



Thomas Pynchon: The Art of Allusion (Crosscurrents / Modern Critiques / New Series)

David Cowart

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This fresh examination of Pynchon's use of painting, film, music, and literature shows that his true art lies in humanistic allusions that stress the possibility of spiritually separating oneself from the modern wasteland.

Cowart disagrees with critics who see Pynchon as a scientist writing about entropy, although Pynchon does illustrate the nihilistic world for which he is famous in allusions to painting and film, both of which mask a Void. But more important, these allusions call into question what is real and what is not. Through musical and literary allusions Pynchon suggests the speculative world, the world of unrealized possibility. Music hints at the dimensions of experience people miss because of the narrow range of experiences to which they are attuned. Literary allusions support and extend the almost mystical sense created by musical allusions, thus suggesting that in Pynchon's view, human consciousness need not be trapped by entropic drift.

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