the rebellion of 1904 in South-West Africa, Montagen reasons that it's simply a matter of giving the army a turn to do what the church, the business world, and tourists had failed to do, whatever that was. "To go in and chase about that silly wedge of German earth two tropics away for no other reason, apparently, than to give the warrior class equal time with God, Mammon, Freyr" (250/240). The allusion to God and Mammon echoes Matthew 6:24, an often-quoted verse from the sermon on the mount: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

For a time, man tried to do just that. More recently, however, man has made his choice, and opted for mammon, for serving his own materialistic desires. Even this, however, has not proven to be satisfactory: "... as for glory, what was there to hanging, clubbing, bayoneting something that did not resist? It had been a terribly unequal show from the start: Hereros were simply not the adversaries a young warrior expects. He felt cheated out of the army
life the posters had shown" (259/241). By implication, the Hereros, by their non-resistence, have chosen the other way, not the way of mammon. For the persecuted, death is a release from the inhumanities and indignities of his fellow man, supposed to be his brother.

As Mondaugen leads an outfit of Hottentot prisoners on a march of one hundred forty miles, one of the prisoners begins complaining about his bleeding feet; even the whip fails to silence him. The incident results in a decision by Mondaugen and his cohort to kill the prisoner: "But as they did this thing . . . there came over him for the first time an odd sort of peace, perhaps like what the black was feeling as he gave up the ghost" (263/245). To a student of the Bible, the phrase "gave up the ghost" calls to mind numerous occasions when the deaths of great biblical characters are described using these words: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus Christ. It is Jesus with which we associate the Hottentot prisoner, for both have been "despised and rejected," beaten, and finally, put to death unjustly.124 But, rather than being "haunted" by the "ghost" of the dead man, Mondaugen feels only "peace," for he is living in a

day when he is free of his "education-to-guilt, a guilt that had never really had meaning, that the Church and the secular entrenched has made out of whole cloth . . ." (257/239).

On another evening Foppl, the host for the siege party, appears with V. in her manifestation as Vera Meroving, singing to her. The song warns her to desist from her "deviations, fantasies, and secret amulets," and to leave old Godolphin alone:

So come away from him,
Take my hand instead,
Let the dead get to their task of burying the dead;
Through that hidden door again,
Bravo for '04 again; I'm a
Deutschesudwestafrikikaner in love . . .

(V. 266/247)

The line "Let the dead get to the task of burying their dead" is a paraphrase of Matthew 8:22, in which Jesus speaks to a potential follower who tries to excuse himself because he wants to go first and bury his father: "But Jesus said unto them, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead."125 The passage is juxtaposed with other images of death related to the South-West Africa uprisings. Pynchon, however, may be using this allusion also to refer to the "God is

125A version of this line has also been popularized by Henry W. Longfellow in his poem "A Psalm of Life."
dead" declaration of Nietzsche by using the "dead" in the Bible verse to refer to the antecedent "him," who is Godolphin, i.e., God, as I hope to show later.

Continuing his narration regarding the atrocities in South-West Africa, Pynchon refers to a traditional Christian symbol. As he recalls the "death marches," Mondaugen also recalls the water holes filled with corpses to be burned: "human pyres whose flames seemed to leap high as the Southern Cross . . ." (269/250). The Southern Cross, of course, is a constellation in the Southern Hemisphere, thus visible in South-West Africa. The configuration that the stars takes resembles that of the Latin cross, one of the most popular and oldest forms of crosses, and the form on which it is said that Christ was crucified.126 Juxtaposed with an image of sacrificial death (human pyres), we immediately associate the cross with the crucifixion of Christ on the cross of Calvary. In this instance, then, Christ is again identified with the rejected of the world, rather than as a judge or a destroyer.

During Mondaugen's stay in South-West Africa, he takes a concubine, a Herero child named Sarah. Given a

note to deliver, she hesitates a moment, and Pynchon states that "the breakwater stretched behind them back to land and safety; but it could take only a word . . . to implant in each of them the perverse notion that their own path lay the other way, on the invisible mole not yet built; as if the sea were pavement for them, as for our Redeemer" (271/252). Unlike a number of passages in which a character is obviously speaking sarcastically or with irony, the phrase "as for our Redeemer" takes us by surprise, for it is in a sober, "straight" context that does not suggest that Pynchon is distorting a biblical passage for parodic purposes. It is as if, for a moment, the narrator believes that the "invisible mole not yet built" will be built, and that man may be redeemable. The reference to the sea as pavement is to an occasion upon which Jesus has his disciples go aboard a ship and cross the water while he disperses the crowds that have gathered to hear his teaching, and then he goes apart to pray. The sea is rough, and during the night Jesus "went unto them, walking on the sea." The disciples are fearful, but Jesus calms them, saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."127

It is one of those "magic" moments in \textit{V.}--only a few lines later we are told that "the moment, whatever it had meant, was over." As an image in the montage, of course, the piece suggests miracles, the supernatural. In \textit{V.}, the intimation is that it would take some kind of miracle to rescue man from the kind of existence that includes Herero exterminations, Hitlers, and the sexual abuse of innocent women. Not able to sustain a belief in the miraculous, however, the fleeting moment of hope passes, discarded, with other dreams and illusions that cannot be realized.

In section 4, we return to Foppl's siege party. Foppl, we are told, spills wine on the roof in his excitement over watching the events of the siege. As Mondaugen watches the wine run down the roof, "it reminded him somehow of his first morning at Foppl's and the two streaks of blood (when had he began [sic] to call it blood?) in the courtyard. . . . When had he begun to call it blood?" (276/257). The incident that Mondaugen recalls is that of hearing cries of pain from the courtyard "where he'd seen the crimson stain" (236/219). Beside him is Vera Meroving, or V., who always seems to be around when destructive events occur. Guilt seems to be working on Mondaugen to
make him associate the wine streaks with the shed blood of the Bondel. The reference works in the montage to elicit an association of the wine, turned to blood, as it were, with the occasion of the Last Supper that Jesus hosted for his disciples before his death. On that occasion, Jesus tells his intimate circle of followers the significance of his serving the wine and bread:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.  

For Mondaugen, however, the guilt that causes the wine to be seen as blood is that caused by a knowledge of his participation in a meaningless extermination of innocent victims by a group who silenced the musicians because "no one on the roof wanted to miss any sound of death that should reach them" (275/256). As the group retires inside for more celebration, the narrator notes a subtle change:

"... was the change internal and Mondaugen's...?"

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(277/256). Mondaugen "was starting to feel those first tentative glandular pressures that one day develop into moral outrage" (277/256). Stirred by an awareness of the decadence around him, Mondaugen wonders "if we would ever escape a curse that seemed to have been put on him," and which he diagnoses, as does Pynchon, as a "soul-depression which must surely infest Europe as it infested this house" (277/258).

So ends the chapter, on a note of despair, brightened only by Mondaugen's awareness that he is included among the three animate objects in the range of his sight. Death is the major theme of the section, but the overtones of hope communicated in such images as Christmas, Redeemer, and the Lord's Supper as a celebration of death that is to be followed by rebirth, somehow negate a message of total nihilism in the montage of V.

X

Returning to the activities of the Whole Sick Crew in chapter 10, the names of Rachel and Esther appear frequently, in addition to several expletive expressions and a single reference to Malta, foreshadowing the next chapter. Otherwise, there are only two references that have
some kind of relationship to the Bible. The first is to a Christian symbol, the Cross. Slab explains to Esther that the Partridge in the Pear Tree, made popular in the Christmas song by that name, will one day "replace the Cross in western civilization" (282/263), since it represents perpetual motion except for the fact that the sharp fang of a gargoyle would one day impale the bird; the bird, having become progressively more and more stupid, would not remember how to fly, and thereby save himself from sure destruction. Although Slab denies to Esther that it is allegory, we have the feeling that Pynchon cannot deny the parallel that is drawn between the symbol for today and present-day man who is too far deteriorated to any longer take the steps needed to redeem himself. Having earlier rejected the redemption offered through faith in the efficacy of Christ's crucifixion on the Cross for man's salvation from sin, man has discarded the old means to spiritual freedom without realizing that the new substitute, being man-made, is also fallible, and would prove to be insufficient.

The other allusion in this chapter to be discussed here is in the form of another of Pynchon's songs. This time Pynchon uses an Old Testament image that has been made
popular in Negro spirituals, as well as in more sedate church hymns and gospel songs:

Gwine cross de Jordan
Ecclesiastically:
Flop, flip, once I was hip,
Flip, flop, now you're on top,
Set-REset, why are we BEset
With crazy and cool in the same molecule . . .

(V. 293/272)

As it relates to the Bible, the allusion is to the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River by the children of Israel, who are going in to possess the land of Canaan which has been promised them by God:

And as they that bare the ark were come into Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, . . . that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, . . . and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.\textsuperscript{129}

Then, flip, flop, God returned the waters to their usual places. Crossing Jordan "ecclesiastically," then, means

\textsuperscript{129}Josh. 3:15-17. Scholars have noted the similarity between this event and that of the parting of the Red Sea recorded in Exod. 14. See pp. 94-95 for a discussion of this allusion.
doing so in a supernatural way, i.e., a way not understood by finite man. McClintic, in contemplating the song, asks a universal question, "But where did the trigger-pulse come from to make you flip?" (293/272). Pynchon does not offer an answer; nor does he offer defenses against a supernatural explanation. In this instance, he leaves all possibilities open, and the allusion serves to register that possibility.

The setting of chapter 11 moves to the island of Malta, and centers on excerpts from and commentary on, some journals of Fausto Maijstral. Entitled "Confessions of Fausto Maijstral," the account has some parallels to the famous Confessions of St. Augustine, the early Christian theologian, philosopher, and Church Father: the accounts are basically spiritual autobiographies, they both speak of a period of Manichean thought, and the death of a loved one influences the beginning of a new stage in spiritual development. This being the case, we are on the alert from the beginning for biblical overtones in such a natural context, whether in a parodic or serious vein.

The first reference suggesting a biblical concept appears as a simile which Fausto uses to explain that some
physical object is necessary for conceptualizing an abstract idea: "As a high place must exist before God's word can come to a flock and any sort of religion begin, so must there be a room, sealed against the present, before we can make any attempt to deal with the past" (305/285). The comparison, an absurd one, to be sure, contains what is likely an allusion to the appearance of God from Mount Sinai to the children of Israel, when God calls Moses up to the top of the mountain for the purpose of giving him the Ten Commandments, basic to the Hebrew religion.\textsuperscript{130} Pynchon's parodic tone tends to undermine the importance of the message delivered to Moses; rather, the allusion seems to ridicule the idea of placing importance on form over content, or logic over feeling. By extension, it applies equally to an emphasis on ritual for its own sake, resulting in a failure to receive an intended message because of undue preoccupation with the means of conveying the message. This, Pynchon hints here and elsewhere, is one of the failures of organized religion today.

\textsuperscript{130}There is a possibility that Pynchon's simile could apply as well to the appearance of God's angel to the shepherds watching their flocks in the hill country of Judea. The angel announces the good news of Christ's birth, that ushers in the era of Christianity.
Fausto Maijstral the First is described as "a young sovereign dithering between Caesar and God"; although he is "slated to be the priest" (306/286), he does not follow through on his vocation immediately. The allusion to Caesar and God is to the admonition of Jesus to the Saducees to "render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's," in Matthew 22:21. This ordering of priorities has become unbalanced since man has discarded God. Furthermore, in choosing man's law over the law of God, man has discovered that "Caesar" is often corrupt and is liable to the same ills as are his subjects, including that of decadence and of a growing inanimateness.

Quoting from Fausto's journal, the narrator alludes to two biblical characters of significance. "Oh, God is here, you know, in the crimson carpets of sulla each spring, in the blood-orange groves, in the sweet pods of my carob tree, the St. John's bread of this dear island... His voice once guided the shipwrecked St. Paul to bless our Malta" (308/287-88). The carob tree, native to Malta, produces a brown, leathery pod containing an edible pulp; John the Baptist is held by some to have subsisted on carob when he lived in the wilderness, hence the name "St. John's"
bread.\textsuperscript{131} John the Baptist is best known as the fore-
runner of Jesus, i.e., he announced a new dispensation and
prepared the people intellectually and emotionally for the
reception of the Christ in the person of Jesus.

St. Paul was indeed shipwrecked in A.D. 60, on his
final "missionary journey," off the coast of Malta
(Melita).\textsuperscript{132} Before his conversion to Christianity, Paul
was known (as Saul) for "breathing out threatenings and
slaughter against the disciples of the Lord."\textsuperscript{133} When
Stephen, the first named Christian martyr, was stoned to
death, it is recorded that "Saul was consenting to his
death."\textsuperscript{134} On his way to Damascus, God appeared to Saul,
as a "light from heaven," asking, "Saul, Saul, why perse-
cutest thou me?"\textsuperscript{135} Saul, later called Paul, is converted
and becomes a bold and persistent follower of Christ. In

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\textsuperscript{131} Another popular opinion explains that St. John's
bread is also called locust bread because the carob pod
resembles a large locust. Mark 11:6 states only that "he
did eat locusts and wild honey," and the word used is the
same as that for "grasshopper."
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\textsuperscript{133} Acts 9:1.
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\textsuperscript{134} Acts 8:1.
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\textsuperscript{135} Acts 9:4.
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a brief history of Malta, Bryan Balls notes that the Romans "left a solid architectural legacy of buildings and catacombs and furthermore it was during this Roman period that the most important event in Maltese history took place—the shipwreck of St. Paul on his way to Rome in the bay that now bears his name. St. Paul's Christian influence in the islands lives on today as perhaps nowhere else in the world." The influence is seen in the form of such things as the large number of churches, the use of famous Christians' names for streets, buildings, etc., and the high percentage of Roman Catholic adherents on the island. The importance attached to John the Baptist and to St. Paul by Fausto I in his diary of 1939, however, is labelled "undergraduate sentiment" by the narrator of V., for since that time wars that seemed to signal an imminent apocalypse have destroyed that confident faith in the Christ whom John the Baptist and St. Paul proclaimed.

The apocalyptic overtones of the 1942 bombing of Malta provide an appropriate context for an allusion to another religious holiday, Ash Wednesday. In contrast to

the peaceful days before World War II, when Maratt could write confidently that God would "rout the evil-starred/
And God light peace's lamps . . . ," the Ash Wednesday of 1942 provides a satire on Eliot's poem, declaring that "I do not hope to survive / . . . death from the air" (308/288). The significance of Ash Wednesday acknowledges aspects of both peace and war in its own way. The ashes are a reminder that man is made of dust, to which he will inevitably return. Death is as certain as is life, whether it be by means of war or otherwise. The Ash Wednesday observance is also a reminder of the need of preparation for a holy death; the alternative is not "to die or not to die," but how to die. The third major significance of Ash Wednesday is that sprinkling with ashes symbolizes sorrow for sin, and true repentance which brings spiritual peace. The peaceful element is now gone, however. Poets "write of nothing now but the rain of bombs from what was once Heaven" (308/289). Thus, the contrast goes beyond that of war and peace to call into question the quality of peace that Ash Wednesday celebrates; no spiritual peace is forthcoming from an empty heaven, no repentance necessary if there is no acknowledgment of sin. Only the destructive element remains.
Under the influence of the Bad Priest, one role of which is the personification of religious decadence, Elena Nemri, Fausto's wife, is advised to enter a convent. "Christ was her proper husband. No human male could co-exist with the sin which fed on her girl-soul. Only Christ was mighty enough, loving enough, forgiving enough" (314/293). The idea of the convent, as a synecdoche for the Church, as the bride of Christ, has been discussed earlier.\textsuperscript{137} In this allusion, however, the emphasis is on the ability of Christ to transcend evil and on his willingness to accept those whom men, even those in the Church, would reject. Fausto's diary continues: "Has He not cured the lepers and exorcised malignant fevers? Only He could welcome disease, clasp it to His bosom, rub against it, kiss it" (314/293). Again, instances of miraculous healing by Jesus are referred to, such as those recorded in the gospels, of an unidentified leper,\textsuperscript{138} and of the fever of Peter's mother-in-law.\textsuperscript{139} In the context in which the

\textsuperscript{137}See p. 87 above.


allusion appears, the implication is that only a miracle could cleanse the sin and the "spirit's cancer" that permeates today's society, and that such a miracle could only come from some supernatural power; man is too far gone to heal himself, and the Church is too decadent, with its "Bad Priest," to do so in God's name.

Speaking of the siege of Malta during World War II, Fausto II notes the futile efforts to rebuild war-torn Malta. "So with pick, shovel, and rake we reshape our Maltese earth for those game little Spitfires. But isn't it a way of glorifying God? Hard labour surely" (315/295). The allusion here is again to the Puritan Work Ethic, discussed above. The labor is likened here to a sentence of hard labor in a prison, where the prisoners, for lack of another choice, develop a kind of community among themselves. This communion is also found in heaven.

There is, we are taught, a communion of saints in heaven. So perhaps on earth, also in this Purgatory, a communion: not of gods or heroes, merely men expiating sins they are unaware of. . . . Here on our dear tiny prison plot, our Malta.

(V. 315/295)

140 See pp. 80-81 for this discussion.
In addition to the Puritan Work Ethic, with its ultimate source in the Bible, the allusion seems to focus on two other biblical concepts, the communion of saints, and Original Sin. While implied in many biblical teachings, especially in those of St. Paul, the term "communion of saints," as such, does not appear in the Bible. The phrase occurs, rather, in the Apostles' Creed, referred to earlier in a discussion of the term "articles of faith."\textsuperscript{141} In both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant forms of the creed, the final declaration is: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen." Fausto II's note that humanity is composed of "men expiating sins they are unaware of" seems to refer to the original sin of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, the source of man's depravity--Adam's curse. Man is born into sin before he ever has a chance to commit a willful act of sin against God. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death

\textsuperscript{141}I have used the Protestant version. In the Catholic form, the words "holy" and "catholic" are capitalized.
passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."\textsuperscript{142} Hard labor was also a part of Adam's punishment, for God tells him in Genesis 3:9 that, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. . . ." Thus, in the same way that Fausto II has difficulty understanding the concept of original sin, so he cannot understand how the air raids and the devastation of Malta during the war are deserved. He is not aware of what has been done or not done that has resulted in Malta's being turned into a "Purgatory," a "prison plot" from which there is no escape, and only a sentence of hard labor, like that of Adam, to be repeated day after day.

Comparing the feeling that time had been suspended during the bombings of Malta with the feeling experienced during a short lull between raids, and then contrasting his feelings when the raids are resumed, Fausto II records that "I seem to have come inside time again. Midnight does mark the hairline between days, as was our Lord's design"

\textsuperscript{142}\textsuperscript{Rom. 5:12}. Pynchon does not acknowledge here the cross-reference verses in the King James version of the Bible that speak of Christ as the expiation for that sin. In 1 Cor. 15:21-22 we read: "For since by man came death, by man also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even in Christ shall all be made alive."
(316/296). 143 The "design" is that of Genesis 1:4-5, "And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night." As a piece in Pynchon's montage, the fact that the division of Day and Night is part of a "design" is significant, for the contrast between design, order, and connectedness, over against randomness, fragmentation, and relativity, is thematically important throughout Pynchon's work. Before the concept of God was dismissed as a myth no longer needed by modern man, the idea of order, plan, and design was seen as part of the wonder and beauty of creation, and God was praised for bringing forth order out of an earth that was "without form and void." 144 With the development of man's scientific acumen, however, evidence has been accumulated which refutes most of modern man's former interpretations of order in the universe. Not willing to entertain the idea that his own earlier interpretations are fallible, twentieth-century man has chosen to assume that the discovery of

143 The idea that midnight is the dividing line between Night and Day has been traced to the apocryphal book, Wisdom of Solomon 18:14-15 by early Church Fathers, even though the context of the passage is that of the time of the Exodus.

144 Gen. 1:2.
randomness and relativity indicates that there was no "design" by an omniscient God after all. Since the passage above is from the journal of Fausto II, who has retreated into "religious abstraction" (315/295), he can still credit God with a design, but he also notes that "when bombs fall," a man-made phenomenon, "it's as if time were suspended," and a concept of dimension and direction with it. In such a chaotic situation, the idea of God and design seem to have disappeared, and to be inapplicable in today's world.

A second allusion to Ash Wednesday is made following the reference to "our Lord's design," suggesting that part of God's design is the frailty of man, as conveyed in the words of the priest to his parishioner when the cross is marked with ashes on the forehead as a part of Ash Wednesday observance: "Remember, man, that thou are dust, and unto dust thou shalt return." The allusion to Eliot's poem which takes its title from the religious holiday is an appropriate one to confirm the impermanent nature of man that Fausto's friend Maratt sees demonstrated when

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145 See pp. 196-97 for discussion of another allusion to Ash Wednesday.

146 Gen. 3:19. "... for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."
he observes the death of his close friends. "One by one they were shot from the sky" (317/296). Rather than accepting the inevitability of a brief span of life followed by death, as a finite creature of God, which he labels "retreat" on the part of Dnubietna (a thinly disguised Eliot), Maratt chooses protest, a "retreat from retreat." Fighting back, for Maratt, is at least an affirmation of life as something worth fighting for. Fausto II's return, however, "was most violent of all. He dropped away from abstraction and into Fausto III: a non-humanity which was the most real state of affairs. Probably. One would rather not think so" (317/297). Neither retreat into abstraction, which Fausto equates with the Ash Wednesday poem, nor transcendence of reality, but the feeling of a "sensitivity to decadence, of a slow falling" characterizes the "non-humanity" of Fausto III. Thus, in the montage, the allusion stands in contrast to the "real state of affairs" in recent war-filled years.

Just as Pynchon refers to Noah and the Flood in a passage related to the divine intervention of God in the affairs of needful man in chapter 3, Fausto also alludes to Noah. Fausto's reference is specifically to the Ark as a simile for the island of Malta to its inhabitants: "But
as the Ark was to Noah so is the inviolate womb of our
Maltese rock to her children. Something given us in re-
turn for being filial and constant, children also of God" (318/298). The story of God's instructions to Noah for
building an ark in which he and his family, together with
a pair of each kind of animal, would take refuge when flood
waters destroyed the rest of God's creation, is recorded in
Genesis 6-8. The idea of the physical salvation provided
by the ark being a result of being "filial and constant,
children also of God" is substantiated in Noah's case in
such verses as Genesis 6:9, "Noah was a just man and perfect
in his generations, and Noah walked with God"; and Genesis
7:1, "And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy
house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before
me in this generation." Just as the ark provides safety
amid destruction for Noah and his family, so the catacombs
in the limestone rock of Malta provide some safety for the
Maltese, although the great loss of life during the sieges
could also work as a contrast to the security of Noah's ark.
More than this, however, is implied a spiritual protection
afforded the Maltese, an aspect which is best included in
a discussion of Malta itself as an allusion.147

147See this discussion on pp. 259-64.
When Fausto's diary refers to the possibility of his mother's being killed during the bombings of World War II, the writer reflects that "if she is to be taken from me . . . Thy will be done" (319/298-99). The words quoted are from the prayer of Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane shortly before he is taken and crucified: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." In the text, the passage is meant as a parody of those who "retreat" and who are sustained by "an allusion of immortality." Ridiculed though it be, however, the allusion stands in the montage as a reminder of a higher power that controls the affairs of man.

In the same passage, the diary notes that "they have levelled the churches, the Knights' auberges, the old monuments. They have left us a Sodom" (319/299). Once again, Pynchon uses the biblical image of Sodom to represent mass destruction such as is paralleled by the bombing raids on Malta during the war. The destruction of Sodom in the Bible is sent by God as punishment for ungodly

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148 Matt. 26:42; see also Mark 14:36.

149 See pp. 95-96 for discussion of another allusion to Sodom.
living; the "Sodom" of the 1940s is destruction that man
metes out to his fellow man during a period unequalled in
history for its inhumanity.

Discussing the relationship between matriarchal rule
and decadence on Malta, Fausto declares that "mothers are
closer than anyone to accident. They are most painfully
conscious of the fertilized egg; as Mary knew the moment
of conception" (321/301). While Pynchon twists the allu-
sion for his own purposes, the source of the reference to
Mary is the account of the annunciation and subsequent
virgin birth of Jesus to Mary, the espoused wife of Joseph.
That Mary is "painfully conscious" of the conception is
understandable, since she is not yet Joseph's wife, but
after being assured by the Lord's angel, and by Elizabeth,
the mother of John the Baptist, that the conception is part
of God's plan, Mary responds with a hymn of thanksgiving,
the well-known Magnificat, which begins "My soul doth mag-
nify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my
Saviour."\(^{150}\) In relation to the context of \(V_\text{.}\), however, a
reference to Mary provides a supreme representative of
mothers who are "possessed . . . without their consent"

(321/301), suggesting that the Magnificat is a cover-up for fear rather than heartfelt praise.

Repeating an allusion to God v. Caesar in a discussion of Fausto, the image seems to function here as a contrast between the ability to make a clear-cut, orderly, and decisive decision to "render . . . unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's," and the inability to do so in today's world of relativity. The narrator adds that on the Day of the 13 Raids, "even what happened then had no clear lines drawn" (322/302). In an inanimate world, nothing is clearly divided; all is sameness. Pynchon hints his intended meaning when he says that Fausto's problem was "never as simple as God v. Caesar, especially Caesar inanimate . . ." (321/301). The passage echoes an indirect reference in an earlier paragraph to the same idea. Decadence the narrator identifies as a move toward non-humanity when man becomes subject to the laws of physics, though pretending "that he is engaged in a great struggle between the laws of man and the laws of God" (321/301). The categorization of laws here is interesting, ironically so. The dualistic

151 See p. 194 for this discussion.
Manichaean concept is presumably all-encompassing, i.e., no other category is necessary or admissible to explain the forces at work in the universe, and in individual men. And yet, man, in his non-humanity, names a third category, the laws of physics, as if it is neither man-made nor divine. If man denies that the laws of physics are based on God-given phenomena, then they must be man-made; if man-made, then the randomness, fragmentation, and relativity in the world are of his own making. Not willing to accept the implications of such reasoning, the "non-human" of today hedges by simply saying that there are "no clear lines drawn" to explain the decadence about him, a conclusion that is itself symptomatic of the times.

The next journal entry alludes to St. Paul. The context makes the application self-evident: "Now the winter's gregale brings in bombers from the north; as Euroclydon it brought in St. Paul. Blessing, curses" (322/302). In addition to merely providing a contrast between good and evil—a good past and an evil present—there lurks behind a derision of the illusion said to be inherent in religious orthodoxy, an acknowledgment that, before decadence overtook the world, that orthodoxy was superior to a world that does not recognize a higher power.
Yet another evidence of a decay of traditional religious practice is demonstrated in a conversation that repeats an allusion to Sunday.¹⁵² On the day once held to be sacrosanct by God, Dnubietna learns that the priest has not been to Mass, nor does he make any move toward doing so. When propositioned by some girls in an underground bar, Dnubietna declines, since he is married, and since Fausto is a priest. "That is long gone," Fausto comments, to which the engineer-poet retorts, "Once a priest always a priest," in imitation of the popular dictum in Christian orthodoxy regarding the security of the believer, "Once saved always saved." As Fusto II, Dnubietna's suggestion that Fausto has a secure place among the Elect is unacceptable. The blanket of security provided by an earlier period of commitment to God, no longer seems applicable today; Fausto no longer even feels the compulsion to go through the motions of performing a ritual that seems meaningless. In so doing, Fausto II identifies himself with the Preterite, for whom Mass on Sunday is unnecessary.

Relating an incident in which Fausto and Dnubietna, drunk, escape serious injury during a raid, Fausto comments

¹⁵²See pp. 165-66 for this discussion.
that, "I've not been able to get it out of my mind that God has suspended the laws of chance by which we should rightly have been killed" (330/309). Though he adds, lightly, that it may have been because he had not blessed the wine, the serious note dominates in the passage. The reference to a dispensation from God is one that is treated in several places in the Bible, and is the overriding purpose of the New Testament: to usher in the new law of grace to supercede the old law of "an eye for an eye." Ephesians 1:10 states that God, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times... might father together in one all things in Christ..." Galatians 4:4 makes it clear that the "fulness of times" is the sending of Christ by God to fulfill, but not to destroy, the law. This dispensation of grace, i.e., unmerited favor by God, was to be extended to the Gentiles. Thus the word dispensation is associated with the putting aside of a law for one's benefit, even if it is undeserved, a tempering of justice with mercy. In the text of V., that "mercy" is received with divided feelings by Fausto, however, because he observes that "somehow the street--the kingdom of death--was friendly" (330/309). Fausto and others of his "Generation," having "lost a certain sense of themselves," are more inclined at this stage, to submit to death than to affirm God-given life.
In the context of the conversation of a Catholic priest on Malta, a dominantly Roman Catholic population, it is not surprising to find two references to the Virgin. In all likelihood, the allusion is to the prophetic statement in Isaiah 7:2, that "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." The first reference alludes to Mary as the mother of Jesus; the second one uses "Virgin" as a metaphor for the Church, also represented by Malta. "The Virgin assailed. The winged Mother protective. The woman passive. Malta in siege" (338/317). Thus, the idea of the deterioration of the Church is likened to a ravaged virgin who is powerless to ward off the attack. Juxtaposed with the image of the truant priest and a setting of war, the allusions point to the decay of the Church, symbolic of religion in general, as being a decay that is both internal and external. Assailed from within and without, there seems to be little hope for its survival.

A final allusion in V. to the Puritan Work Ethic is made with regard to the Church, which, lacking vitality, has become inanimate and outmoded, and is like rock which, "however fine as an object of contemplation, does no work: labors not and thus displeases God, who is favorably
disposed toward human labor" (340/319). The allusion is used in the context of the teachings of the Bad Priest, i.e., a decadent Church, which Fausto concludes is "apostasy." Interestingly, it is the children who see through the sham of viewing a rock-like state of inanimateness as ultimately desirable; we are reminded of several instances recorded in the Bible in which wisdom comes "out of the mouths of babes." Non-humanity, soullessness, to which the Bad Priest is succumbing, is rejected by Pynchon as a worthy alternative to continuing to work, thus affirming life, even if that labor is hard and seemingly fruitless, as on the "dear tiny prison plot" of Malta, referred to earlier with regard to the allusion to the Work Ethic that is so much a part of western thought.

In a brief commentary of Fausto III's life, the narrator observes that there remain two unanswered questions. The first one is, "If he had truly broken his covenant with God in administering the sacrament why did he survive the raid?" (345/323). Answering his own question, he can only

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153 See pp. 80-81, 222-23, and 233-34 for other discussion of the Work Ethic.
154 See Ps. 8:2; Matt. 11:25; and 1 Cor. 1:27.
surmise that it is because he "had no further need for
God." The reference to breaking the covenant in adminis-
tering the sacrament may refer to an Old Testament account
of Moses. 155 Great leader though he was, Moses at one point
disobeys God when he fails to give God the credit for bring-
ing forth water out of rock and acts in his own name.
"Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of
this rock?" For this sin Moses was denied the privilege of
conducting the children of Israel into the promised land.
Unlike Fausto III, however, Moses remains faithful to God,
though chastened by him. His life is spared, and he con-
tinues to acknowledge his need for God. Fausto III con-
cludes that since he was not killed, which, in his thinking,
seems to be a logical punishment for his breaking of a
covention with God, then God is unnecessary; for, he can
now, apparently, act in his own name without asking God's
blessing, or fearing his punishment. In his state of non-
humanity, it is all the same.

The other unanswered question pertains to Fausto's
failure to minister to the needs of the apparently dying
Bad Priest, identified by a nearby child as "Jesus." It

155 See Numbers 20.
was a "sin of omission," says Fausto, for which he will "answer to no tribunal but God" (345/324). Although the term "sin of omission" is not used in the Bible, the idea is implicit throughout the scriptures. One well-known verse that capsules the contrast between sins of omission and those of commission is Romans 8:19, in which Paul laments that "the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." Likewise, it is impossible to pinpoint a single verse as a source for the concept of man's being answerable only to God for his sins, because the teaching pervades numerous books of the Bible. In context, Fausto's realization of guilt at his having so far lost his humanity as to go through the motions of administering the last rites to the Bad Priest when death is imminent, but not to make an effort to preserve life when it may have been possible to do so, is what triggers the advent of Fausto IV. So, while the Bad Priest is allowed to die ("I did feel for a pulse or heartbeat. None"), the chapter ends on a note of hope which has been predicted early in the chapter, and is best summarized in the words of Fausto himself:

His successor, Fausto IV, inherited a physically and spiritually broken world. No single event produced him. Fausto III had merely passed a
certain level in his slow return to consciousness or humanity. That curve is still rising.

(V. 307/286)

XII - XIII

The next two chapters, like some of the earlier ones, chapters 2 and 4 especially, make their main contribution to Pynchon's montage of the twentieth century by the use of the overtonal type of montage. In chapter 12, these references include Rachel and Esther, Malta, the Street, and some expletive expressions; in chapter 13, Malta, Rachel, Godolphin, the Street, and several expletives function in the same way. As I have indicated earlier, these will be discussed as separate allusions in the final sections of this dissertation chapter.

Also in chapter 13, however, are two allusions that relate specifically to the Bible or to the historical background of the Bible. The first one appears in a conversation between Rachel and Profane, in which Profane explains that "whenever I, any schlemihl lets a girl think there is a past, or a secret dream that can't be talked about, why Rachel, that's a con job. Is all it is. There's nothing inside. Only the scungille shell." Rachel replies, making an allusion to the rib from which woman was created:
You have to grow up. That's all: my own unlucky boy, didn't you ever think maybe ours is an act too? We're older than you, we lived inside you once: the fifth rib, closest to the heart. We learned about it then. After that it had to become a game to nourish a heart you all believe is hollow though we know different.

(V. 370/347)

The allusion to the rib is to Genesis 2:21-23: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." The admission of each character that survival depends on each playing his respective "game" seems to represent Pynchon's concept as well. Like Profane, the "victims" in today's world are those for whom the sustaining beliefs of the past have been exploded by science and technology, to reveal only empty shells with no substance. Feeling so, they feel victimized, betrayed, for having been led to believe in a past that, once exposed as nothing, leaves them dangling as "has-beens," preterite, hanging helplessly as if at the end of a yo-yo string. Rachel, however, intimates that Profane is not irrevocably consigned to his plight; rather, an immaturity of consciousness keeps him a schlemihl. The Rachels of the world, however, can be hopeful
because of an "inside knowledge" that she (like other "feminine" things in V., such as Malta and the Church) has available. This "it" about which Rachel has innate knowledge, enables her to believe that meaningful humanity is possible, even though it may be an illusion. Nevertheless, it is an essential illusion. Raymond Olderman makes a helpful statement in this regard:

What Pynchon has made clear is that in the face of the waste land of this century some kind of illusion is necessary for man to remain human--and that some illusions are better than others.156

Like belief in Malta, Rachel has a "good illusion because it produces a sense of communion and a feeling that man can endure.157 The rib in the montage, then, functions to elicit the traditional association with woman and womanhood which Pynchon, like Faulkner, uses to suggest qualities of endurance which, however "romantic," as Profane labels them, make it possible to prevail amid decadence and growing inanimateness.

Later in the chapter, two further references related to man's beginnings are made which relate indirectly to the Bible. In the first one, Paola's description of Malta, a

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156Olderman, p. 143.

157Ibid.
"cradle of life" (382/358), hints at what is made more explicit a few pages later, when Stencil comments that "the Middle East, cradle of civilization" (387/363), may yet be the world's grave. The "cradle of civilization" refers to what is now variously termed the "fertile crescent,"158 or the Holy Land, and indicates the boundaries of the Old Testament world. Extending from Ur of the Chaldees, near the Persian Gulf, to the Nile valley in Egypt, the area includes the home of Abraham, the land of Canaan, and the birthplace of Jesus Christ. It is, in a real sense, a microcosm of the whole world. As H. I. Hester notes, "It is a world in miniature for everything is there—the seething gorge, the snow-capped mountain, the wide-sweeping valley, the elevated plain, the rolling table land. It is the 'multam in parvo' of all lands."159 The "cradle of civilization," as the birthplace of Christ and of mankind, and thus life-giving, is juxtaposed in V. with an image of Malta, also described elsewhere in the novel as a "womb of rock" whose "soul hasn't been touched" (318/298), even

158 This term was coined by Dr. J. H. Brested, the noted Egyptologist.

though she was physically ravaged by the war. Without the insight of Paola, who, like Rachel, is one of the "pro-life, pro-humanity" characters in V., Stencil, who has "stayed off Malta," suggests that another war could make the "cradle of life" become a "cradle of death," for Stencil, as Max Schulz implies, is haunted by "the ghost of annihilation." In the montage, the allusion could be taken as affirmation of life and as a contrastive element to the idea of annihilation.

XIV

Moving to Paris, in 1913, chapter 14 is concerned with a bizarre relationship between V. and Melanie l'Heuremaudit, a fifteen-year old French ballerina. In discussion with the Russian Satin about the young girl, M. Iitagoe describes Melanie as functioning like a mirror that reflects the ghost of her father who has deserted her. That "ghost," he says, is "Cast in the image of what? Not God.... Or if known, then he is Yahweh and we are all Jews, for on one will ever speak to it" (399/374-75). Repeating an allusion made in chapter 3 to God's creation of

160 Schulz, p. 78.
man in his image,\textsuperscript{161} Pynchon uses the allusion to make a
direct contrast between man's identity with God as creator,
and Melanie's inability to identify her father. Thus, she
functions as a mirror that reflects, not her father as a
human being, but only as a ghost. The juxtaposition of the
Genesis allusion with the name Yahweh further emphasizes
non-identity. The name Yahweh, or Jehovah,\textsuperscript{162} is a pro-
nounceable form of the incommunicable Hebrew tetragram
YHWH, one of the names of God that carries the meaning of
"I am," or "the existing one," but which was never spoken
by the Jews. Inherent in the name is an affirmation of
life, even though, like a ghost, it is a vague concept that
cannot be captured and labelled as a "person" in the finite
sense. Unlike Moses, who communicates with Jehovah, even
though he cannot see him,\textsuperscript{163} Melanie has no basis for any
conception of her father, who has utterly disappeared. She

\textsuperscript{161}See Gen. 1:26-27.

\textsuperscript{162}Exod. 6:2-3: "And God spake unto Moses, and
said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham,
unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty,
but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them."

\textsuperscript{163}Exod. 33:20. "And he said, Thou canst not see
my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."
reflects only a ghost with whom there can be no sense of identity or of communication, a total non-identity.

The final reference in the chapter that has biblical relevance repeats the allusion to Puritanism which has been discussed earlier.\textsuperscript{164} The narrator speculates on what V's reaction would have been if she had suspected that her fetishism were "part of a conspiracy levelled at the animate world, any sudden establishment here of a colony of the Kingdom of Death. . . ."\textsuperscript{165} Answering his own question, he surmises that any such realization would have caused her to become "a purely determined organism, an automaton, . . . which we have come to call Puritan," or else to become "an inanimate object of desire" (411/386). The reappearance of the allusion further accentuates Pynchon's concept of the possibility of an unseen source of control which he labels

\textsuperscript{164}See pp. 80-81 and 212-13 for this discussion.

\textsuperscript{165}Pynchon's references to the "Kingdom of Death," and to "the inanimate Kingdom" (411/386) are apparently analogies of his own with the biblical concept of the "Kingdom of God" or the "Kingdom of Heaven," which may be briefly defined as the whole spiritual commonwealth of God's children, the "invisible church." It is represented by the organized, or visible, church, but is more comprehensive and is greater than the visible church (Davis, p. 433). Pynchon's terms are not themselves biblical allusions. The Kingdom of Death is, of course, a logical label for a force antagonistic to life, as is the "inanimate Kingdom" for the idea of a once animate man who has lost his humanity.
"Puritan" when applied to the idea of an arbitrarily pre-determined groups set aside by God for salvation, and which he considers analogous to paranoia in a secular context.

XV

With the exception of the first biblical allusion in chapter 15, there are no new references to the Bible cited in the chapter. The repetition of allusions that have been used earlier, in other contexts, however, works to reinforce important themes in \( V \), and is therefore used to good purpose. The chapter opens with an account of the aftermath of a night of burglary by the Rollicking Boys. They are greeted by a note from Profane as to his whereabouts, to which Stencil comments, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin" (416/391). The source of these Aramaic words is Daniel 5:25. Daniel, who had established a reputation for himself with King Nebuchadnezzar for being able to make accurate interpretations, has been called in by Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar, who is presently king, to interpret the meaning of these strange words which appear from a hand and are written on a plaster wall of the king's palace while he is hosting a "great feast." Daniel interprets the words as recorded in Daniel 5:25-28:
And this is the writing that was written, ME-NE, ME-NE, TE-KEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.166

Daniel has prefaced his interpretation with a reminder to Belshazzar that he has not humbled his heart, though he knew of his father's downfall through pride. "But has lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; . . . and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified."167 Daniel is rewarded for his services, and that night Belshazzar is slain. In the immediate context, Stencil's comment could be paraphrased in a colloquial idiom as something like, "You've done it now, so you can expect to take the consequences for breaking the law." Thus, Pynchon uses the Bible quotation in a light vein, as word play. The montage principle works toward a considerably more important message, however, for it suggests a doom that is inevitable for man if he continues his decadent course in which Eigenvalue ("one's own value") is robbed (taken away from, degraded).

166 Upharsin is a plural form of peres.
167 Daniel 5:22-23.
Later in the day, Profane visits a familiar bar and announces to the Whole Sick Crew that he is going to Malta. He reflects that he sees "no street ahead but the Gut," a bar area in Valletta, but he thinks that "it would have to go some to be worse than East Main," a tavern district in Norfolk. Then he says, "There was also the sea's highway. But that was a different kind entirely" (418/393). As in chapter 9,\textsuperscript{168} when Pynchon alludes to the sea as "pavement for . . . our Redeemer," his tone is suddenly very sober. The sea's highway, to be a highway, requires supernatural intervention, a different kind of street from the Gut, indeed. Lacking the quality of faith to effect such a miracle, the "highway" for Profane would lead to a watery grave, and an answer to the universal question: Is there a life beyond? Pynchon leaves the question open.

A variation of an earlier allusion to the Lord's Supper appears here as a reference to a piece of religious art, Dali's Last Supper. Stencil, Profane and Pig Bodine visit the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., during a debauche which Profane cannot even recall clearly. Deciding that they should have female companionship, we are told

\textsuperscript{168}See p. 186 for this discussion.
that "sure enough, in front of Dali's Last Supper, they found two government girls" (418/394). As parody, the allusion "fits" in the story well enough, for it appears just after we are told that Profane, the schlemihl, is taking the weekend visit "to spend a last liberty" (418/393). As montage, however, the connotations of the allusion to the last supper of Jesus with his disciples, at which the Communion is instituted as a lasting memorial, provide a contrast to the "last fling" that Profane and his friends spend with strange girls. The Communion image is extended in a description of the activities of the weekend, which include "God knows how many bottles of circulating and communal wine" (419/394). Far from being the wine that represents the blood of Christ shed for the remission of man's sin, all Profane realizes from his "last supper" celebration is impaired memory of a decadent party that is to be followed by another. Taken together, then, the allusions used in the chapter point to a contrast between a profane society which, in spite of warnings, continues to follow a course of decadence toward an inevitable destruction. Lacking faith in Daniel's God, Profane is not shaken

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by the fact that Belshazzar's sin is indeed punished by
death, and the symbolism of the Lord's Supper no longer
contains a sacred meaning for him.

XVI

The opening words of chapter 16 are, "Now there
was a sun-shower over Valetta, and even a rainbow" (424/
399). For a reader who is familiar with Pynchon's Gravity's
Rainbow, in which the rainbow is a tremendously important
symbol, the appearance of the word immediately attracts
attends attention. As the image is confined to V. alone,
however, one may question whether or not the word is a bib-
lical allusion. As such, probably not. However, just as
the sight of a weeping older woman, who is wearing a black
dress and a wedding band, standing beside a newly dug
grade, causes the word "widow" to come into our minds,170
so, in a novel in which the covenant for which the rainbow
is a token is referred to twice, along with a number of
other covenants made by God with man, not to mention the

170This is Sergei Eisenstein's classic example of
the principle of montage; the association is made in our
minds whether it is intended or, indeed, whether it is
correct, or not. See Eisenstein, The Film Sense, pp. 4-5.
use of approximately one hundred other different references with biblical associations in the novel, it is difficult to present a biblical inference coming to the fore when the word "rainbow" is used. The biblical story that provides the source for an explanation of the rainbow's appearance with a sun-shower is that of Noah, as recorded in Genesis 9. When man becomes so sinful that God "repents" having made him, he destroys all living things except for the family of Noah and a pair of all the animals. Noah builds an ark according to God's directions, and he and his family are saved. After the flood waters have subsided, God makes a covenant with Noah, promising never to destroy the earth again by flood, as we read in Genesis 9:13-15:

   I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

Between the opening sentence of the chapter in which the words "sun" and "rainbow" are used, and the end of the chapter, in which we are told that "all illumination in Valletta . . . was extinguished," there is a verbal picture of inanimateness, inertia, passiveness (all these words are
used), including an actual drawing by Pynchon (435/410) of a Kilroy who has become so inanimate as to appear as part of a band-pass filter, a mechanical part. We also see Profane and Brenda walking toward, and apparently into, the sea. Amid the numerous representations of man's trend toward self-destruction, and now what appears to be his success in achieving it, the allusion to the rainbow, traditionally a symbol of God's promise to man, serves as a brilliant reminder of man's broken covenant with God that has resulted in his making of the world a wasteland that is useless. God's part of the covenant has not been revoked; the rainbow still appears. It is man who has disowned the God of the covenant.

Several pages later Pynchon uses what has become a popular expression, but which is based on Genesis 4:9, "And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" In V., however, the allusion is inverted in that Johnny and Clyde feel an obligation to stay with Pappy Hod while he enjoys an evening of dance and drink. Unable to find a taxi, Clyde insists on taking the drunken Pappy home so that Johnny, who is an officer, can stay out longer. Johnny retorts, "Who said I was an officer. I'm a white hat. Your brother,
Pappy's brother. Brother's keeper" (439/413). In this case, Pynchon seems to be enjoying word play, but, nevertheless, the reference points to the concept of caring, even in decadence, that the novelist explicitly urges in a number of passages, such as the repeated advice to "Keep cool, but care," a phrase that is used several times throughout the novel.

Beginning on page 444/418, a number of expressions relating to light are used in ways that appear to be of some elusive significance that is somehow associated with the Bible. First, we are told that Stencil "walked to the room in the ruined building through a brilliant gray afternoon. Light seemed to cling to his shoulders like fine rain" (444/418). In a conversation between Maijstral and Stencil regarding Stencil's search, Maijstral asks, "You always look inside first, don't you, to find what's missing. What gap a 'vision' could possibly fill" (445/419). After meeting a shopkeeper who knows of an eye such as V. has, the narrator comments that "light that afternoon produced a burn. . . . Light angling through the window fell across a bowl of fruit . . . bleaching them. . . . Something was wrong with the light" (446/420). Returning to Maijstral's in the early morning, Stencil "walked through a sea-
phosphorescence to Maijstral's. Dawn leaked in, turning the illumination conventional" (447/420). There follows a conversation between Maijstral and Stencil:

"She cannot be dead," Stencil said. "One feels her in the city," he cried. "In the city."
"In the light. It has to do with the light."
"If the soul," Maijstral ventured, "is light. Is it a presence?"
"Damn the word."

(V. 447/421)

A little later, Stencil "freezes" when Profane tells "of his nights with the Alligator Patrol, and how he'd hunted one pinto beast . . . and killed it in a chamber lit by some frightening radiance" (450/424). It will be recalled that an earlier allusion to light is related by Profane to a pentecostal experience ("Surely the alligator would receive the gift of tongues").¹⁷¹ Pieced together, these passages are also somehow suggestive of Jesus' transfiguration experience, when "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."¹⁷² What the "presence" indicated by the otherworldly light is if it is

¹⁷¹See V., p. 122/109; see also pp. 138-39 for this discussion.

"more than a sense of sin" (as Maijstral suggests) is not revealed, but the possibility of an intended contrast between, or parody of, the transfiguration experience of Jesus, and the spirit of evil or destruction represented by V. is hinted.\textsuperscript{173}

The last reference to puritanism in V. is made in a passage describing Brenda Wigglesworth, a girl whom Profane picks up in Kingsway, and who seems to personify the decadence that has invaded contemporary life.\textsuperscript{174}

High she had remained all the way across the Atlantic; high as the boat deck and mostly on sloe gin fizzes. The various lifeboats of this most underelict passage east were shared by a purser (summer job) from the academic flatlands of Jersey who gave her an orange and black toy tiger, a pregnancy scare (hers only) and a promise to meet her in Amsterdam, somewhere behind the Five Flies. He'd not come: she

\textsuperscript{173}Notes in The New Oxford Annotated Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), regarding Jesus transfiguration apply amazingly well to the above incident in V. Transfigured is defined as "having a non-earthly appearance" (p. 1225). The event began as prayer (Stencil's begins with "an argument with the whisky bottle") and grew into an intense religious experience, the exact nature of which is uncertain; Matthew uses the word "vision" for it. The aura of unnatural brilliance is associated with mystical experience (p. 1258).

\textsuperscript{174}The name Wigglesworth is apparently intended to bring to mind Michael Wigglesworth, the seventeenth-century Puritan poet, author of the best-seller, The Day of Doom, which describes the end of the world and God's obliteration of all but the Elect because of man's incurable sinfulness.
came to herself—or at least to the inviolable Puritan she'd show up as come marriage and the Good Life, someday soon now—in a bar's parking lot near a canal, filled with a hundred black bicycles: her junkyard, her own locust season. Skeletons, carapaces, no matter: her inside too was her outside. . . .

(V. 447/426)

The allusion to Puritanism calls forth a mental picture in total opposition to the description given of Brenda, serving to convey an idea of the extent to which the earlier Puritan and the modern of today have parted ways.

Once again, Pynchon uses a distorted version of the account in the gospels of Jesus walking on the water. 175 This time, the allusion serves to emphasize the inanimate and relative state that Profane has been moving toward, in spite of his dislike of inanimate things. Rather than "walking on the sea," as Jesus does, Profane wonders if he hadn't "really stood there still on the sea like a schlemihl Redeemer while that enormous malingering city . . . all slid away from him over a great horizon's curve . . . ."

(453/427). A parallel is drawn between Benny Profane's spiritual passivity and the passive motion of a sailor who may indeed only stand still on a ship, since the ship itself

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175 See Mark 6:48-50 and John 6:18-20. See also pp. 186-87 and 225 for earlier discussions of the allusion.
actively moves, and he is only carried along, with no positive effort of his own expended. Actually to walk on the water, as Jesus does, not only involves active motion, but supernatural ability as well, a miracle. Such a miracle does not appear to be forthcoming for a schlemihl in a "screwed up" world. The foregoing passage provides the background for the much-discussed final paragraph of the chapter, in which Profane and Brenda do, this time, actively run "toward the edge of Malta and the Mediterranean beyond" (455/428). Even so, the possibility is not ruled out that, beyond the watery grave of the Mediterranean waters, there is a means of being saved, a rebirth. Throughout world literature the sea has represented both life (birth) and death; water has symbolized cleansing as well as being an agent of life or death. Coupled with the covenant of the rainbow in the opening part of the chapter, that promises not to destroy all life by water, the life-saving symbolism of the sea remains a possibility. Profane's death may be his only means to life, having "botched" his life in this world, and death is also his only means of finding out what finite man cannot otherwise know.
Epilogue

Although the events of the epilogue in V. occur more than thirty-five years earlier than the chronological "end" of the novel, the allusions in the chapter provide, in general, a fair survey of the major themes in the Stencil story-line of V. Early in the chapter there are some allusions to passages in Exodus regarding Moses and the children of Israel. "A pillar of cloud stood to the north behind Marsamuscetto, looking solid and about to topple, to crush the city" (457/430). As Moses is leading the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land, the "Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night a pillar of fire to give them light. . . ."176

Not only did the pillar of cloud guide the way, but Exodus 14:19-20 adds that, on one occasion, the angel of God moved from before them, . . . and went behind them, providing a screen between the Israelites and the Egyptians that made the Egyptian side dark while providing light for the Israelites, i.e., it provided protection as well as light. Pynchon twists the biblical significance of the allusion to the extent that, in the harbor of Malta, the cloud seemed to

threaten rather than protect. In so doing, the image contrasts the faith of the Israelites in the security provided by God with the distrust that abounds today when there is no longer the certainty of a higher power who can be trusted to provide protection. The uncertainty that is being discussed in the context of the novel, i.e., the insecure feeling that the Armistice ending World War I is not a sure thing, is paralleled in the natural phenomenon of the cloud provided by Pynchon in V., but stands in contrast to the pillar of cloud described in the Bible as a symbol of security for the Israelites. Continuing in the same vein, Stencil thinks about the Armistice:

> How could he tell Curruthers-Pillow of all people, who felt in the presence of the most inconsequential chit initialed by the Foreign Secretary much as Moses must have toward the Decalogue God blasted out for him on stone. Wasn't the Armistice signed by legally-constituted heads of government? How could there not be peace?

**(V. 458/430)**

When God appears to Moses atop Mt. Sinai to give the Ten Commandments, the awesomeness of the occasion is described. The people in the camp "trembled" and God forbade all but Moses and Aaron to approach him.\(^{177}\) When God finishes

\(^{177}\)Exod. 19 and 20.
talking with Moses, he gives him "two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God."\textsuperscript{178} When Moses returns to the people, who have meanwhile become impatient from waiting so long for him, he finds that Aaron, who has returned, has allowed the people to make a golden calf to worship. Moses, exceedingly angry, "cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount."\textsuperscript{179} Later, God sends for Moses again, telling him, however, that he cannot see his face, "for there shall no man see me, and live,"\textsuperscript{180} and tells him to hew two more tables so that he can "write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables,"\textsuperscript{181} which Moses had broken. As can be seen, the allusion parodies, by the contrast in the text, people who follow unquestioningly in a day when authority means little. The allusion also contrasts, by implication, the Ten Commandments which have lasted over the centuries, with the frail treaties of men, on the one hand. On the other hand, the image is a reminder that man has broken or ignored the

\textsuperscript{178}Exod. 32:19.

\textsuperscript{179}Exod. 34:1.

\textsuperscript{180}Exod. 31:18.

\textsuperscript{181}Exod. 33:20.
Ten Commandments, i.e., the law of God, but he cannot trust his own man-made laws, which have failed to bring lasting peace. Furthermore, the allusion has its source in a passage containing a reference to the golden calf, i.e., idol worship, of the Israelites, which parallels modern man's preoccupation with material things and his turning away from the worship of God. Pynchon shuns no opportunity to use the many-faceted sides of the allusion to the fullest.

Pynchon repeats an earlier reference to Armageddon (461/434), which stands for World War I, a potentially apocalyptic occurrence, and which, in the Bible, refers to the final battle to be fought between the forces of good and evil at the end of time as we know it.\textsuperscript{182} World War I, of course, does not secure a final victory over evil, however. Nor does it bring an end to man's life on earth; it has left a world alive, but physically and spiritually broken. Moreover, no new understanding, no revival of a faith man has lost, as is intimated in the allusion to which Armageddon is juxtaposed: "The Armageddon had swept past, the professional who'd survived had received no gift of tongues" (461/434). It will be recalled that the gift of tongues

\textsuperscript{182}See pp. 108, 110-12, and 150-51 for earlier discussions of allusions to Armageddon.
indicates that the recipient has been filled with the Holy Spirit, and is imbued with the breath of God so that he can devote his God-given energy to enlarging, perfecting, and edifying the Church, i.e., the body of believers, and, figuratively, the body of Christ. Having failed to receive the "gift" that would restore man's vitality, a return to faith, he is simply left waiting for an end he has come to long for. "Despite all attempts to cut its career short the tough old earth would take its own time in dying and would die of old age" (461/434).

The "shipwrecked St. Paul" (461/434) is mentioned again in relation to Mara, a goddess-like figure who runs throughout the early historical literature of Malta. Like Mara, "a teacher of love," St. Paul brought "blessings" to Malta in the form of Christian teachings of a God of love. On the other hand, Mara is also described as a witch who beheaded the Turk Mustafa (464/437), relating her to an allusion to the "beheaded St. John (465/437), in close proximity to the reference to St. Paul. John the Baptist, who has been discussed earlier,\(^{183}\) caught the attention of Herod the Tetrarch, who had an affair with Herodias, the

\(^{183}\)See pp. 194-95. See also Matt. 14:1-12.
wife of his half-brother, and subsequently married her while her first husband was still alive. John the Baptist reproved the guilty couple, and Herodias, for revenge, plotted his death. When her daughter Salome pleased Herod with her dancing, he promised her anything she wished as a reward; to please her mother, Salome asked for the head of John the Baptist. The king regretted this, but he felt bound to keep his promise, and he ordered John the Baptist beheaded. Pynchon further interrelates the image of St. John to Salome in his use of shalom, explaining his word-play thus: "The joke being that shalom is Hebrew for peace and also the root of the Greek Salome, who beheaded St. John" (465/437). This series of allusions appearing in close proximity is used in a playful way in the novel's context, but, at the same time, in the montage the allusions provide associations with contrasts between violence and peace, and are thereby related to a host of other allusions in V. that are discussed elsewhere.

In a listing of socio-political wants of the Maltese, Pynchon alludes next to the fact that "the Church . . . wanted only what the Church always desires during times of political crisis. She awaited a Third Kingdom.
Violent overthrow is a Christian phenomenon." There follows a sort of explanation of that Third Kingdom:

The matter of the Paraclete's coming, the comforter, the dove; the tongue of flame, the gift of tongues: Pentecost. Third Person of the Trinity. None of it was implausible to Stencil. The Father had come and gone. In political terms the Father was the Prince; the single leader, the dynamic figure whose virtù used to be a determinant of history. This had degenerated to the Son, genius of the liberal love-feast which had produced 1848 and lately the overthrow of the Czars. What next? What Apocalypse?184

(v. 472/444)

The group of allusions to the Holy Spirit and the apocalyptic, appearing in a cluster as it does, functions somewhat like a newspaper headline, announcing an important message of an imminent event. Several of the words have been used earlier in the novel, and since the narrator draws the intended analogy, the passage is largely self-explanatory in the "story." The montage principle works, however, to

184 The word Paraclete does not appear in the Bible text per se, but it is used in marginal notes in some versions of the Bible. The comforter is perhaps the most commonly used name for the Holy Spirit, and is used in John 16 and other passages. The dove is used to refer to the shape of the Holy Ghost as it descended upon Jesus (Luke 3:22). The designations of tongue of flame, the gift of tongues, and Pentecost are forms, or adaptations of forms, used, notably, in Acts 2. The phrase "Third Person of the Trinity" is not used in the Bible, but is used in Christian literature to identify the Holy Ghost.
draw a religious analogy with the events that Pynchon translates in political terms. To paraphrase the foregoing passage in Christian terms:

The first person of the Trinity is God the Father, the creator of heaven and earth, whose omnipotence and omniscience used to be recognized as the determiner of all things. Although some time in the nineteenth century, Nietzsche declared that God was dead, the Father had manifested himself to man as the second person of the Trinity, Jesus the Son of God. Jesus came as a Messiah, a Redeemer; however, he was despised and rejected by those he came to save, and was finally put to death. Shortly before his death he hosted a "love-feast," the Lord's Supper, to establish a lasting memorial of his death and to remind his friends that he would one day return. After his ascension, the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, was sent to those who would receive him. Most twentieth-century men do not seem to have received that Spirit; many assume that it must have been a hoax. Nevertheless, none of it was implausible to some who are still hopeful, and who wait to see what will happen next. The way things are going now, however, whatever happens must be soon, if man is to be saved from self-destruction.

Certainly, Pynchon's paragraph serves to suggest not only the failure of religion and of secular rule, but also to register wonder at the unknown that lies ahead. We are made to ask with Pynchon, "What next? What Apocalypse"?

Another reference to the Paraclete is made several pages later. Its juxtaposition with a reference to the Armistice and "a daftness for overthrow" (480/452) suggests political overtones that apply as well to the state of the
Church that makes the parishioners desire the priest's replacement. "It was the Paraclete he feared. He was quite content with a Son grown to manhood" (480/452). The Paraclete, or Holy Spirit, carries a connotation of the apocalyptic, of "violent overthrow," and, of course, an unknown or mystical presence. If Pynchon is directing his comment toward the Church, the word implies a change from the status quo, which is a complacent and decadent stage. Father Fairing's contentedness with "a Son grown to manhood" connotes a progression from "promiscuity to authority" (480/451), i.e., no longer like the early Church, with its gift of tongues (like childish babbling) but with a long line of tradition, ritual, and order, a tendency toward sameness (inanimateness).

Not long after the foregoing conversation takes place, Stencil learns that Father Fairing is being transferred to America. It appears that the biblical phrase which Pynchon uses is, on the surface, at least, mere word play, but, as a montage piece, it registers a larger meaning as well. We are told that, "There came, in time's fullness, One of Those Days. After a spring morning made horrible by another night of heavy drinking, Stencil arrived at Father Fairing's church to learn the priest was
being transferred (481/453). The phrase "in time's fullness" is associated, to one familiar with the Bible, with Galatians 4:4-5, in which the coming of the Son of God to redeem man is recorded: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The phrase "in time's fullness" implies the arrival, after a time of preparation and expectant waiting, of something important. In the Bible, of course, the event is the long-awaited coming of the Redeemer. For Stencil, the "spring morning" (associated with a time of rebirth and renewal), heralds only a hangover and news that is less than momentous. The incident leads into two other references that have biblical associations. Stencil's presumed comment on the news of the priest's transfer is "God's will,"[185] though its sincerity is undercut by the narrator's suggestion that later, if not now, it would be spoken sneeringly, since the distinction between a divine will and the will of the Church speaking on its own authority is fast fading. The priest corroborates this fact in his reply, "Hardly. In the

[185] See pp. 98-99 for discussion of an earlier allusion to God's will.
matter of Caesar and God a Jesuit need not be as flexible as you might think. There's no conflict of interests" (481/453).\textsuperscript{186} It seems to be implied that, as man moves toward inanimateness, sameness, the corruption of the concept of an omnipotent God by secular man has gradually led to a state of affairs in which man's idea of divine authority has fused with that of earthly authority to the point that any attempt at differentiation is rendered meaningless. To "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," i.e., the authority of man, is all that matters when God's will is no longer preeminent.

With the reference to Caesar, e.g., man, as preeminent in a godless world, the allusions that appear only once, or a few times, in \textit{V.}, end. There remains, however, as I have indicated repeatedly, the need to consider separately certain groups of allusions that appear in \textit{V.} numerous times, or which are unusually significant in the novel as a whole: the expletive; (Strait) Street; Malta; Rachel; and Hugh and Evan Godolphin.

\textsuperscript{186}See p. 194 and pp. 208-09 for other discussions of this allusion to Matt. 22:21.
THE EXPLETIVE AS A MONTAGE ELEMENT

In order for there to be expletives of the category defined as "profane expressions" in many recently published dictionaries, and as "taking the name of God in vain" in some older ones, there is an implicit assumption that there is or has been something sacred that can be treated contemptuously. Even though a young contemporary may claim that his "profanity" is just an expression, a filler in a statement, it is nonetheless a historical fact that the source for oaths aimed at irreverence is the Bible, often called "the Word of God." Thus, ironic though it be, the large number of expletive expressions containing some form of God or of one of the Godhead in V must be acknowledged as one category of allusions having biblical associations in this specific kind of way.

When the first expletive expression is used in V, it appears that Pynchon is deliberately using God's name in passing because it is no longer considered meaningful. For example, as Beatrice serves beer in the Sailor's Grave tavern, she hears a piercing voice, and comments, "God, it's Ploy again" (11/3). It seems highly unlikely that a religious significance can be attached to what is apparently a profane expression used as a filler for which
words like "Oh" could as easily be substituted. Like this one, many of the oaths in V. seem to be for the purpose of emphasizing the secular usage, i.e., the literal meaningless of the expressions.

As we continue to see various expletives scattered throughout the novel, however, it appears that Pynchon uses certain ones for other calculated effects, rather than using them spontaneously as a part of the contemporary idiom that his characters use. Although there may be some overlapping, there seem to be at least four general ways in which some of these expressions add to larger meanings in the novel. These include (1) reinforcement of meanings in the immediate context; (2) pleas for help, as if unconsciously praying; (3) word play which helps to identify a character's role; and (4) overtones suggesting that a higher knowledge not available to man, exists, though the speaker may not be aware of his implication.

The first type may be illustrated by the word "Madonna," used early in the novel. When Paola follows Profane out into the snow to avoid Teflon's camera, Profane is slightly irritated: "Madonna, he thought, I have a dependent now" (20/11). The Italian word singles out the Roman Catholic Church and its special veneration of the
Virgin Mary, who has been popularized by numerous works of art showing the Madonna (Mary) and Child (Jesus). The narrator having just previously identified Paola as Catholic, the use of "Madonna" emphasizes that fact, and prepares us for later passages in which the decadence in the Roman Catholic church is censured by Pynchon as a symptom of a larger deterioration in the twentieth century.

In a novel depicting the godless, and often hopeless, situation in which today's world finds itself, certain expletives provide a means of expressing what has become incommunicable in ordinary conversation. In a number of places, for example, the "O God" stands out like a plea for help in a hopeless situation, an unconscious prayer, so to speak. The character is not aware of what he is doing, to be sure; in a world without God, there would be little "meaning" in calling on Him. But, beneath the surface, a longing for some higher power seems to linger. D. H. Lawrence seems to have correctly diagnosed this problem, to which V. also speaks:

Liberty is all very well, but men cannot live without masters. There is always a master. And men either live in glad obedience to the master they believe in, or they live in a
frictional opposition to the master they wish to undermine. 187

We sense something of this secret longing in passages such as one in which Profane, having refused to "come home," is speaking to Rachel on the telephone: "He wanted to say, God, the things we want. He said: 'How is the party'" (35/25). Again, during a political crisis on Malta, Demivolt and Stencil, who is "nearly past caring," discuss the problem:

"We've lost our contact. We've lost more than that . . ."
"What the hell is wrong, Sidney."
"Health, I suppose," Stencil lied.
"Oh God."
"The students are upset, I've heard. Rumor that the University will be abolished."

(V. 490/461)

At other times, Pynchon seems to be enjoying word play, either by using an expletive more or less "straight," or in parody, to help identify a character's role. For instance, when Godolphin realizes that he has scurvy, Weissman suggests that the old man needs to go for some vegetables. Mondaugen says, "No. For God's sake, don't leave the room. Hyenas and jackals are padding up and down

those little corridors" (260/241). Since Godolphin seems to function as one manifestation of a God-figure in V., and is in danger at this time, the comment applies literally. Another time, Rachel is at a party with the Whole Sick Crew, and is completely distressed at what she finds: "'Dear God,' said Rachel. She had never seen so many red faces, the linoleum wet with so much spilled alcohol, vomit, wine" (356/333). The expletive here emphasizes the role of Rachel who, like her biblical namesake, weeps for her wayward children and prays for their return to God.

Another variant in the use of expletives is that of the expression "Only God knows," or a similar form of it, which constitutes a substantial number of the expletive expressions used. The idea that "God knows" in a world that denies that God exists, seems absurd. Paradoxically, however, when the allusion appears repeatedly, the effect is to leave open the possibility that some omniscient power exists beyond the capability of a society that is progressively becoming animate, to know. In effect, the expressions finally seem to shout that man has become incapable of knowing even himself; whatever ultimate knowledge there is, is necessarily supernatural. When Profane first learns about the Alligator Patrol that works "under
the street," Geronimo recalls its beginning, and the gradual increase in the number of alligators, until they were all over the sewer system: "Down there, God knew how many there were" (43/33). For one who is familiar with the Bible, the expletive used in this context echoes a passage in Luke 12 in which Christ teaches that God cares for all, great or small. Even a sparrow does not go unnoticed, and "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.\(^{188}\)

(STRAIT) STREET

Several things, such as the use of capitalization (though not consistently so), and a perception of some abstract meaning intended rather than a literal one, first serve to call special attention to Pynchon's use of the word "street" in V. The word is also used with the addition of "Strait" a number of times in ways that suggest more than a mere street name. That there is a special significance to the terms and what the intended meanings are, however, are not immediately evident. As the words are repeated in various contexts, however, the possibility of a larger meaning that is associated with the Bible becomes increasingly

apparent. By gathering the references into a single group for examination, features such as tone, style, even sentence structure, suggest that Pynchon may be inverting some well-known Bible verses for an almost opposite surface meaning. The montage principle works to link various connotations of the words as they are used in V. and in the Bible.

The first use of the word "Street" appears in the opening pages of V. Used in a discussion of Profane's habit of "yo-yoing," and of his visiting a tavern on East Main Street in Norfolk, Virginia, "Profane had grown a little leary of streets like this. They had in fact all fused into a single abstracted Street, which come the full moon he would have nightmares about" (10/2). The reference seems appropriate in context, but the use of the phrase "a single abstracted Street" arouses our suspicion that more is meant than simply a description of setting. At this point, little more interpretation is possible. Likewise, a few pages later, we read that "Profane had been there when they met: the Metro Bar, on Strait Street. The Gut. Valletta, Malta" (14/6). This time the street is very precisely named and located, and it is far away from Norfolk, Virginia, U.S.A. For a reader who is familiar
with biblical terminology, the street name prods a memory of the frequent use of both "strait" and "straight" in the Bible. Still, one has only to consult a city map of Valletta, the capital city of Malta, to find a Strait Street. No direct connection can be established yet, for, true to form, Pynchon uses the street name in a perfectly appropriate way in the "story." For almost three hundred pages, we can only ponder a "hunch" that there may be a connection. Then we come to one of the "heightened" passages in V. having to do with the street:

   It is a universal sin among the false-animate or unimaginative to refuse to let well enough alone. Their compulsion to gather together, their pathological fear of loneliness extends on past the threshold of sleep; so that when they turn the corner, as we all must, as we all have done and do--some more often than others--to find ourselves on the street ... You know the street I mean, child. The street of the 20th Century, at whose far end or turning--we hope--is some sense of home or safety. But no guarantees. A street we are put at the wrong end of, for reasons known to the agents who put us there. If there are agents. But a street we must walk.

(V. 323-24/303)

Although "street" is not capitalized here, the passage seems obviously related to Pynchon's concept of the "single abstracted Street," since he now identifies it as "the street of the 20th Century." On the next page, some
clarification is forthcoming. Through Fausto, Pynchon now tells us that "in dream there are two worlds: the street and under the street. One is the kingdom of death and one of life. And how can a poet live without exploring the other kingdom, even if only as a kind of tourist?" (325/304). The biblical tone ("kingdom of death" and "kingdom of life" are not actually in the Bible, but we make an association with the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the Kingdom of God," which imply eternal life and are used often in the Bible) used here seems to justify a closer look at the ways in which all these street-related words in \_\_ are used in the Bible. We recall, too, Pynchon's love of using foreign words, and the fact that via, in Latin, means both "street" or "way," as a possible aid in interpreting Pynchon's underlying meaning. In the passage quoted above, the reference to a "far end" offering some sense of "home or safety," and the clause "But a street we must walk" elicit now an association with several important, well-known biblical passages. For example, an often quoted portion of Isaiah 30:12 says: "... This is the way, walk ye in it"; also, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by me [italics mine]," which is spoken by
Jesus in John 14:6, a passage which also speaks of "home." 189

The next references to the Street in V. make it clear that the word is to be associated with decadence, and something ultimately undesirable, thus verifying Fausto's equating the Street with death. He comments on the "duck-ass heads and bursting straight skirts of the Street" (360/337), and some pages later, the narrator says that the world of "tourists" is "two-dimensional, as is the Street" (409/384). Charles B. Harris has interpreted the Street in a way that is relevant here:

Pynchon portrays two basic responses to this death drift. Under what he terms The Street, Pynchon subsumes organized religion, political activism, the two-dimensional world of tourism (408-9), and the desperate frivolity of East Main and the Whole Sick Crew. The Street . . . includes all the inadequate "social" alternatives to decay that involve "manipulated mob violence" (486) and regimentation. 190

The association of the Street with organized religion further justifies the likelihood that Pynchon would parody

189 See John 14:1-6, a portion of which is as follows: "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. . . . And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

190 Harris, p. 90. In the paperback edition of V., the page numbers referred to are 384 and 440, respectively.
Bible passages in order to reinforce his point regarding the decadence of the modern church. The idea of organized religion being "two-dimensional," i.e., lacking depth, in the presence of other tidbits of insight gathered thus far, leads us now to make an association between Strait Street and a key passage in the Bible, Matthew 7:13-14:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

In the foregoing passage, it is made clear that the way to destruction, being "wide" and "broad" is crowded ("many there be which go in thereat"). In V. we are told that "Strait Street--the Gut--was crowded as Kingsway but more poorly lit" (430/404), and a bit later the idea is again emphasized: "Strada Stretta; Strait Street." A passage meant, one felt, to be choked with mobs (468/440).

At this point, all of the associations seem to converge on what seems to be Pynchon's central idea in his references to Strait and Street: in keeping with the idea of decadence and perversion that the novelist keeps in the fore, it appears that he is taking advantage of word play to invert the "strait" gate of the Bible, which is narrow, but which "leadeth unto life, and few there be that find
it," and use the term instead for the way of decadence (represented in the bar district of Strait Street) that leads to destruction (the world of the street that Fausto calls the kingdom of death), which, in the twentieth century is "a passage . . . choked with mobs."

As these pieces fall into place, further clarification is achieved with regard to the early passage in V, in which Profane is urged by Angel to consider working in the sewer:

"Geronimo and I work in the sewers," Angel said. "Under the street. You don't see anything down there."
"Under the street," Profane repeated after a minute: "under the Street."

(V, 42/33)

The underlying message of this passage is now clear, for "under the street," which Fausto has explicitly identified as the "kingdom of life" (325/304) is a way to survive in a world headed toward destruction, although few will choose an underground life in a narrow sewer. The biblical way to life exactly parallels an underground life in the twentieth century: ". . . strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Having made these associations, it is only a short step to a final one that now seems relevant in V. In Acts
9:10-22, there is an account of God telling Ananias to "go into the street which is called Straight," and ask for Saul of Tarsus who, in a dream has seen Ananias coming to heal him of blindness. Ananias is surprised because it is Saul of Tarsus (later St. Paul) who has persecuted so many Christians, but God tells him that Saul is a "chosen vessel" and he must go to him. Ananias obeys. Saul is "filled with the Holy Ghost," receives his sight, and is converted to a lifetime of Christian witness, though he undergoes much persecution himself as a follower of Christ. There has been a great deal of critical discussion of the much-quoted final paragraph of chapter 16 in V., in which Brenda and Profane apparently run off the edge of Malta, presumably to death, but there has not been much real clarification of the passage. A portion of the paragraph reads as follows:

Later out in the street, near the sea steps she inexplicably took his hand and began to run. . . . The street, however, was level and clear. Profane and Brenda continued to run through the abruptly absolute night, momentum alone carrying them toward the edge of Malta, and the Mediterranean beyond.

(V. 455/428
[Italics mine])

In the light of possible associations suggested above, there is a hint that Brenda and Profane have experienced some kind of "enlightenment," and that the final run down
the street, which is now "level and clear," may not be to a meaningless death, but to a new life, in the same way that Paul experienced conversion and "received sight" after having Ananias come to him in a "street called Straight."

There is somehow a Conradian overtone that suggests that the couple are making a "jump into the unknown" and are submitting to the "destructive element" in the hope of finding salvation therein.

MALTA

Moving from Strait Street in Valletta, we come now to focus, from a broader vantage point, on the island of Malta itself, and to examine certain aspects of Malta that seem to have Christian implications. The island is one of the main settings in the novel, and is especially significant in chapters 11, 15, 16, and in the epilogue; as such, its frequent appearance is not surprising. One actual link between Malta and the Bible is simple enough: Malta is the present name given to the Melita of the Bible, the island off which St. Paul was shipwrecked, as recorded in Acts 28. Beyond these facts, however, the use of Malta as a Bible-related reference functions rather differently from most of the other allusions in this study, in which a reference is,
more often than not, to a biblical theme or specific passage. While this is true in a limited sense here, it is rather what Malta represents as a whole, both historically and symbolically, in the novel, that makes the use of the name significant. As with the discussion of Strait Street, I shall focus on selected representative passages that demonstrate an analogy between the island of Malta and the Church, in order to suggest the possibility that such a parallel may be intended by Pynchon. Since Malta is a place name, it should not be imagined that every sentence containing the word will necessarily be linked with a biblical passage. However, when those passages which do appear to be significant are discussed, and the proposed analogy established, the principle of montage takes over to cause us to make the suggested association, i.e., Malta as analogous with the church in certain ways, when we see the word elsewhere in the novel. For example, the first time that Malta is mentioned in V., it is perceived merely as a geographical location; Profane had met Paola, we are told, at "the Metro Bar, on Strait Street. The Gut. Valletta. Malta" (14/6). Only later are other associations made.

The first parallel that is suggested between Malta and the Church is that both have femininity attributed to
them. In V. we are told that "Malta is a noun feminine and proper" (317/298), that Malta is a "matriarchal island" (321/301), that she is a "womb of rock" (317/298), and that she is "a woman passive" (338/317). Elsewhere in V. an allusion to the Church as the bride of Christ has been discussed,191 based on The Song of Solomon in the Bible, and such verses as Revelation 21:9, which identifies the Church as "the bride, the Lamb's wife." The Greek word "ecclesia," that is translated as "church," is also a feminine noun.

While a number of rock-like qualities of Malta that are figurative, e.g., "invincibility," "perseverance," and "tenacity," (325/305) are used to describe Malta, it is a geological fact that the island is a limestone deposit, so that it is literally a rock as well. The Church as a rock is mentioned in numerous passages in the Bible,192 but the most famous, and probably the one most important in church history, is Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,

191 See p. 87 for this discussion.

192 See also such verses as Ps. 18:1-2; 31:3; 61:2; and 1 Cor. 10:4.
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." A number of Christian hymns also employ the rock metaphor for Christ and the Church, as, for example, "Rock of Ages."
The clefts and catacombs in Malta are noted in V. several times, as in the following passage:

Her soul is the Maltese people, who wait—only wait—down in her clefts and catacombs alive and with a numb strength, filled with faith in God His Church.

(V. 317/298)

Like the Maltese, who used their famous catacombs for bomb shelters during the war, the Christians in the early Church took refuge in the Roman catacombs during periods of persecution, because the catacombs were protected by law; they were also used for worship services.\(^{194}\)

One aspect associated with the idea of Malta as female, which is stressed in V., is that of Malta as an "inviolable womb." Although her flesh may be vulnerable, "as the Ark was to Noah, so is the inviolable womb of our

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\(^{193}\) A marginal note refers a reader to John 1:42, in which Peter, or Cephas, is translated as "stone."

\(^{194}\) The early Maltese Christians were also persecuted. According to Bryan Balls, "Christianity almost vanished from Malta during the period of Saracen rule from 870 to 1090, due to persecution, and those who re-established their religion in the 13th century adapted catacombs for their worship. See Balls, p. 54.
Maltese rock to her children (317/298). The invincibility of Malta is paralleled in the biblical description of the indestructibility of the Church. When Jesus establishes his Church, he tells Peter, in Matthew 16:18, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

A final parallel can be drawn in V. between the "characterless facade" (468/449) of public buildings such as churches, representative of the Church, or the "mindlessness" of organized religion, to use Charles Harris' word, and similar qualities of the Maltese:

But we are torn, our grand "Generation of '37." To be merely Maltese: endure almost mindless, without sense of time? Or to think--continuously--in English, to be too aware of war, of time, of all the greys and shadows of love?

(V. 309/289)

Malta as rock in V. conveys a double meaning: it is simultaneously a symbol of inanimateness and of endurance, both negative and positive qualities. In one passage, for example, we read that "manhood on Malta thus became increasingly defined in terms of rockhood," while in the preceding paragraph, we are told that "virility on Malta did not depend on mobility. . . . Malta . . . stood like an imovable rock. . . . The same motives which cause us to populate a dream-street also cause us to apply to a rock human
qualities like 'invincibility,' 'tenacity,' 'perseverance,' etc. More than metaphor, it is delusion. But on the strength of this delusion Malta survived" (325/305). While Pynchon does not himself explicitly extend his parallel to include endurance as a quality of the Church, it is inherent in the metaphor that he uses. One generation after another has observed the "failure" of the Church, but it is still with us. As the soul of Malta "hasn't been touched; cannot be" (317/298), so the Church, the "body of Christ" cannot be destroyed; "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

RACHEL

While other kinds of allusions in V. may seem more impressive or original, names of characters who are associated with the Bible provide the greatest number of single images. This is not surprising, of course, since names function in the text to identify people either in direct address or in impersonal narration. The name of Rachel appears most often (over one hundred times), and significantly so in chapters 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13 and 15; the uneven distribution is probably the result of the double narration in the novel. This fact may also contribute to
its being noticeable when it does appear frequently. In
general Rachel functions in certain rather specific kinds
of roles in \textit{V}., so when her name appears several times on a
page, it is as if a signal light were flashing to remind us
of her role at the moment.

It will be remembered that, more than almost any
other character in \textit{V}., Rachel seems to demonstrate the
quality of caring and of the ability to love, even if the
objects of her love are often perverted; after all, she too,
is a part of the century's condition. When she is shown
demonstrating love, she is more like the Rachel of Jeremiah
31:15, or of Matthew 2:18, who weeps as she hopes for the
return of her children to God. One of the most memorable
examples of Rachel in this regard is found in chapter 1,
where her name is juxtaposed with allusions to Profane's
prodigality, and she is the one who pleads with him to
"Come home" (34/24). Again, when Roony, one of the Whole
Sick Crew, is found drunk on the stoop of St. Patrick's
Cathedral, the police bring him to Rachel's place. When
Rachel, out for a little while, returns, she says:

"Oho. So this is what happens behind my
back. While I was at church, praying for you,
Profane. And the children." . . . And we know
who it was Rachel spent the rest of the day with,
and the night. Holding his head, tucking him in,
touching the beard-stubble and dirt on his face; watching him sleep and the frown lines there relax slowly."

(V. 417/393)

A number of times the name of Esther, who is described as "half victim, half in control." On these occasions, Rachel is almost always helping Esther out of some entanglement: "'Look, I want to help you, is all.' Esther had got tangled in a sheet. Rachel stood helpless in the dark laundry room yelling at her" (352/329-30).

In the Bible Rachel also figures importantly in the book of Genesis as the beautiful and well-favored maiden whom Jacob loves. Since he is poor, Jacob agrees to work seven years for Rachel's father in lieu of money, which he does; however, at the end of the time, Laban deceives Jacob and gives him the younger, more unattractive daughter instead of Rachel. Undaunted, Jacob works seven more years, and finally receives Rachel in marriage. For a time she is barren, but finally God allows her to bear Joseph and then Benjamin, although she dies in childbirth with the latter. In V., the Jacob-Rachel love story of the Bible is twisted into a perverted, and ultimately barren, "relationship" with Profane. For example, on one occasion, Profane tells Rachel that "if I'm hooked on anything, it's you Rachel O."
Rachel perceives that he is spiritually sterile, incapable of giving or of making a commitment, and she replies, "As long as you don't have to give anything, be held to anything, sure: you can talk about love. Anything you have to talk about isn't real" (383/359).

Elsewhere in V., Rachel is always a little apart, and above the rest, who have succumbed to the ravages of the decaying century, suggesting that, amid all that is wrong, in Rachel rests whatever hope remains. Winsome detects her distinctive qualities: "Lately he'd been running for comfort to Rachel. He'd come in a way to depend on it. Her sanity and aloofness from the Crew, her own self-sufficiency drew him" (283/264).

Rarely does one of Pynchon's characters "fit" a role consistently, however, and Rachel is no exception. Paradoxically, she can also be seen as a manifestation of the deterioration in today's world, notably in her almost stereotyped role as a seductive figure. As such, she typified all that has "gone wrong" with the kind of love that Jacob and Rachel shared. Her frequent sexual overtures, almost like automated reactions, not only speak to the sexual inversion that is a major symptom of today's sickness, but demonstrate as well the drift toward
inanimateness, the automaton-like response expected of an object, but not of a responsible human being. Typical of such occasions is her response to Profane after an also typical occasion in which she tries to help him, and finds herself helpless to do so. She "bawled for a while," reflects on the situation, and "kept crying" (like the biblical Rachel who weeps for the lost), then begs him: "Only come home with me, to bed . . ." (381/357). Thus, in creating the character Rachel, Pynchon seems to have turned to the Bible for a figure that provides a model for attributes that demonstrate that loving and caring are important in the world, even a decadent one, but which he can also show as capable of succumbing to a measure of the decadence that marks the twentieth century of which she is a part.

HUGH AND EVAN GODOLPHIN

In terms of quantity, the words which predominate are the names Hugh and Evan Godolphin. Some form of the name appears over one hundred forty times in the novel, which, for two names, is not highly significant in itself. What is noteworthy, however, is the fact that, when the numerous pieces of information obtained from the various contexts and juxtaposed words or phrases are brought...
together, there emerges a strong possibility that the names, which already hint of "God" in the spelling, may be intended as an allusion to God the Father and God the Son. In some cases, the context suggests some merging of the two into a general Deity, much in the same way that "Lord" is used in the Old Testament to represent God the Father, but also becomes in the New Testament, a title for God the Son. Etymologically, this thesis is supportable in the names "Hugh," meaning "spirit" or "soul," and "Evan," short for "evangel."

It is true that a reader may perceive more "ungodliness" in the Godolphins than otherwise on a surface reading of V. In this regard, Robert Golden makes a relevant comment:

Pynchon allows himself no escape from his vision of decadence. He is consistent enough to admit that his own novel must be part and parcel of this pervasive decadence.195

What is often observed is that Pynchon provides just enough information to make a "connection," and then twists or distorts the image so as to parody or undermine the connection. Thus, some of the references affirm attributes of the

Godhead by focusing on concepts that are the very opposite of what we associate with God. In montage, however, all of the inferences and connotations are retained, and an underlying picture can be perceived beneath an often distractive surface. Furthermore, the other representations of the Godolphins, or of other characters, for that matter, are not cancelled out; rather, the multiplicity of impressions allowed is an integral part of the message of the novel. 

Stated more simply, we might think of the Godolphins as a part of Pynchon's montage by posing some questions: How would one begin to put the Godhead in a picture, without its being obvious, since in the twentieth century God has apparently disappeared, and still preserve a surface "story" that "makes sense"? How does one tuck in tidbits of the life of Christ that could be recognized if one looks below the surface deeply enough and, at the same time, distort it enough to simultaneously convey a sense of the perversion of religion and loss of faith that pervades the present age? Pynchon seems to have found a way to do precisely this, and the montage method enables him to do what he finds words per se inadequate to do. As Wittgenstein notes in his closing propositions: "There are indeed things
that cannot be put into words. They make themselves mani-
fest." Since the references to the Godolphins that sug-
gest biblical associations are highly elusive at best, I
have chosen to simply present them as they appear in the
text of V., and allow the cinematic method to work toward
a unified picture. As Eisenstein explains:

The juxtaposition of these partial details
. . . calls to life and forces into the light that
general quality in which each detail has partici-
pated and which binds together all the details
into a whole, namely, into that generalized image,
wherein the creator, followed by the spectator,
experiences the theme.197

The first "shot" is of Evan Godolphin, Hugh's son,
who is a "liaison officer in his middle thirties" (98/85).
The word "liaison," or go-between, suggests John 14:6:
". . . no man cometh to the Father but by me." The age in
the thirties is in accord with Old Testament law in Numbers
4 regarding the work of the tabernacle being done by those
who are between thirty and fifty, that is fulfilled when
Jesus embarks upon his public ministry at "about thirty

196Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Lollico-
Philosophicus, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness

197Eisenstein, Film Sense, p. 11.
The next "frame" shows Evan Godolphin "stop to pick a lone poppy, ... and insert it into one faultless lapel" (98/86). The word "lone," in the presence of Evan (evangel) GODolphin, a man in his thirties, recalls to one familiar with the life of Christ several instances in which Jesus turned away from a crowd in order to minister to a single person, usually an alienated, lonely person in need, or taught, in parables of caring for the individual. Notable are the story of the lost sheep in Matthew 18:12, in which the good shepherd leaves the "ninety and nine" to seek the one that has gone astray; and the time when Jesus is in a crowd in Jericho and perceives that the despised tax collector Zacchaeus needs to talk with him. Jesus comes to the sycamore tree which Zacchaeus has climbed and tells him to come down so he can go home with him (Luke 19:1-9). The word "faultless" implies perfection, the distinctive character of God, as noted in Matthew 6:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

We learn in the next scene that Godolphin praises Schoenmaker sometimes with a "well done" for taking care of his responsibilities, and that there is a "latent sense of death" between them (98/86). A student of the Bible
may be reminded of the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:21, when Jesus says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . . ." As John Franklin Carter notes, Jesus "had as many as five times made statements in which we can see a reference to his death, though the people who heard them did not so understand them."

Following immediately is a scene in which Evan Godolphin is severely injured in a plane crash: "Godolphin would live, they decided. But his face would have to be rebuilt" (98/86). Since the crash occurs in 1918, at the time of World War I, the implication is that the old "face" is no longer usable; a new concept of God would be needed if he is to have a part in a changed world at all. A few pages later, the "latent sense of death" is repeated in a scene in which Godolphin "talked like a man under death sentence" (100/88). Here, the repetition of the sense of death that Godolphin feels helps to remind us of the parallel in Jesus' life; it speaks also to the condition of the times, in which man has a growing sense of inanimateness.

The name of Godolphin appears again in chapter 7, and we learn that Evan, "for as long as he could remember

. . . had labored beneath the shadow of Captain Hugh, . . . resisting any compulsion to glory which the name Godolphin might have implied for himself" (156/142). This information sounds a familiar note with regard to several verses, one of which is John 15:8, in which Jesus says: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples."

Having received a note signed "FATHER," and referring to Vheissu, Evan reflects on the message and the fact that "it was something which, to his knowledge, Evan alone shared with his father . . ." (157/143). The information accumulated thus far, and the suggestion that Vheissu is to be associated with an ultimate Nothing, elicits the idea that Pynchon is representing an inversion of an ultimate place of Life (Heaven). If such be the case, then an intuitive leap can be made to suggest that the Godolphins, Father and Son, are indeed the only ones who share an "inside" knowledge of the place.

Occasionally Pynchon goes out of his way to be indirect in linking a character with a biblical figure. For example, one allusion that associates Godolphin with God is likely to be recognized only by a reader familiar with James Joyce's Portrait, in which Joyce compares the artist
with God, who "remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails." Pynchon's parody of Joyce follows Victoria Wren's questioning of Godolphin:

The old man began to bite at his nails; slowly and methodically, using the top central and lower lateral incisors to make minute cuts along a perfect arc-segment. "You have discovered something about them," she pleaded. . . . Snip, snip. The rain fell off, stopped. . . . "What sort of world is it where there isn't at least one person you can turn to if you're in danger?" Snip, snip. No answer. . . . The girl continued to harangue old Godolphin as he completed his right hand and switched to his left. Overhead the sky began to darken.

(V. 172-73/157)

By using such a method, Pynchon succeeds simultaneously in associating Godolphin with God, and in depicting the twentieth-century condition in which God is "refined out of existence" and is indifferent to man's need.

If, and only if, the foregoing fragments have by now confirmed the suspicion that Godolphin represents both a manifestation of God and of His realization that he has been rejected by the twentieth century, do some of the following bits of information "fit." We see, in succession, several

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James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man, ed. Chester G. Anderson (New York: The Viking Press, 1968.)
statements that seem to have an underlying message associated with the Godhead. "He will only be a matter of time (183/168), says Hugh Godolphin to his own image, and as if thinking of hastening the end, he examines some shears, and reflects that "the ripple edges would make a nasty wound," but, looking at himself in a mirror, says, "No, Not yet." Underneath the surface "story," there is a hint of Jesus realizing that the end is not far off, of his contemplating the "wounds" of what, in the Bible, are the iron spikes of crucifixion. John 7:6, in which Jesus says "My time is not yet come," regarding his approaching death, comes to mind in the presence of the other details.

Shortly, another group of words appears that seems to confirm our suspicions. Godolphin, whose "life returned to him all at once" (184/169), makes an escape "down a narrow twisting side street," at the end of which he begins to climb a trellis, and "young rose-thorns" prick his hands (185/170). Mental associations can be made with the sustaining strength in the face of death that Jesus receives in his time of prayer in the garden of Gethsemane,^{200}

^{200}See John 16:23: "... be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." This is followed by the words, "Father, the hour is come."
shortly before the events leading to his crucifixion, and a "crown of thorns" of John 19:1 that the soldiers plait and put on his head in mockery before his trial begins. Whereas Jesus, destined to a death that he does not avoid by taking a "back road" in Gethsemene to lose the soldiers, V.'s Godolphin says that "he'd be let down if there weren't a dash over the rooftops" (185/170). While Pynchon appears to be having fun in the comic version of espionage, he is also picturing an established custom in New Testament times, of using a roof as a way of escape in time of evil. Fred H. Wight explains that "in a day when escape from evil was necessary, the inhabitants of villages in Christ's time could do so by going from roof to roof," and the custom is alluded to at least three times in the New Testament.

The next scene in V., as in the biblical account of the life of Jesus, introduces the word "Judas," which elicits an almost universal association, in the Christian world, with betrayal. As was noted in a discussion of the references to the Judas tree, Pynchon parodies, with his "two


202 See pp. 156-57 for discussion of the Judas tree.
hundred lire" (186/171), even the detail of the money which Judas receives for betrayed Jesus. A parallel continues when Signor Mantissa approaches Godolphin and says: "You are in trouble. Of course. You need not even have asked. If you had come along even without a word I would have slain the barge keeper at his first protest" (187/171). Likewise, in an effort to defend Jesus when the disciples see that Jesus is about to be taken, Luke 22:50 says that "one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear." Evan Godolphin is also taken to prison for a time, and after his release, he meets Victoria, and they have a brief conversation in which, at one point, "Evan hung his head, sheepish" (200/184), a playful reminder of Jesus as the sacrificial Lamb of God, a theme that is dealt with seriously elsewhere in V.

There follows another series of vague references to Vheissu in which V. (as Victoria) and Godolphin figure. She says that she has been waiting for him "because you are his son" (200/184), referring to Hugh Godolphin, and speaks of a "radiance" that may be found only in Vheissu. Several

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203 See Matt. 26:15, in which Judas says, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him to you? And they covenantanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."
scenes later, Godolphin reveals to Mantissa that in Vheissu, "It was Nothing I saw" (204/188), and has him promise not to reveal the secret: "I haven't much time left. You must never tell anyone" (205/189). He too speaks of a "strange light," such as is associated elsewhere in V with a mystical presence in Malta, and suggests Jesus' transfiguration experience. As Godolphin's reflection on Vheissu continues, he states that the apparent planting of a spider monkey at the Pole was mockery:

A mockery, you see: a mockery of life, planted where everything but Hugh Godolphin was inanimate. With of course the implication... It did tell me the truth about them. If Eden was the creation of God, God only knows what evil created Vheissu.

(V. 206/188-89)

While the meaning of the entire passage in V is elusive, Pynchon's posing Vheissu as an opposite pole to Eden, created by God, seems, finally, somehow to relate Godolphin's secret and "inside" knowledge of Vheissu to a realization that in the present-day world he is unrecognized and unacknowledged, and that Vheissu is indeed a "mockery of life," since its Nothingness, a void, has replaced the God of life.

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204 See pp. 138-40 and 230-32 for this discussion.
When all the pieces in which the Godolphins figure have been gathered, a veritable life sketch of Christ emerges, if we can get beneath the surface "story" to find it. Having done so, it seems possible to suggest one final allusion that somehow "makes sense" now only after having looked at all the other scenes that make up the montage. The epilogue is dated 1919, and is therefore a "flash-back" in terms of chronology. Thus, we need to turn in our thinking back to the post-World War I period, and to the year after Evan Godolphin has a plane crash and receives severe facial injuries. In the light of all that has been related between pages 98/85-6 and the final page of V., it now seems possible to fit the final "piece" into Pynchon's montage:

   But as the xebec was passing St. Elmo . . . . a shining Benz was observed to pull up . . . . and a black-liveried driver with a mutilated face to come to the harbor's edge and gaze out at the ship. After a moment he raised his hand; waved with a curiously sentimental feminine motion of the wrist . . . . He was crying.

   (V., 492/463)

The "mutilated face," in funereal black, who is now Victoria's "servant" (488/459), we are told, is crying.

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205 See Matt. 20:27: "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
Given the hundreds of pieces that have already been put into place as background, it seems reasonable to relate the tears of Evan Godolphin to those of Jesus, as recorded in Luke 19:41-42, when he weeps over the city of Jerusalem, i.e., his people, who have rejected him:

    And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

Stencil is still searching for an identity he will never find; the clue to his "peace," like that of twentieth-century man, is "hid from his eyes." Here the story-line of Stencil and Profane converge: as each goes to a watery grave. Pynchon does not--no, cannot--reveal what those waters lead to. But he leaves all possibilities open.
Chapter 3

THE MONTAGE METHOD IN GRAVITY'S RAINBOW

A decade separates Thomas Pynchon's most recent novel, *Gravity's Rainbow*, from *V.* During the intervening years a short novel, *The Crying of Lot 49*, was published. While the middle novel echoes themes found in one or both of the longer works, so that in many ways, Pynchon can justly be described as a "homo unius libri,"¹ the structural method is noticeably different from that of *V.* The appearance of *Gravity's Rainbow* in 1973, however, proves to be a return, on a grand scale, to the method employed in the creation of *V.* In fact, Pynchon's conscious use of the cinematic method is overtly present in such things as the chapter divisions, which are in the form of a series of squares highly suggestive of the sprocket holes in a roll of film. That the novelist had the montage method in mind as he wrote *Gravity's Rainbow* is hinted in the way that he uses

the word "montage" at one point in the text: "So as the Gaucho sings his story unfolds--a montage of his early life on the estancia."\(^2\) Although the words are adapted to the immediate context of the narrative, in another place Pynchon echoes the tone of a passage from Sergei Eisenstein which I have quoted earlier,\(^3\) regarding the use of the montage method: "What happens when paranoid meets paranoid? ... The two patterns create a third: a moiré, a new world ..." (GR 395). Moiré, of course, is a familiar word in the textile industry. It refers to an effect achieved when fabric is passed between engraved cylinders so that a design is produced which appears to combine a solid fabric with cloth having a wavy or watered pattern; the result is a third pattern that is distinct, yet which contains both the solid and patterned elements. As Pynchon uses the analogy with the paranoid, he identifies the contemporary world situation in which the solipsist finds himself unable to avoid

\(^2\)Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow* (New York: Viking Press, 1973), p. 387. All subsequent quotations from *Gravity's Rainbow* are from this edition and are indicated within the text in the following manner: (GR 000).

\(^3\)See p. 18 above.
"connections" with other alienated individuals, but, at the same time, he remains alone and capable of knowing only himself. It is this bringing together of often disparate elements that Pynchon sees as contributing to a composite picture of the twentieth-century world that is at the heart of *Gravity's Rainbow*.

During the seven years of silence between *Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow*, Pynchon has glimpsed a new vision that enables him to create a giant new montage that focuses from a different angle on the same world inhabited by the figures in *V.*. a world which, on the face of it, seems helpless to avert certain destruction. It is as if Pynchon entertains some slender hope of moving beyond the earlier picture of the twentieth century in which "nothing was settled." To the new montage the novelist brings many of the old materials, among them the Bible, as substantial sources of allusions. Furthermore, a large majority of the allusions in *Gravity's Rainbow* are to the same biblical topics that are found in *V.*. Used in different contexts, and with different wording in some cases, however, the emergent montage is by no means a carbon copy of *V.*. It is, rather, a new creation with its own message, a message which, finally, provides a more conclusive picture than
does the earlier montage. Rather than studying all of the Christian allusions in the novel, as I attempted to do in Chapter 2, I shall adopt a different method. Using representative examples from some ten types of allusions that are common to *V.* and *Gravity's Rainbow*, I hope to demonstrate that Pynchon uses the Bible in *Gravity's Rainbow* as a source for pieces of a montage that supersedes *V.* The method of montage works to picture a waning century in which man, though doomed to physical destruction, is not without hope that his health will lead to some new knowledge that he is powerless to obtain as an earthbound, finite, creature.

Just as the title of the opening chapter in *V.* provides a point of contrast for the inherent significance of the first biblical allusion that Pynchon uses in that novel,\(^4\) so in *Gravity's Rainbow*, the epigraph to Part 1 is an integral part of the novel's text. Prior to the opening words of the novel per se, a quotation from the late rocket engineer Wernher von Braun is given:

> Nature does not know extinction; all it knows is transformation. Everything science has taught me, and continues to teach me, strengthens my belief

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\(^4\)See pp. 40-41 for a discussion of an allusion to Christmas which is juxtaposed with the title of the first chapter.
in the continuity of our spiritual existence after death.

The words of Von Braun themselves contain obvious biblical overtones in their inference of a belief in immortality; more than that, however, the passage identifies a thematic concern that pervades the entire novel, and furnishes a backdrop against which numerous allusions, biblical and otherwise, will be focused. On a very broad scale, the epigraph relates to and influences the overall effect of allusions having to do with immortality or the lack of it, such as God as creator and destroyer, eternal life, the Elect, death and rebirth, and "the gates of that Other Kingdom," to name only a few.

The category of allusions to religious holidays is also common to V. and Gravity's Rainbow. Christmas is referred to in some way at least nine times in V.; in Gravity's Rainbow, however, not only does it appear much more frequently, but with more qualitative significance. To be sure, the main uses of "Christmas" in V. are repeated in Gravity's Rainbow. The contrast between secular observance and the original religious meaning is seen in such passages as "Christmas seen . . . from the vantage of children and not of sheep huddled . . . on their bare hillside, so bleached by the Star's awful radiance" (GR 58). The
biblical reference that is contrasted with the idea of the child who thinks of Christmas in terms of gifts and Santa Claus rather than of Christ, is to Luke 2:8-9, which records the account of the angel's appearance to the shepherds with the message of Jesus' birth. The abbreviated form of Christmas used in *V.* reappears in *Gravity's Rainbow* in references to "Xmas shopping" and "Xmas present," suggesting, as it does in the earlier novel, Christmas with Christ taken out, to those who are not aware that the Greek letter "X" stands for the first letter of *Christos*. Again, the antithesis inherent in war and peace is hinted in a reference such as "the seventh Christmas of the war" (GR 126), and is similar to the "Christmas of blood" described in *V.* Closely related to the concept of war and peace is the idea of birth and death, and Pynchon alludes to Christmas in this respect as well. To a patient at "The White Visitation," the Rundstedt offensive of World War II, in which thousands of Germans died, "gave ... a new lease on life--'a beautiful Christmas gift,' he confessed to the resident on his ward, 'it's a season of birth, of fresh beginnings'" (GR 131). Elsewhere, Christmas represents perfect harmony in contrast to randomness:
Then for another moment it seems that all the Christmas bells in the creation are about to join in chorus—that all their random pealing will be, this one time, coordinated, in harmony, present with tidings of explicit comfort, feasible joy.

(Gr 70)

This latter clause seems to refer once more to the angel's announcement to the shepherds recorded in Luke 2:10, "... behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." The word "comfort" further suggests that Pynchon is also thinking of Sir John Stainer's adaptation of the sixteenth-century Christmas carol "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," in which the word "comfort," not used in the Bible, is contained in the chorus in the phrase "O tidings of comfort and joy." In addition to the carol suggested above, Pynchon follows his plan in V. by including another Christmas carol in Gravity's Rainbow. Tantivy refers to "a naughty version of 'Silent Night'" (Gr 19) in describing Slothrop's activities, suggesting a perversion of the "holy" night on which the birth of Christ the Savior takes place.

In Gravity's Rainbow, the isolated allusions to Christmas are further extended to include several clusters of allusions to biblical sources that clearly relate to the story of the nativity of Christ, but not to the holiday
itself. For example, an allusion is made to the biblical account in Matthew 2 of the visit of the wise men to pay homage to the child that has been born "King of the Jews." In Matthew 2:11 we read that "when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Pynchon changes the passage to read: "Bring to the serai gifts of tungsten, cordite, high octane?" (GR 131). It takes little investigation to discover that these are materials used in a rocket. In such a mingling of religious and scientific terminology, one senses that the allusion is pregnant with meaning that goes beyond the level of mere word play. Is man willing to acknowledge an unseen source of control with gifts that could result in his destruction? At the point in the novel in which the above passage occurs, Pynchon's characters are not sure. Paranoia results, for being uncertain whether they are being controlled, and if so, by what power, they are equally uncertain whether to try to escape that control, and if so, how to accomplish it. And, suppose one escapes control only to discover that the source of control was also the source of life? In Christian theology, the gifts of gold,
frankincense, and myrrh symbolize Christ's lordship, priesthood, and sacrificial death, respectively. In rocket engineering tungsten carbide cores give great strength and make armor-piercing shells effective; cordite, which is about one-third nitroglycerin, is used for its propelling powers; and high octane provides fuel that makes possible high-altitude firing. Combined, the elements represent power, destruction, and death. It is a mechanical power that metes out meaningless death in a secular world, not a redemptive and saving power.

Several other times in Gravity's Rainbow, biblical allusions are made to passages that are related to the larger Christmas story, i.e., the nativity, baby Jesus, Herod, and the like. One example will suffice. In the context of grim descriptions of war in the days of the Battle of the Bulge, a parallel is drawn between the black-market sales of information and of sex, "charging whatever the traffic will bear," and the biblical account of the tax registration required by Caesar Augustus as recorded in Luke 2. Since everyone has to return to his native city

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to register, many people must travel long distances and stay wherever they can find accommodations. Thus, the innkeepers, Pynchon surmises, are "naturally delighted with this registration thing," since it undoubtedly means increased profits. Continuing his parody of Christ's nativity, Pynchon asks, "What kind of a world is it . . . for a baby to come in tippin' those Toledos at 7 pounds 8 ounces thinkin' he's gonna redeem it, why, he oughta have his head examined. . . ." For an instant, however, there follows one of the sober "magic" moments that occasionally appear in Pynchon's novels.6

But on the way home tonight, you wish you'd picked him up, held him a bit. Just held him, very close to your heart. . . . As if it were you who could, somehow, save him. For the moment not caring who you're supposed to be registered as. For the moment anyway, no longer who the Caesars say you are.

(GR 135-36)

The "spell" is soon broken, but not before the allusion has registered in our consciousness the longing of a war-weary world for a king of love who will save man from meaningless death and destruction.

6See pp. 48 and 141-42 where similar "magic" moments in V. are described.
In addition to Christmas, *Gravity's Rainbow* contains an allusion that is related to the Easter holiday. While references to Lent and Ash Wednesday are found in *V.*, Pynchon refers to Palm Sunday in the later novel. While Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and ends forty days later, excluding Sundays, on Easter; Palm Sunday begins a week before Easter, and the week is designated Holy Week. Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on an ass, as recorded in John 12:12-15, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 that "thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." As the week progresses, Jesus is betrayed by Judas Iscariot, brought to trial, and condemned to die by crucifixion. For three days He is in a tomb, and the week culminates, on Easter Sunday, with Jesus' resurrection, according to synoptic gospel accounts. In a real sense, Palm Sunday marks the beginning of events that will bring to an end Jesus' earthly existence. Pynchon seems to find a parallel in this "beginning of the end" of Jesus' life with the events of World War II. The Lubeck raid is described as "the next-to-last step London took before her submission, . . . because sending the RAF to make a terror raid against civilian Lubeck . . .
brought the rockets hard and screaming, the A-4's . . . a bit sooner . . ." (GR 215).

Another category of Bible-related allusions that Pynchon uses both in *V.* and in *Gravity's Rainbow* is that of Christian hymns. In *V.*, the subjects treated include Christ as victim, the wrath of God and his final Judgment, and the Christian as a spiritual soldier. *Gravity's Rainbow*, however, first uses two references to an early German carol, "In Dulci Jubilo," on the nativity of Jesus:

In Dulci jubilo  
Nun singet und seid froh!  
Leit in praesepio,  
Leuchtet vor die Sonne  
Matris in gremio.  
Alpha es et 0.  

A few pages later the opening lines of the second stanza of the carol appear following the reference to the baby Jesus quoted above: "O Jesu parvule, /Nach dir ist mir so

7Italics are Pynchon's. A nineteenth-century adaptation of the carol appears in the *New Catholic Hymnal*, comp. and ed. Anthony Petti and Geoffrey Laycock (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), p. 123. The German portions have been translated into English as follows:

In dulci jubilo, Let us our homage show,  
Our delight and pleasure Lies in praesepio,  
Our sunshine and our treasure, Matris in gremio,  
Alpha es et 0, Alpha es et 0.
This fragment of song expressing man's longing for a master to whom homage can be paid is juxtaposed with a stark passage that bespeaks only alienation on a "terrible night" in which man must find his own way to a path "you must create by yourself, alone in the dark" (GR 136). The import of the vivid contrast works to portray the vast gulf that separates the Christian tradition of the past with the alienation of contemporary man "whether you want it or not."

Perhaps one of the most significant uses of an allusion to a Christian hymn based on a biblical source in Gravity's Rainbow is found in a discussion of Enzian's name. "Enzian knows that he is being used for his name. The name has some magic. . . . Can his name, can 'Enzian' break their power? Can his name prevail?" (GR 321). It seems to be more than coincidence that this passage resembles, both in tone and in content, an early hymn written by Charles Wesley, brother of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.  

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8 In the later English version, the line is rendered, "O Jesus parvule, /I long for you each day." See the New Catholic Hymnal, p. 123.

9 Elsewhere in Gravity's Rainbow, Pynchon makes other references to Methodist theology.
The final stanza of the hymn, "O For a Thousand Tongues," states:

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.¹⁰

The scriptural bases for the hymn are the gospel accounts of the prophecy of Jesus' birth and its fulfillment as recorded in Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Early in the novel we are told that Captain Blicero, "in some sentimental overflow, some precognition, gave his African boy the name 'Enzian'" . . . (GR 101). Following the allusion to the power of Enzian's name, the point is made that "though the murderers in blue came down again and again, each time, somehow, Enzian was passed over" (GR 323).

The full significance of the character Enzian has been discussed by various critics, holding varying views. Scott Simmons, for one, suggests that "Enzian would seem

to be something of a holy man were it not that he has too much self-mockery to believe it. . . ."11 Whatever speculations we may make, the text of Gravity's Rainbow makes it clear enough that Enzian is somehow "special"; it is intimated that his being spared, "passed over," like the children of Israel when the Egyptians are smitten,12 is for some high purpose. The first reference to the Herero engineer of the 00001 rocket is juxtaposed with an image of God as "creator and destroyer, the epitome of "all sets of opposites brought together" (GR 100). In a real sense, in the novel Enzian is himself a creator--of the rocket, and destroyer--of himself, presumably, when the 00001 rocket is launched. Elsewhere Enzian is seen as being visited by a transcendent spirit.13 At one point, Pynchon refers to a spot where "tradition sez Enzian had his Illumination" (GR 297). At another point, we are told that often "Enzian will wake for no reason. Was it really Him, pierced Jesus,


12See Exod. 12 for an account of the passover. See also pp. 53-54 for a discussion of this allusion in V.

13Compare references in V. (447/421 and 450/424) that seem to allude to the transfiguration experience of Jesus. See also pp. 230-32 of this study for a discussion of the allusion.
who came to lean over you?" (GR 324). Enzian, like Jesus, seems to be aware of his role as a savior. "What Enzian wants to create will have no history. . . . It will never need a design change. The Erdschweinhohle will not be bound, like the Rocket, to time. The people will find the Center again . . ." (GR 318). This Eliotic passage suggests Enzian as the means by which contact with a Higher power is to be re-established, much as Jesus is when he says, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."\footnote{John 14:6.} As a black-skinned Herero, Enzian is grouped with the Preterite, the non-Elect, but he is capable of transcending his condition. When Katje tells him that there has been a failure in the light, Enzian reassures her that "there are things to hold to. None of it may look real, but some of it is" (GR 659). Finally, we are told that the white Anubis has gone on to salvation, leaving the preterite behind:

Back here, in her wake, are the preterite. . . . Better here with the swimming debris Thanatz . . . . ask that Oberst Enzian, he knows (there is a key, among the wastes of the World . . . and it won't be found on board the white Anubis because they throw everything of value over the side).

The "key" presumably has to do with a willing submission to death in the belief that it is the only hope for ultimate
life and salvation, a salvation which, finally, awaits those who know the true meaning of being "despised and rejected," like the Christ and the Herero, and of being humble, i.e., of identifying with the King whose triumphant entry is made on a lowly donkey. Thus, the juxtaposition of Enzian, a figure "in love with death," with biblical allusions that relate Enzian with Christ, reveals a picture of death--true; but, it is an efficacious death that is not morbid; it is rather a death without sting, a victorious death, available to those who have been "passed over" in this world.

Again, in a playful reference, Pynchon makes use of what is apparently a parody of a hymn based on a Bible verse when he has Brigadier Pudding sing:

Wash me in the water
That you wash your dirty daughter,
And I shall be whiter than the whitewash on the wall. . . .

(GR 231)

This allusion can be traced to the verse "Purge me with Hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."\(^{15}\) The verse has also been adapted for

\(^{15}\) Psalms 51:7.
use in a hymn by James Nicholson entitled "Whiter than Snow," which has been included in a number of Protestant hymnals for many years.\textsuperscript{16} Although written in a light vein, the context in which the allusion appears in the novel suggests the idea that, as Brigadier Pudding enters D Wing (D for death?) of the hospital, he may be subconsciously hoping that he will be "clean" and prepared for his own death when it comes.

In contrast to allusions to biblical passages which are clearly identifiable, Pynchon often makes references, in \textit{Gravity's Rainbow} as well as in \textit{V.}, which are just as clearly biblical in source, but which justifiably can be attributed to one passage as easily as to another. Such a case in point is that of a reference to "... memorizing chapter and verse the structures of Arks, Temples, Visionary Thrones--all the materials and dimensions" (GR 241). Does Pynchon refer to God's instructions to Moses for the construction of an ark for the tabernacle,\textsuperscript{17} or to God's instructions to Noah for the building of an ark in order

\textsuperscript{16} For example, see \textit{The Broadman Hymnal}, ed. B. B. McKinney (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1940), p. 9.

\textsuperscript{17} Exod. 25:10.
to escape destruction by flood?\textsuperscript{18} Is the novelist thinking of the structural dimensions of Solomon's Temple,\textsuperscript{19} or of the temple completed in 516 B.C.?\textsuperscript{20} Is the Throne that of King Solomon or of one described in the fourth chapter of Revelation? Fortunately, knowing the exact source is not essential for appreciating the significance of the allusion. What is more important is seeing the allusion to memorizing Bible chapters and verses used beside a reference to a German parts list containing a number, 0011-5565/43, which Tyrone Slothrop has memorized and which he recognizes as the original contract number for the A-4 rocket. The Bible references above all presuppose the certainty of a God who directs the building; the technological reference also identifies an origin, a source of directions for constructing the rocket. Taken by itself, the biblical allusion signifies little; it is only as it is placed next to another, as part of a montage, in the mainstream of the novel text, that it assumes significance in the development

\textsuperscript{18} Gen. 6:15-16.

\textsuperscript{19} 1 Kings 6.

of the theme of control that is of overriding importance in *Gravity's Rainbow*.

A number of references are made in *Gravity's Rainbow* to terms which may be readily associated with the Bible, but which are not contained, as such, in the Bible. At least two of these references are also used in *V.*, the term "mezuzah" and the phrase "outward and visible." While the mezuzah is referred to in passages which are primarily of a parodic tone in *V.*, the word appears in *Gravity's Rainbow* as a serious reference when Pynchon identifies the mezuzah as something of a talisman representing "safe passage through the night" (GR 563). A student of the Bible is likely to recall immediately the historical source of the mezuzah, found in the Exodus account of the institution of the passover.\(^{21}\) Since the word "mezuzah" is linked by Pynchon with the Hindu or Buddhist terms "mandala" and "mantia," and is in close proximity to a reference to the configuration of the rocket, which "made a cross, another mandala" (GR 363), the religious associations of the word are elicited immediately. Thus, the word serves in the montage as a reminder of God's protection of his people in

\(^{21}\)See Exod. 12:11-14.
bygone days, and implies that man still dares to hope for some mystical intervention by a higher Power in his behalf, even if there is little ostensible evidence to justify that hope in today's world.

The other example, that of the phrase "outward and visible sign," seems to be a favorite with Pynchon. In my discussion of its use in V.\(^{22}\) I noted that the source is the Catechism of the Episcopal church, and is part of a definition of the Sacrament. Pynchon lifts the expression out of context in V. to suggest the sexual decadence of Victoria Wren, while in Gravity's Rainbow he borrows the term to refer to the city as an "outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual illness or health" (GR 372) in one place, and to link the concept to Puritanism in another:

In America, Lyle Bland and his psychologists had figures, expert testimony and money (money in the Puritan sense—an outward and visible O.K. on their intentions) to tip the Discovery of Guilt at the cusp between scientific theory and fact.

(GR 652)

In the main, Pynchon uses the religious expression "outward and visible" as if it were a convenient cliche for what could be expressed readily using such ordinary words as

\(^{22}\)See p. 153 of this study.
"evidence." He does not choose to do so, however. Rather, the repeated use of the religiously oriented expression points to the word choice as being deliberate, possibly for the purpose of drawing a contrast between the nature of the "outward and visible sign" of the Sacrament as indicative of man's joyful faith in God over against that of the "City Sacramental," the hub of twentieth century life, as foreboding an irreversible spiritual illness.

In addition to extrabiblical terms important to religious orthodoxy, another category of allusions shared by V. and Gravity's Rainbow is that of doctrines explicitly named in the Bible, the most important of which is Election. In both novels the biblical concept of a small group chosen to the exclusion of another is thematically important. The baffling question of why God should create a "chosen" group, and then consign it to failure is at the heart of a pervasive thread that runs throughout the novels. In Gravity's Rainbow the analogy of the now extinct dodo bird and the "passed-over" of the world is drawn:

But if they were chosen to come to Mauritius, why had they also been chosen to fail, and leave? Is that a choosing, or is it a passing over? Are they Elect, or are they Preterite, and doomed as dodos?

(GR 110)
Stated in terms of modern history, the question is pertinent to the Jewish race, once chosen by God, but later rejected, according to the Bible, and to such minority groups as the Hereros, whose creation seems meaningless if they survive for a time only to be virtually exterminated by other groups for no ostensible purpose. To be a victim of preterition is incomprehensible enough, but to note the nature of the Elect, who supersede the "passed-over," is puzzling indeed, Pynchon seems to say. If the so-called Elect of today's world, characterized by decadence and a perversion of the qualities that characterize the Elect described in the Bible, are examples of the Elect whom God has foreordained for salvation, then, wherein lies the advantage of being "chosen"? The qualities of humility and fortitude exemplified by many of the rejected of the world seem more deserving of grace than does a failed Church. Such reasoning introduces a faint but persistent ray of hope that, somehow, beyond the limits of time and space in which present-day man is imprisoned, the question of the fate of a spiritually impoverished Elect and a passed-over segment of creation will be reconciled. Thus, the allusion to the Elect in Pynchon's montage registers the degree to
which the Church, predetermined by God for salvation, has failed, in recent days, to fulfill its mission.

Another use of the Bible as a source for montage pieces by Pynchon in both V. and Gravity's Rainbow is in the area of characters and places. One example of each will demonstrate the point. In somewhat the same way that Job is mentioned a single time in V., and is logically associated with the schlemihlhood of Profane, in Gravity's Rainbow, one lone reference is made to a character whose name, we are told, is Jeremiah ("Merciful") Evans, "the well-known political informer from Pembroke" (GR 541). Just as the mention of the name Job elicits certain connotations regarding the concept of the victim that is a highly significant one in V., so the mention of the name Jeremiah, to a reader familiar with the Bible, activates certain associations with the biblical character that go beyond the mere name of a very minor character in Gravity's Rainbow. Pynchon's use of the appositive "Merciful" to identify Jeremiah tends to support the association of the name with the biblical prophet; otherwise, the name could have been just a rather "old-fashioned" one chosen more or less at random. Jeremiah, along with Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, is identified by biblical scholars as one of four
"major" prophets in the Bible; he lived the latter part of the seventh century and the first part of the sixth century before Christ. According to H. I. Hester, the prophet's active ministry of some forty years dates about 625-585 B.C., the last years of the kingdom of Judah and the early part of the Babylonian captivity. A common misconception about prophets construes them to be some kind of "other-worldly" soothsayers, so to speak. The fact is, however, that the prophet was a powerful leader of religious, social, and even political life in Old Testament history. He was the recipient of a vital message which he felt compelled to declare to the people. Thus, the description of Pynchon's Jeremiah as a "well-known political informer" is, to a large degree, in character with the biblical prophet. In the novel _per se_, of course, the allusion seems trivial; however, as a piece in Pynchon's encyclopedic narrative, the connotations evoked by the name are to the point in making the message of the novel complete. That is to say, the prophet mingles promises with rebukes, and sets before the people a prospect of salvation on the condition of moral

regeneration, thus providing a basis for hope predicated on man's personal responsibility. While Pynchon's novels do not seem to offer much hope for a mass change of heart that will avert man's trend toward destruction, he does not excuse the individual from his need to do what he can to ward off catastrophe. Charles B. Harris makes the point well in this regard when he quotes from Norbert Weiner's The Human Use of Human Beings:

> In a very real sense we are shipwrecked passengers on a doomed planet. Yet even in a shipwreck, human decencies and human values do not necessarily vanish, and we must make the most of them. We shall go down, but let it be in a manner to which we may look forward as worthy of our dignity.24

Or, as Pynchon puts it, "Keep cool, but care" (V. 366/343, 369/345); we must continue "painting the side of a sinking ship" (V. 460/433). In a real sense, then, Jeremiah's message urging each individual to be responsible for doing his bit toward turning the tide of encroaching moral degeneracy has filtered down through the centuries to modern man, to take its place in Pynchon's literary portrait of a century in need of his prophetic message.

24See Charles B. Harris, p. 91.
An example of the category of allusions to biblical places in Pynchon's novels is that of Armageddon. While the site of the final battle between the forces of Good and Evil is alluded to three times in V., it appears only once in Gravity's Rainbow. Appropriately, the word is juxtaposed with a reference to "South America burned to cinders, the sky over New York glowing purple with the new all-sovereign death ray . . ." (GR 143). The picture of annihilation in the modern world is reinforced by the appearance of the word Armageddon, which signifies the final destruction of Evil at the end of time as we know it. Equally present in the allusion, however, is the vision of a final victory of the forces of Good. Thus, the allusion works to temper the picture of the total destruction in the passage, and to hint of some transcendent victory to be gained out of the imminent devastation that appears to confront the world.

Yet another category of allusions shared by V. and Gravity's Rainbow is that of allusions to Christian symbols. In V., as I noted, Pynchon refers to the Southern Cross;\(^{25}\) in Gravity's Rainbow the novelist alludes to the swastika.

\(^{25}\)See p. 185 of this study for a discussion of the allusion.
The context is that of a description of the rocket's launch site:

The Bodenplatte--concrete plate laid over strips of steel--is set inside a space defined by three trees, placed so as to triangulate the exact bearing, 260°, to London. The symbol used is a rude mandala, a red circle with a thick black cross inside, recognizable as the ancient sun-wheel from which tradition says the swastika was broken by the early Christians, to disguise their outlaw symbol.

(GR 100)

Since the mandala that Pynchon identifies as a symbol is not itself the swastika, it seems unlikely that the novelist would have taken pains to add the background material regarding the swastika if he did not wish certain associations to be made with that symbol. Indeed, the associations that the sign elicits are relevant to the novel and to the modern world. The swastika is readily identified, in modern times, with the National Socialist party of Germany, and with Hitlerism; as such, it came to be one of the most hated symbols in the history of man, for it stood for all of the evil associated with the Nazi regime, not the least of which was the attempted extermination of Jews. The history of the swastika, however, goes much farther back than 1933, when it was adopted for use by the Nazis. The swastika is an ancient symbol, often used as a religious
sign. It is in the form of the Greek cross (used, notably, by the Red Cross); it has four arms of equal length, the ends of which are bent at right angles in a given direction. The Nazi swastika bends the arms clockwise, while some other groups, such as the Indians of North and South America, use the counter-clockwise swastika.\(^{26}\) The symbol has a long history of use as a secret sign, as Pynchon infers. Thus, the appearance of the word as a montage piece brings together a number of associations that are of fundamental importance in *Gravity's Rainbow*: as a disguised form of the cross, the swastika is a reminder of the Christian, the Elect, who are on the side of Good, but simultaneously, it signifies the Christian as a persecuted group who resort to distortion of their sign for the sake of safety. At the same time, the symbol registers Evil personified in the person of Hitler, in his infamous role as persecutor of the Jews. The dual representations are inextricably interwoven, as are other antithetical ideas expressed in the novel, e.g., "God as creator and destroyer" (GR 100), or man as controller and controlled.

Echoes of V. are further reverberated in Gravity's Rainbow in the form of variations of allusions to specific biblical passages that are used in the earlier novel. For example, a reference in V. to Yahweh (399/375), whose name is not spoken by the Jews, is alluded to indirectly in Gravity's Rainbow in a passage that describes the passed-over in today's technologically oriented world, seeking for meaning amid "so much waste":

The rest of us, not chosen for enlightenment . . . must go on blundering inside our front-brain faith in Kute Korrespondences, . . . kicking endlessly among the plastic trivia, finding in each Deeper Significance and trying to string them all together like terms of a power series hoping to zero in on the tremendous and secret Function whose name, like the permuted names of God, cannot be spoken. . . .

(GR 590)

In the montage, the biblical reference to God, whose name "cannot be spoken," serves to emphasize the incomprehensible quality of whatever Power may lie behind the universe, a power which man, in spite of all his technological prowess, has not yet been able to describe in rational terms, using words which depend on an understandable form for communication to take place.

A comparison in V. between the Ark as a refuge for Noah, and the rock of Malta for the Maltese under siege,
is recast in *Gravity's Rainbow* as a contrast between the Ark of Noah that contains a pair of all creatures, and Slothrop's sparse, but not solitary, existence in a sewer: "One of everything's not so bad. Half an Ark's better than none" (*GR* 67-68). Like the admonition to keep on "painting the side of a sinking ship" alluded to earlier, Pynchon seems to opt for preserving whatever fragments of value and meaning can be salvaged from the wastes that comprise so much of today's decaying world. The appearance of the allusion to Noah's Ark as a piece of Pynchon's montage in this context seems apropos, for the unity and completeness implied by the pair, male and female, of each of God's creatures in the Ark, stands in contrast to broken and incomplete relationships that characterize the present age.

Again, Pynchon uses the Old Testament story of Lot's being spared when the wicked city of Sodom is destroyed, to enhance a point made in *Gravity's Rainbow*. While in *V.* the allusion to "Lot's escape from annihilated Sodom" (*V.* 78/66) is cited as an example of God's intervention in history, in *Gravity's Rainbow* Pynchon focuses on a different facet of the biblical story. In Genesis 19:17, God's angel instructs Lot concerning his departure from Sodom: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee,
neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the moun-
tain, lest thou be consumed." Several verses later, how-
ever, we read, in Genesis 16:26, "But his wife looked back
from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." 27 It
is apparently to this passage that Pynchon alludes when he
notes that "Pokler, billeted at a fisherman's cottage, came
in from his evening walks behind a fine mask of salt.
Lot's wife. What disaster had he dared to look back on?
He knew" (GR 405). In the cryptic passage in which the
allusion appears, it is not made explicit exactly what it
is that Pokler "knows," but the intimation, suggested in
part by the allusion itself, is that Pokler has somehow
intuited a relationship between the Rocket and a means of
achieving a state of "zero," or spiritual peace through

27 An intercolumnar note in the King James Bible
refers the reader to a passage in Luke which describes the
second coming of Christ. The passage is relevant to the
story of Lot as well as to the whole thematic concern of
Gravity's Rainbow. Luke 17:29-33 is especially noteworthy:
"But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it
rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them
all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man
is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the house-
top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to
take it away: and he that is in the field, let him like-
wise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall
seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall
lose his life shall preserve it."
death. A few paragraphs later, such a realization is suggested:

The fear of extinction named Pokler knew it was the Rocket beckoning him in. If he also knew that in something like this extinction he could be free of his loneliness and his failure, still he wasn't convinced. . . . So he hunted, as a servo valve with a noisy input will, across the Zero, between the two desires, personal identity and impersonal salvation. . . . Pokler would have to find his own way to his zero signal, his true course.

(GR 406)

Thus, like Lot's wife, who satisfied her curiosity at the cost of her life, Pokler ponders the possibility that he can gain his desired goal only through the sacrifice of his life, his personal extinction from the face of the earth.

Yet another example of specific biblical allusions used in _V._ that appear in a modified form in _Gravity's Rainbow_, is that of a reference to a passage in the book of Daniel. Used playfully on the surface in _V._, Stencil retorts "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin" in reply to a note from Profane. While the more serious implications of the words are important as a montage piece in _V._, they appear in translated form in _Gravity's Rainbow_ in an overtly serious passage. Tyrone Slothrop and Miklos Thanatz engage in a conversation primarily concerned with the A4 rocket:
... There was a boy. His name was Gottfried. God peace, which I trust he's found. For us I hold no such hope. We are weighed in the balance and found wanting, and the Butcher has had His thumb in the scales... 

(CR 465)

In addition to the overtones regarding a predetermined fate of man, the passage sums up, in essence, one of the basic messages of the novel--man's failure to "save" himself, and the possibility that man is, finally, a controlled creature rather than the controller of his fate. Furthermore, the biblical quotation serves as a warning that is as relevant for today's world as for the Old Testament world of Daniel, and suggests that man, having been found wanting, must sooner or later--but possibly soon--submit to the consequences of his irreversible spiritual decay.

A final category of allusions used by Pynchon that are somehow related to the Bible is that of "overtonal" references. I suggested earlier that, in V., such names as Godolphin and Rachel seem to symbolize certain attributes associated with the Bible; in Gravity's Rainbow Gottfried (God's peace) and Enzian, suggestive of a special power like that of Jesus, whose "name charms our fears," function similarly, and, in addition to their roles as characters in the novel. I further suggested that references to the
Street and to Malta in 
 seem to be significant and pervasive in a way unlike that of more explicit biblical allusions. Like a thin film of lacquer sprayed over a picture, these references become a vital part of the finished literary portrait, but in a general, or overall way that is somehow of a different order from the other allusions. In Gravity's Rainbow, a similar parallel may be drawn in the reference to the rainbow, which in 
 is mentioned only one time in an ostensibly insignificant and tenuous way, so far as its use as a biblical allusion is concerned. Perhaps no single symbol in Gravity's Rainbow is more fraught with meaning than that of the rainbow, sign of God's promise to man that the earth will not be destroyed a second time by flood. 28 The symbol is especially significant when it is juxtaposed with the other title word of the novel, gravity. Gravity, the accelerating tendency of bodies toward the center of the earth, represents the force that holds the universe together, literally. If gravitation were to be suddenly cut like a severed wire, the planets and the stars would tumble to destruction; the moon's influence on the tides would be halted. It is a

28 See Gen. 9:11-16.
force which carries the potential for controlled order, or for chaos. The rainbow, on the other hand, is the sign that seals a covenant God makes with man not to destroy; ironically, however, the visible portion of the rainbow, in adhering to gravity's pull, assumes the shape of a parabola, also the path taken by a rocket aimed at a target of destruction. Traditionally, the force of gravity and the covenant sealed with the rainbow have shared a common source—God. Recent developments in technology have called into question the source of ultimate control in the universe, which is what Pynchon's novel is all about. Calling into question what millions of years have failed to prove, however, is not to disprove. Meanwhile, man struggles to be free from control by a power that he cannot prove, but which he cannot disprove. He would like to laugh off as a joke the reality of an ultimate Power that controls him, but he is afraid that it might turn out to be real after all. If so, what then? Pynchon is not sure; his characters are not sure either at the beginning of the novel, when the image of the rainbow and of gravity are the only shots of the picture that have been spliced together.

By the time the myriad pieces have been added, and the montage is complete, however, Pynchon seems to have
discovered in making his creation that time can go on without him, and that Wernher von Braun may have a point when he says, "Nature does not know extinction. Everything science has taught me, and continues to teach me, strengthens my belief in the continuity of our spiritual existence after death."
## APPENDIX A

### BIBLE-RELATED REFERENCES IN V.

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APPENDIX B

BIBLE PASSAGES RELATED TO V.

OLD TESTAMENT

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**Deuteronomy**

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THE APOCRYPHA

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NEW TESTAMENT

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<p>| Romans | 5:12 | 8:29-30 | 12:4-5 |
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1 John
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4:3

2 John
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Revelation
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3:12
16:16
21:2
21:9
APPENDIX C

TEXT OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge: and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Bear eth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.
APPENDIX D

TEXT OF "ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS"

Onward, Christian soldiers!
On to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver
At the shout of praise;
Brothers, lift your voices,
Loud your anthems raise.
Onward, etc.
APPENDIX D (continued)

Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus
Constant will remain:
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst us prevail;
We have a refuge sure.

1924) Yorkshire
Companion William
Clowes and

(1834-
APPENDIX E

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF JOB

The book of Job gives an account of the sufferings of Job, who is initially represented as being prosperous, and as having a large family and many servants. Satan is permitted to try Job's faith in three ways: by taking his possessions away, then his family, and finally, his health. Three friends come to condole with Job. They argue, in turn, that suffering is always and necessarily a result of sin. Job agrees in principle, but rejects the idea of its application in his case. Misunderstanding ensues, and the friends suggest to Job, then openly accuse him of, secret sin. Job is confident of his uprightness, and he cannot understand God's apparent harshness to him, but he stands firm in his faith: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him. . . ."¹ Then the thought comes to him that some time, in God's good pleasure, even if not in Job's lifetime, he will be justified. Convinced of immortality, he

¹Job 13:15.
makes the famous affirmation, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God." Finally, Elihu, who has been silent, suggests that affliction, rather than punishment for sin, may be God's means of strengthening and purifying his children. Job accepts this view. At last, God speaks to Job and tells him that finite man knows far too little about the mysteries of God to try to justify himself. Job's prosperity, family, and health are then restored to him by God.

\[2\text{Job 19:25-26.}\]
APPENDIX F

TEXT OF "DIES IRAE"

Day of wrath! O day of mourning!
See fulfilled the prophets' warning!
Heaven and earth to ashes turning!
O what fear man's bosom rendeth
When from heaven the Judge descendeth,
On whose sentence all dependeth!

Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth,
Through earth's sepulchres it ringeth,
All before the throne it bringeth.
Death amazed and nature quaking
See all creatures now awaking,
To the Judge their answer making.

Lo, the book exactly worded,
Wherein all hath been recorded:
Thence shall judgment be awarded.
When the Judge his seat attaineth,
And each hidden deed arraigneth,
Not a sin unjudged remaineth.

Dies irae, dies illa,
solvet saeculum in favilla
teste David cum Sibylla.
quantus tremor est futurus,
quando judex est venturus,
cuncta stricte discussurus!
tuba irum spargens sonum
per sepulcra regionum
coget omnes ante thronum.
mors stupebit et natura,
cum resurget creatura
judicanti responsura.
liber scriptus proferetur,
in quo totum continetur,
unde mundus judicetur.
judex ergo cum sedebit,
quidquid latet, apparet;
mil inultum remanebit.
APPENDIX F (continued)

What shall I, frail man, be pleading,
Who for me be interceding,
When the just are mercy needing?
King of majesty tremendous,
Who dost free salvation send us,
Fount of pity, then befriend us.

Think, good Jesu, my salvation
Caused thy wondrous Incarnation;
Leave me not to reprobation.
Faint and weary thou hast sought me,
On the Cross of suffering bought me;
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?

Righteous Judge! for sin's pollution
Grant thy gift of absolution,
Ere that day of retribution.
Guilty, now I pour my moaning,
All my shame with anguish owning;
Spare, 0 God, thy suppliant groaning.

By the sinful woman shriven,
By the dying thief forgiven,
Thou to me a hope hast given.
Worthless are my prayers and sighing;
Yet, thy mercy not denying,
Save me from the wrath undying.

quid sum miser tunc dicturus,
quem patronum rogaturus,
cum vix justus sit securus?
rex tremendae majestatis,
qui salvandos salvas gratis,
salva me, fons pietatis,
recordare, Jesus, pie
quod sum causa tuae viae;
ne me perdas illa die.
quae remedium me sedisti lassus,
redemisti crucem passus;
tantus labor non sit cassus.
juste judex ulterioris,
donum fac remissionis
ante diem rationis.
ingemisco tanquam reus,
culpa rubet vultus meus;
supplicantici parce, Deus.

qui Mariam absolvisti
at latronem exaudisti,
mihi quoque spem dedisti.
preces meae non sunt dignae;
sed tu bonus fac benigne
ne perenni cremer igne.
inter oves locum praesta,
at ab haedis me sequestra.
APPENDIX F (continued)

With the sheep vouchsafe to place me;
Do not with the goats abase me;
But to thy right hand upraise me.
While the wicked are confounded,
Doomed to grief and loss unbounded,
Call me with thy saints surrounded.

Low I kneel, with heart-submission,
Bowed to dust in sore contrition:
Shield me, dying, from perdition.

Ah, that day of tears and mourning!
From the dust of earth returning
Man for judgment must prepare him:
Spare, O God, in mercy spare him!
   Lord, all pitying, Jesu blest,
   Grant them thine eternal rest. 1

1 The hymn is thought to have been written by Thomas of Celano, the friend and biographer of St. Francis of Assissi. It was translated, in what is substantially its present form, by W. J. Irons in 1848. See Frost, pp. 378-79.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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