The Role of Popular Mythology and Popular Culture in Post-war America, as represented by four novels - *The Floating Opera* and *The End of the Road* by John Barth, *White Noise* by Don DeLillo, and *Vineland* by Thomas Pynchon

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The University of Sydney, 2004
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Abstract of Thesis

The Role of Popular Mythology and Popular Culture in Post-war America, as represented by four novels - The Floating Opera and The End of the Road, by John Barth, White Noise, by Don DeLillo, and Vineland, by Thomas Pynchon.

The four novels - The Floating Opera, The End of the Road, White Noise, and Vineland - are representative of the cultural shift away from traditional moral concepts after World War II. Popular culture has increasingly become the guiding force for the continuation of American society, and in Don DeLillo’s White Noise, popular culture and its creation of myth (according to the author’s representation of America) has become embedded in the system and life of contemporary America.

John Barth’s novel The End of the Road and its predecessor The Floating Opera are important in any discussion of the role of popular culture and popular mythology in post-war America. They both appear to signal an end to sincere intellectual thought or debate, and the notion of imposing a rational moral world upon the social landscape surrounding the individual. The Floating Opera explores the common tendency of society to avoid difficult intellectual struggles, and the central character and first-person narrator ultimately realises that questions about the nature of existence are of no objective value. In The End of the Road the character Jacob Horner adopts a superficial reflection of pre-existing rules and social conventions. Together these novels reflect much of what is at present understood as the post-modern aesthetic, and are indicative of many of the changes in America that were about to occur. The Floating Opera was published in 1956 and The End of the Road was published in 1958, but they are still highly relevant beyond the period in which they were written.
White Noise (1984) portrays a system founded on the Hollywood mythology, and the superficial reflection of pre-existing rules and social conventions found in The End of the Road. The novel revolves around the experiences of the narrator, Jack Gladney, a university lecturer who teaches Hitler studies at Blacksmith College, and his wife Babette. The course which he teaches on Hitler is influenced by Hollywood myth, and the novel portrays a consumer-based society that has lost much of the firm moral basis which traditional religious concepts formerly supplied. The role of television, Hollywood, and the idea of simulation are all explored throughout the novel and are important forces in any examination of post-war American society.

Finally, in Vineland (1990) the social upheavals which occurred during the late ‘60s and early ‘70s are explored from the perspective of the 1980s. The novel refers to a vast array of images and icons from popular culture, and the brief youth rebellion, in the late ‘60s, which failed to inspire any final social revolution. The result of this failed social revolution is a landscape of popular culture in modern America, where Godzilla leaves footprints in Japan and popular mythology from television or pulp novels coincides with everyday life. There are references in typical Pynchonesque fashion to those who must necessarily be orchestrating these social and cultural alterations, but they, as specific individuals, remain anonymous or hidden from the scope of the author (although, as in White Noise, there are deliberate references to the CIA and other agencies or departments within the U.S. Federal Government). Vineland is important, therefore, both as an account of the social changes which occurred in America between the late ‘60s and ‘80s, and the increasing role of popular culture in America.
These four novels form the basis of an exploration of the role of popular mythology and popular culture in post-war America. They form a clear progression, and allow a detailed analysis of the social and cultural changes which contemporary America has undergone since the end of World War II.
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Preface

The title of this thesis is “The Role of Popular Mythology and Popular Culture in Post-war America, as represented by four novels – The Floating Opera and The End of the Road by John Barth, White Noise by Don DeLillo, and Vineland by Thomas Pynchon.” The topic requires a succinct definition of both “Popular Mythology” and “Popular Culture,” and some historical documentation in relation to relevant developments in post-war American history. I have deliberately placed this information in the preface, because, prior to an analysis of the four post-war American Literary texts as they relate to the topic, it is first necessary to clarify the topic and illustrate the relevance of these texts with regard to actual events.

I have decided to extend the function of the preface to incorporate this information, principally because I wish to maintain a clear structure to the thesis and I do not wish to explain every historical reference or related event (to the texts) in the body of the thesis. In the introduction and conclusion I concentrate on providing Literary context to the topic and some post-modern theory, while the body of the thesis is strictly an analysis of the four chosen texts in so far as they represent the role of popular mythology and popular culture in post-war America.

“Popular Culture” is evident within all forms of media (including print), and is by its nature directed toward the broadest possible audience. “Popular Culture” may be quite simply defined as “Mass Culture” or the “mass media,” and this is how I interpret the term throughout the thesis. The term “mass medium” is defined, by The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, as “a medium of communication (such as radio, television, newspapers) that reaches a large number of people; usu. in pl., such
media collectively." Popular culture similarly exists within these means of
communication (or media) - predominantly film and television and to a lesser extent
radio, novels, newspapers and magazines - and popular culture also appeals to the
broadest possible audience.

Popular culture is, therefore, the “forms of art, music, or other culture which
appear to or are favoured by many people; intended primarily to please, amuse, or
entertain.” In contrast, serious “music, literature, etc.” is “not intended simply to
amuse, please, or entertain.” The novels chosen for this thesis are examples of
serious literature, not simply due to form or aesthetic design (it was not for this reason
that they were chosen), but rather because they all comment, through the use of
various narrative styles and techniques, on (modern American) society and approach
an objective truth or understanding about existence.

According to Dominic Strinati in An Introduction to Theories of Popular
Culture, it “seems difficult to define popular culture independently of the theory
which is designed to explain it,” and for this reason I have provided only a basic,
dictionary definition of this term and shall avoid any irrelevant theory. According to
Strinati, “for the Frankfurt School, popular culture is that mass culture, produced by
the culture industry, which secures the stability and continuity of capitalism,” and I
for the most part agree with this definition of popular culture. Although popular
culture is largely created by the “culture industry” of America and fundamentally
assists in the continuation of this capitalist system, it does perform a legitimate role in

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1 The term “represent” was chosen in the topic because the texts are not historical sources although they relate to a certain period and certain actual events. As a metaphor the texts (“signifier”) both reflect and define the subject of concern (or the “signified”).
the society of America and the world. This should be asserted before any evaluation of the role of popular culture and popular mythology in post-war America.

The creation of myth within forms of popular culture - for the most part film and television - explains the use of the term “Popular Mythology” in the title of this thesis. The term “myth” is defined by *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* as:

1. A traditional story, either wholly or partially fictitious, providing an explanation for or embodying a popular idea concerning some natural or social phenomenon or some religious belief or ritual; *spec.* one involving supernatural persons, actions, or events; a similar newly created story. M19.
2. A widely-held (esp. untrue or discredited popular) story or belief; a misconception; a misrepresentation of the truth; an exaggerated or idealized conception of a person, institution, etc.; a person, institution, etc., widely idealized or misrepresented. M19.
3. Myths collectively or as a genre; the technique or habit of creating myths. M19.

Myth includes figures or events from traditional stories, but is foremost (in this thesis) “a misrepresentation of the truth” or involves an “exaggerated or idealized conception of a person, institution, etc.,” where “popular mythology” is, most obviously in the post-war period, consciously created and encouraged by the American culture industry.

“Popular Mythology” entails a falsification of reality, according to popular misconceptions, which occurs in various forms of the media and conforms largely to the “Mythotherapy” endorsed by the Doctor in *The End of the Road*. The “Mythotherapy” of the Doctor in *The End of the Road*, which is discussed in detail in the body of this thesis, is designed to avoid reality, avoid self-reflection, and promote action without notions of morality or traditional ideas about correct behaviour.

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6 Strinati, p. xviii.
8 This falsification of reality involves a departure from historical truth or accuracy and a departure from the recognition of traditional power sources, where “myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they once were made.” Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972), p. 142.
The practical realisation of “Mythotherapy” occurs within popular culture, and in White Noise the various therapies of the Doctor are witnessed within this representation of contemporary American society. Vineland includes various references to popular culture and demonstrates the loss of any clear distinction between popular myth and reality. The four texts relate clearly to the role of popular mythology and popular culture in post-war America, and were chosen because of their influence upon and relevance to the period and also their relevance to the topic. The four texts exist outside the myth evident in modern film and television and offer a valid perspective on post-war America. As a “serious” literary metaphor, each text comments on (American) society and aspires toward a reality which approaches an objective understanding, and each text deserves, for this reason, both academic attention and greater public recognition.

It is necessary to give historical evidence with regard to the post-war period in America, and in particular relevant issues and references raised in the four chosen texts and in this thesis. The origins of mass media in America occur prior to the post-war period, when “the growth of the idea of mass culture […] is] notably evident from the 1920s and 1930s.” It is however necessary to examine these origins, because:

The social significance of popular culture in the modern era can be charted by the way it has been identified by the idea of mass culture. The coming of the mass media and the increasing commercialisation of culture and leisure gave rise to issues, interests and debates which are still with us today.

In a discussion of the role of popular mythology and popular culture in post-war America, the early forms of mass-produced culture may inform an understanding of the contemporary culture industry in America, where, apart from the film industry and

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9 Strinati, p. 2.
10 Strinati, p. 2.
Hollywood, the song-writers of “Tin Pan Alley” are the most notable evidence of early mass culture in America.

In *The Floating Opera* there is a reference to early Vaudeville and travelling troupes, which are forms of popular culture and popular entertainment notably evident in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After 1828,

White performers right across the country were imitating black music and dance, and presenting it to white audiences, […] where the] slapstick comedy of Mr Interlocutor, Mr Tambo and Mr Bones made up the first part of the minstrel show.\(^1\)

The performance of Tambo and Bones and Mr. Interlocutor in *The Floating Opera* also existed within real life, historical America, and was an early form of popular culture catering to public, preconceived notions about reality.

The origins of the contemporary American music industry are to some extent found in “Tin Pan Alley,” which “was the beginning of the ‘pop’ music industry as we know it today.”\(^2\) In 1900 song-writers

Worked in many of the offices near [New York’s] Union Square […] where their job was to write songs which would sell to the public in great numbers, and so make a lot of money for the publishers who printed them.\(^3\)

These songs were written in great numbers or mass-produced, in response to the market, where

*Tin Pan Alley* was in business to write songs in much the same way that Coca-Cola were in business to produce their soft drink. The faster the songs or the Coke could be produced, the more money there was to be made.\(^4\)

Capitalism is the motivating force behind mass culture and “Tin Pan Alley” itself, since it is purely the willingness of the available market to buy or listen to the songs

\(^2\) Shepherd, p. 2.
\(^3\) Shepherd, p. 1.
\(^4\) Shepherd, p. 6.
of “Tin Pan Alley” which dictates the rate of production in this early form of mass entertainment.

Industry and culture are clearly interrelated in the United States (in the modern era), and even in the mid-1940s “the dependence of the most powerful broadcasting company on the electrical industry, or of the motion picture industry on the banks, is characteristic of the whole sphere, whose individual branches are themselves economically interwoven.”¹⁵ This relationship between capitalism and popular culture is not only evident within “Tin Pan Alley,” but has become institutionalised in almost all forms of modern American mass media. Big business and the Federal Government largely control modern mass culture in America, where even youth rebellion and youth culture is a valuable market resource (among many other target groups or target areas).

In Vineland, the character, Mucho Maas, typifies the movement of the music industry between the ‘60s and ‘80s from a radical youth culture to a capitalist-structured industry, “as revolution went blending into commerce.”¹⁶ This novel also contains an overwhelming number of references to popular culture, illustrating both the rate of production and the importance of mass culture in modern American society. According to the representations of 1980s America in both White Noise and Vineland, television, film and the mass media have infiltrated all aspects of modern life to such an extent that the mass media has become a significant and ongoing influence on individual and social behaviour.

The formula which “Tin Pan Alley” adopted remains within the contemporary music industry:

¹⁵ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (University of Sydney Library Electronic Item), p. 4.
Fashions change and singers change, but the formula remains the same: a well-written song, appealing to the general public’s emotions, sung by an artist who can put over the song’s message with conviction.\textsuperscript{17}

Naturally market research and marketing have become significantly more sophisticated since the early to mid twentieth century (and the rise of “Tin Pan Alley”). However, the formula remains the same, where the role of the writer is still central to the production of mass culture.

In the contemporary American culture industry, the role of the writer (or writers) has simply become hidden from the audience. Films, similar to popular song, are mass-produced, where

Within the structure of Hollywood, writers are essential but undervalued. This problem of diminished value is reinforced by their virtual invisibility to the general public.\textsuperscript{18}

In television writers or teams of writers create the majority of programs, where, for example, in 1971 writers (and not a carefully marketed celebrity) “wrote all the network television dramatic, comedy, and variety programs produced in the country [America].”\textsuperscript{19} The importance of television writers has not diminished in the period since 1971, yet writers do not seem to be publicly acknowledged in the present as they may have been in the past (especially within the celebrity-orientated modern environment of the U.S. culture industry).

Writers do not maintain final control over their work, and these works are frequently censored or suffer alteration in the process of public presentation:

There is room for different interpretations of exactly how tens of thousands of writers, journalists, broadcasters, editors, and producers of videos and films

\textsuperscript{17} Shepherd, p. 138.
are made to accede, or voluntarily shape their creations, to the taste of the Established Order.\textsuperscript{20}

This “Established Order” includes the corporate powers, where

During the 1950s major corporations like U.S. Steel, Goodyear, Kraft, and Philco literally owned whole shows, which gave them substantial control over production and, by extension, over content.\textsuperscript{21}

This interference in the culture industry by corporate powers and industrial magnates existed around the time of World War II. According to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, who wrote the essay \textit{Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception} in the mid-1940s, “there is the agreement – or at least the determination – of all executive authorities not to produce or sanction anything that in any way differs from their own rules, their own ideas about consumers, or above all themselves.”\textsuperscript{22}

This “ruthless unity in the culture industry is,” as Adorno and Horkheimer predicted in the mid-1940s, “evidence of what will happen in politics.”\textsuperscript{23} This statement preempts many of the future developments in both public and hidden American politics, and refers most importantly to the centralisation of U.S. Government power during and after WWII.

More important (with regard to this thesis) than the role of corporate powers and industrial magnates is the role of the American Government or “big government” in the culture industry of America. The influence of the various government agencies has developed and significantly increased in the post-war period. Besides the obvious military expansion during and after World War II, police, investigatory, and intelligence functions have grown considerably in recent decades.\textsuperscript{24} And, in particular,

\textsuperscript{20} Schiller, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{22} Adorno and Horkheimer, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{23} Adorno and Horkheimer, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{24} Schiller, p. 161.
the intelligence agencies exert influence over corporate America and the culture industry, where

The strong state, as a regulating instrument of potential economic crisis and political disorder, has powerful friends and defenders, some of whom are in the transnational corporate community itself.\(^{25}\)

The influence of the government agencies in the mass media is perhaps best witnessed in the content of television programs and film. During the 1981 season the programs ‘The CIA and Today’s FBI’\(^{26}\) were aired, where the subject and titles of these programs display the willingness of the government to become involved in the mythology of the mass culture industry. The CIA and FBI are constantly reinventing themselves through the various available forms of media, but, in this example, no attempt is made to conceal the subject and political nature of the programming.

Similarly, in *Vineland* an obvious link is formed between the television and the government (in this case the military) as Hector’s television program is interrupted by an “Anglo in fatigues,” who states that he is “commanding officer of state defense forces in this area.”\(^{27}\)

The culture industry may be controlled through various means. For example, in *Sabbatical: A Romance* by John Barth, indirect influence is applied through a “New York literary agent.” Fenwick is advised to write a spy novel by Margot Scourby because officially “the public seems not to tire of spy novels.”\(^{28}\) Fenwick summarises the true position of the literary agent by stating: “you’ll sell what they want. Ciao, Fenn, says Margot Scourby: that’s C-I-A – Addio, Margot.”\(^{29}\) Fenwick deliberately refers to the CIA and understands the real source of the literary agent’s interest in

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\(^{25}\) Schiller, p. 161.  
\(^{26}\) Taylor, p. 156.  
\(^{27}\) Pynchon, *Vineland*, p. 339.  
\(^{29}\) Barth, *Sabbatical: A Romance*, p. 277.
popular spy novels. The use of an intermediary is an effective form of coercion from the perspective of the CIA (or the American Government) because it leaves no tangible evidence and in this case allows for the excuse of catering to the interests of the public (rather than the admitting to the public that the interests of the American Government are involved).

The involvement of the CIA (or the American Government) and the culture industry did in fact begin with the formulation of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949. This Act provided the basis for CIA “action programs,” including ventures in international broadcasting and film production and infiltration of organisations of many kinds, at home and abroad. The Act allowed unspecified activities abroad, which included involvement in international broadcasting on a world-wide scale.

But the CIA did not confine its activities exclusively to foreign countries and various front organisations were established in America. Control and influence over the culture industry domestically and abroad did not occur immediately or as a single process. It was a process which began with radio (the first of several early broadcasting projects was Radio Free Europe) and was then followed by the other forms of mass media, including film, television and even newsreels. The typical method to promote and control foreign and domestic ventures was the use of an intermediary to provide funds, and in the Dulles era (the period in which Allen Dulles was the director of the CIA) secret CIA subsidies were used to infiltrate labour unions, youth groups, foundations, and to influence the content of books and magazines.

The influence of the CIA and the secrets of the intelligence community, of which the relationship between the CIA and the culture industry is one such secret,

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are referred to in *White Noise* in connection with Dana Breedlove. After stating:

“Perhaps I was beginning to understand my ex-wives and their ties to intelligence,”

Jack asks himself: “Are secrets a tunnel to a dreamworld where you control events?”

This is a reference to the hidden power of the U.S. intelligence community and in particular the CIA (which is the employer of Jack’s ex-wife Dana Breedlove). This dream-like world of hidden control will be discussed and revealed in this thesis as it relates to both the texts and the topic. The centralisation of power and the importance of the CIA in the determination of the policy of the American Government are important in an understanding of the term “American Government,” as it is used in this thesis, and understanding the deliberate references to the CIA (and other agencies and departments of the American Federal Government) in the two later novels.

There are references to the CIA in both *White Noise* and *Vineland*, and references to the FBI in *Vineland* (obviously the two Barth novels were written shortly after the creation of the CIA, and the CIA does not feature in these novels, but in Barth’s later novel *Sabbatical: A Romance* there are extensive references to the CIA and I refer to this novel in both the preface and the introduction). It is these government agencies which are most relevant to this thesis, and I shall provide some relevant historical information about foremost the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), a certain amount regarding the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), and also about the NSA (National Security Agency). There are no direct references to the NSA in the four chosen texts of the thesis, but this agency is relevant with regard to the sorting and storing of both domestic and global surveillance (where surveillance in various forms and the computer databases of the American Government are mentioned foremost in *Vineland*).

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31 Barnouw, p. 100.
The CIA and NSA were both initially intended to gather intelligence on foreign countries, but both have covertly, and even illegally, operated within America. These domestic operations are of the most importance with regard to the topic, but I shall not confine this discussion purely to events occurring within the borders of the United States. It is necessary to illustrate the extent to which the American intelligence agencies have influenced and exert control over the actions and policy of the American Government (both domestic and foreign), and the manner in which some of the post-war domestic and foreign operations of the U.S. Government relate to references in the texts.

In illustration of America’s increasingly expansionist role in the post-war period, there have been various covert and overt military operations. I shall not attempt to explain the cause and objective of every incursion or operation (whether domestic or foreign), since the preface is only designed to clarify references from the four chosen texts and the important terms used in this thesis. Since I am not a qualified historian, I shall mostly refer to outside sources in this brief history of the American Government and the various Federal Government agencies.

In the introduction I refer to World War II as the moment in which power shifts from Europe to America, which is a “serious” literary version or understanding of history as represented foremost in *Gravity’s Rainbow* by Thomas Pynchon. This understanding of history is validated by actual events, in particular America’s role in world affairs prior to, during and after World War II. Until 1941 the insular United States of America did not possess an external intelligence organisation, and relied upon the FBI for domestic protection and relative stability:

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Don DeLillo states in an interview, “the thing that’s interesting about living in another country is that it’s difficult to forget you’re an American. The actions of the American Government won’t let you.”

Robert R. Harris. Interview with Don DeLillo. (“Don DeLillo Biography.”

http://perival.com/delillo/ddbio.html “from Harris, 1982.”)
The egocentric and ambitious J. Edgar Hoover expanded his FBI empire in 1924 to protect the country’s internal security and expanded it to include Latin America. With G-men policing its back yard, America, like Gulliver, slept content, confident it would not awaken one morning immobilized by the little people. After all, Germany was thousands of miles away, beyond the Atlantic Ocean. Japan was a similar distance across the Pacific from the United States although Hawaii and its anchorage of Pearl Harbor was much closer to the American mainland.\footnote{Brian Freemantle, \textit{CIA} (London: Michael Joseph/ Rainbird, 1983), p. 15.}

This policy of isolation began to alter on 11 July 1941, when Roosevelt issued a Presidential Directive to centralise intelligence assessments from abroad. America necessarily became involved in the affairs of the world via this form of intelligence, and then via the armed conflict of World War II.

America’s direct involvement in the outcome of world events did not cease with the conclusion of World War II, but instead increased with the newly perceived threat of Communism. Although fears about Communism existed in the United States prior to 1945 - “in 1918, the barons of American capital needed no reason for their war against communism other than the threat to their wealth and privilege,”\footnote{William Blum, \textit{The CIA: A Forgotten History: US Global Interventions Since World War 2} (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1986) p. 5.} and anti-Communist propaganda existed in America from this moment – the American Government only began after 1945 to actively intervene throughout the world in response to the perceived threat of Communist expansion.

The CIA was created in 1947 within the post-war environment of an emerging cold war between Russia and America. In many respects the CIA developed “in accordance with a maximalist interpretation of the National Security Act […] and even] strayed beyond those limits,”\footnote{Jeffrey T. Richelson and Desmond Ball, \textit{The Ties That Bind} (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p. 108.} where Communism to some extent legitimised the various covert actions of the Central Intelligence Agency. The actions of the CIA include assassination, drug tests, overthrowing and influencing foreign governments.
and countries, involvement in the trade of illegal narcotics, and surveillance (both domestic and foreign). All of these forms of covert behaviour by the American State are mentioned in *Vineland*, including assassination attempts on Fidel Castro, drug-assisted interrogation, involvement of the CIA in the drug trade, and domestic surveillance (the exact reference and page number I give throughout the preface as each incident or operation is mentioned).

In 1948 the CIA mounted a massive propaganda campaign in Italy, where “millions of dollars were pumped into the Christian Democrats and other non-communist parties.” The American Government ignored the fact that the Communists had been the single most active anti-fascist group in Italy during the war and “the Christian Democrat government of 1948 and other electoral opponents on the right were riddled through with collaborators, monarchists and plain unreconstructed fascists.” The immediate policy of the United States Government was simply to halt the spread of Communism, and this initiative was successful in Italy and also in France. At the very same time, France, which was also heavily dependent upon American financial aid, ousted all its Communist ministers as well. As Freemantle notes: “The defeat of the communists at the polls is historically viewed by the CIA not only as their first but as one of their most outstandingly successful covert operations.”

With the creation of the Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) in 1948, the CIA began, ostensibly under the direction of the OPC, to form its own foreign policy and organisation of covert activities. The OPC “though supposed to be part of CIA, and pledged to keep the State Department informed of what it was doing, was soon

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37 Freemantle, p. 29.
38 Blum, pp. 23-24.
39 Blum, p. 25n.
40 Freemantle, p. 29.
working entirely independently. The OPC had become under Frank Wisner’s direction a successful intelligence unit on its own, operating on a secret budget with little or no superintendence. Under the direction of Allen Dulles the OPC was then brought into the Central Intelligence Agency, but remained mostly unaltered:

Wisner was content with that since he was assured that, as deputy director of Plans, he would still be running covert operations and would be in complete charge of the far-flung intelligence service he had built up. He now had what the OPC called ‘back alley’ operations going in Europe and Asia, all of them aimed at curtailing Communist advances. […] He was working in close cooperation with General Gehlen’s units in Germany. He was operating in Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, and sending agents into China.

The CIA under Allen Dulles soon gained freedom to infiltrate U.S. embassies, consulates, and the U.S. Information Agency offices in foreign countries and in all parts of the world, and particularly in Germany, South America, and South East Asia, the Agency expanded and infiltrated every arm of U.S. government.

As Mosley notes:

The Act of 1947 had set up the National Security Council to oversee operations in which the Agency’s many arms were now engaged, but in the two years since Allen had been operating as director of the CIA, the Council had had no real control over the activities that he ordered and approved – manifold activities, which were protected from interference by Foster’s brotherly wing.

In 1955, Allen was able to extend the CIA’s kingdom to the stratosphere. Even Allen Dulles was now not able to supervise and direct every operation undertaken by the CIA. “The trouble with the Agency was that there was such a

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42 Mosley, p. 272.
43 Mosley, p. 272.
44 Mosley, p. 364.
45 Mosley, pp. 364-365.
multiplicity of small activities going on at any time that no one could keep account of them all, except, perhaps, the finance department.”

By 1961 the CIA formed a relatively autonomous body or organisation:

It is probable that the CIA had more staff overseas, under official and unofficial covers, than the State Department, and this in addition to its countless paid agents. Often the CIA Chief of Station had been in a particular country longer than the American Ambassador, had more money at his disposal, and exerted more influence. When it suited their purposes, Agency officers would completely bypass the ambassador and normal protocol to deal directly with the country’s head of state and other high officials. The CIA had its own military capabilities, including its own air force; for all intents and purposes, its own foreign service with, indeed, its own foreign policy, though never at cross-purposes with fundamental US cold-war, anti-communist ideology and goals.

The CIA governed its own actions and by 1961 exerted influence throughout the world, having infiltrated all the foreign bases and embassies of the American Government.

The CIA was involved in assassination attempts and assassinations around the world. Congressional leaders have been told of Central Intelligence Agency involvement in a plot by French dissidents to assassinate the late French President Charles De Gaulle, which occurred sometime in the mid-1960s – probably in 1965 or 1966: “A hired assassin, armed with a poison ring, was to be slipped into a crowd of old soldiers of France when General De Gaulle was to be the host at a reception for them.” The killer would clasp the general’s hand and thereby inject the poison.

During the early 1960s in Congo the CIA attempted to assassinate Patrice Lumumba and allegedly completed the operation: “In 1978, former CIA Africa specialist John Stockwell related in his book how a ranking Agency officer had told him of driving

47 Mosley, p. 370.
48 Blum, p. 165.
49 Blum, p. 169.
50 Blum, p. 169.
around with Lumumba’s body in the trunk of the car, ‘trying to decide what to do with it.’”

Although it was never used, the CIA had previously sent one of its scientists, Joseph Schneider, to the Congo carrying “lethal biological material” (a virus) specifically intended for use in Lumumba’s assassination. The virus was transported by diplomatic pouch.

In *Vineland* a similarly bizarre assassination attempt (as those plotted and carried out against De Gaulle and Lumumba by the CIA) is mentioned as DL (with Howie and Sledge) attempts to find Frenesi and rescue her from Brock Vond. On poles are medallions with faces “looking directly at the viewer with a strangely personal expression, as if just about to speak” and “inscribed at the base of each pole […] was the story that went with the face.” Among these images and words is a reference to a failed attempt to assassinate Fidel Castro by the fictional “Virgil (‘Sparky) Ploce, 1923-1959.” The attempt involved offering Castro “an ingenious bomb of ‘Sparky’s’ own design” in a cigar, but the plot was uncovered when Castro bit the wrong end and revealed the explosive device.

This would seem to be pure fantasy and offer no valid relationship with actual events, but various assassination plots against Fidel Castro, by the CIA in particular, did actually exist and many even resembled the fictional plan by Virgil Ploce in *Vineland*. These CIA assassination attempts were not only designed to kill Fidel Castro but were also designed to assist in the overthrow of the Communist regime in Cuba (to which the reference to a U.S. assassination attempt on Fidel Castro, in *Vineland*, also implicitly refers).

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51 John Barth refers to the murder of Patrice Lumumba in; Barth, *Sabbatical: A Romance*, p. 118, and the CIA connections to this event.
52 Blum, p. 176.
53 Blum, p. 175.
54 Pynchon, *Vineland*, p. 251.
The various assassination attempts against Fidel Castro in Cuba and other incursions into the country, which were conducted foremost by the CIA, most probably initiated the Cuban Missile Crisis. There were various attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro, and the Bay of Pigs invasion was a CIA operation. Castro knew perfectly well what the CIA was doing, and the ongoing American attacks against his rule may well have been an important factor in his decision in the spring of 1962 to allow the Soviet Union to install offensive nuclear weapons in his country.

Apart from rumours of chemical and biological warfare against Cuba, which remain mostly unsubstantiated, there were various plans to assassinate or humiliate Fidel Castro. Devised by the CIA or Cuban exiles, with the co-operation of American mafiosi, the plans ranged from poisoning Castro’s cigars and food to a chemical designed to make his hair and beard fall off and LSD to be administered just before a public speech. There were also of course the more traditional approaches of gun and bomb, one being an attempt to drop bombs on a baseball stadium while Castro was speaking; the B-26 bomber was driven away by anti-aircraft fire before it could reach the stadium.

During this period, the CIA was mostly acting on its own initiative, since neither President Kennedy nor President Johnson approved of political assassination (and the CIA was thereby exercising its own deliberate government policy independent of the democratically elected leader of America).

President John F. Kennedy stated in November of 1961, “suggestions to that effect keep coming to me, and I believe very strongly the United States should not be a party to political assassination.” Lyndon Johnson allegedly told his former aide Leo Janos, as recounted in a July 1973 Atlantic article: “We had been operating a

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56 Pynchon, Vineland, p. 252.
57 Freemantle, p. 38.
59 Blum, pp. 212-213.
damned Murder, Inc. in the Caribbean." 

Neither President endorsed political assassination, at a public level or even privately. So it may be assumed that the CIA deliberately operated (and perhaps still might choose to operate) independent of the elected leader of the United States (if indeed these assassination attempts were arranged, planned and executed by the CIA and the statements by the two Presidents are correct).

Indeed there is circumstantial evidence that the CIA was involved in the assassination of John F. Kennedy: “One factor that preyed on [President Johnson’s] mind was his suspicion that the CIA had something to do with the tragic event in Dallas that had made him president.” And, in Libra, Don DeLillo uses the form of the novel to recreate the events surrounding the assassination of John F. Kennedy and refers to the accumulated secrets of the CIA since that moment.

In many respects the CIA has consolidated its influence and power within the American Government since the period of the 1960s, and the assassination of President Kennedy formed part of that process:

At the moment of President Kennedy’s assassination “the first government official to confer with the new President of the United States was McGeorge Bundy, who had been John F. Kennedy’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs.” Under Kennedy, Bundy “took over the job of running the highly secret and often controversial National Security Council.”

The NSC law, by implication, gave the NSC director authority to cut across department lines in coordinating the many arms of the government involved in national security – State, Defense, Commerce, Agriculture, the AEC, CIA,

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60 Marchetti and Marks, p. 336n.
61 Marchetti and Marks, p. 337n.
64 Roberts, p. 70.
USIA, and AID, to name a few. Bundy has never hesitated to exercise that mandate.\textsuperscript{65}

The American Government was not immobilised by the assassination of President Kennedy, but Bundy and Defense secretary Robert McNamara in particular were highly efficient in maintaining command.

Bundy

Sped to the White House and took charge. While McNamara ordered U.S. armed forces around the world (including ten Polaris submarines under the seas) into a state of readiness, Bundy placed the CIA on a worldwide ‘intelligence alert’ to watch for any suspicious act by the Communists.\textsuperscript{66}

This displays to some extent the influence and command of both the military and the CIA in determining foreign policy, and in particular their control over the actions of the White House.\textsuperscript{67}

During the student movement of the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, the CIA conducted domestic surveillance in an operation called CHAOS. CHAOS was created in August 1967, and did not involve solely the CIA: “The FBI and the Defence Intelligence Agency were told to investigate, as was the electronic eavesdropping section of American intelligence, the National Security Agency.”\textsuperscript{68} Officially, the operation was intended to prove connections between U.S. dissidents and foreign agitators,\textsuperscript{69} but no such connections were ever found. During the operation

The CIA compiled 13,000 files, including 7,200 upon Americans, and needed a computer system, called HYDRA, to index its enquiries into people and organizations. […] Within CHAOS, subprogrammes MERRIMACK and RESISTANCE were created, to infiltrate peace groups and activist movements and obtain information upon them.\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{65} Roberts, p. 71.

\textsuperscript{66} Roberts, p. 65.

\textsuperscript{67} Dugald Taylor states that the CIA is “gearing up for new covert operations in the 1980s whoever wins the November election. It is Dugald’s understanding that both the CIA and the Pentagon are reviving chemical-biological warfare research.” Barth, \textit{Sabbatical: A Romance}, p. 144.

\textsuperscript{68} Freemantle, p. 123.

\textsuperscript{69} Freemantle, p. 122.

\textsuperscript{70} Freemantle, p. 122.
Subject files were opened on 1000 domestic organizations, including the Students for a Democratic Society, American Indian Movement, Women’s Liberation Movement, National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, Grove Press Inc., and the Youth International Party.  

The CIA acted here outside the limits of the National Security Act, and received assistance from other agencies to increase the effectiveness of the intelligence program. The FBI operation was called COINTELPRO, and acted in conjunction with the efforts of the other intelligence agencies, and in particular acted under the direction of the CIA.

In *Vineland* there is a reference to the “COINTELPRO file” of the “Bureau” and also domestic surveillance during the description of the ‘60s student rebellion on the campus of the College of the Surf. Weed Atman has a COINTELPRO file with the FBI, of which he is unaware, and it is stated that this file is “an already lengthy stack of documents that eventually would oblige the Bureau, when they wished to move it about, to hang a WIDE LOAD sign on the back.” He is receiving hidden interest from the Federal Government prior to his death, and it is a government employee (Brock Vond) who initiates and orchestrates his death. There are also references to surveillance during the student rebellion, where “no hour day or night was exempt from helicopter visits, though this was still back in the infancy of overhead surveillance.” The youth rebellion is allowed to flourish at the College of the Surf, although “by all the laws of uprising, this one should have been squashed in a matter of hours by the invisible forces up on the base.”

The student rebellion of the late ‘60s was foremost orchestrated and overseen by various agencies, departments and bureaus of the Federal Government and in

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71 Richelson and Ball, p. 108.  
74 Pynchon, *Vineland*, p. 209.
particular the CIA. As in *Vineland*, the rebellion began ostensibly on university campus, where, according to historical accounts of the period, there were various pre-established links between the government and the university administration:

At Harvard the interest of the FBI began well before the 1950s, was directed toward an unusually wide range of student activities, curricular and extracurricular, including even the surveillance of student organizations, and depended in large part on the secret cooperation of university administrators. 76

Established connections between the FBI and most notably Harvard and Yale commenced under the threat of Communism. Similarly the campus at Berkeley (The University of California) had existing links with the government:

By 1964 the world’s premier example of a multiversity was the University of California, and the University’s crown jewel was its campus at Berkeley. No other campus had such close ties to the government, such a heavy emphasis upon government-sponsored research, or such a neglect of undergraduates. 77

A student rebellion occurred at the Berkeley campus after the administration acted in an extreme and provocative manner. The President of The University of California (Clark Kerr) in particular was “warlike, he handed his enemies victory after victory through self-destructive bold advances alternating with paralysis and retreat.” 78 The President suddenly became “a man of vacillation, of compromise, and of an inappropriate toughness that spawned new crises,” 79 who through his actions allegedly both used and sacrificed the Chancellor (Edward W. Strong).

The student revolt began at the Berkeley campus,

In September 1964, when the administration suddenly banned political activists from passing out literature, soliciting funds, or organizing support from card tables set up at the edge of campus. This ban led the activists,

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75 Pynchon, *Vineland*, p. 208.
78 Rorabaugh, p. 20.
79 Rorabaugh, p. 35.
largely civil rights workers, to attack the new rules and, following the administration’s reprisals, to demand that all sorts of political activity be permitted throughout the campus.  

The students were encouraged to rebel by the actions of the administration at the Berkeley campus, and rallied wide support from alienated students and, after the largest sit-in and mass arrest in California history, gathered overwhelming faculty support.  

In Vineland, the youth rebellion at the College of the Surf, like the historical events at the Berkeley campus, gathers faculty support after events designed to inspire dissident activity (and in chapter three of this thesis I discuss these student activities, the actions of the faculty staff and also the hidden government involvement in the events at the College of the Surf in greater detail).  

After the events on the Berkeley campus of The University of California, antiwar protests began to spread on campuses across the country. During the late ‘60s there occurred race riots, police riots, and various assassinations. The assassination of Martin Luther King was followed by widespread race riots in over one hundred American cities. On the evening of his victory in the California primary, Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated, and during the Democratic National Convention that summer in Chicago, millions of television viewers saw police beating unarmed protesters and innocent bystanders.  

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80 Rorabaugh, p. 10.  
81 Rorabaugh, p. 10.  
83 Morrison and Morrison, p. xxi.  
84 Morrison and Morrison, p. xxii.
Weed Atman, in *Vineland*, similarly witnesses, during the campus unrest at the College of the Surf, “three policemen, falling upon one unarmed student, were beating him with their riot sticks.”

It was during this turbulent period that the CIA conducted the CHAOS operation, and in 1970 the student rebellion was brought to a conclusion:

At Kent State University in Ohio, after a weekend of turmoil, National Guard soldiers shot four undergraduates dead on a grassy meadow. Ten days later, two black student demonstrators were killed at Jackson State College in Mississippi. Stunned students left campuses all over the country. More than 400 colleges and universities closed early. Nearly 100,000 demonstrators converged on Washington. Then they went home to think and mourn.

The student deaths concluded the student movement of the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, and this incident may be understood as the intervention of the American Government (whether originating from within the CIA or Pentagon, and if indeed the National Guard soldiers were acting under direct orders).

In *Vineland* as Prairie and DL watch images filmed by Frenesi of the ‘60s student rebellion, it is stated that there were no reported deaths, because “in those days it was still unthinkable that any North American agency would kill its own citizens and then lie about it.”

“Any North American agency” is an implied reference to the Central Intelligence Agency and this quotation from the novel illustrates the change in public perception of the CIA after the various inquiries principally during the 1970s (which did not result in any form of prosecution but revealed some of the CIA operations to the public).

The CIA and the Department of Defense continued their involvement with universities and in particular involvement in university research, despite the events on campus of the late ‘60s and ‘70s. After the “Vietnam era had died down […] it was no

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86 Morrison and Morrison, p. xxiii.
longer imprudent for Agency recruiters to enter university precincts or place job advertisements in academic journals.” The CIA successfully altered its image in the ‘80s, and recruitment numbers noticeably increased. A record 9,200 men and women applied for 1,458 CIA jobs in 1980; by the mid-1980s, the Agency was receiving about 150 thousand inquiries annually. This rise may be, in part, attributed to the CIA’s direct involvement in the education system:

By 1985 there were fifty-four courses wholly devoted to intelligence, and the subject formed a component of many others. Serving officers turned up at academic conferences, wearing ‘CIA’ badges, to deliver learned papers. A spate of publications also appeared on the CIA and allied subjects.

The Department of Defense similarly has been and is actively involved in establishing and maintaining links between the military and scientific research on campus. During World War II, scientists and engineers established a partnership with the military for the development of better defensive weapons systems, but “the scientists and engineers preferred the pre-war freedom of their academic and other laboratories, and left military facilities in droves”:

To maintain the partnership with the technical community during the postwar period, the Department of Defense instituted broad research and development activities that went beyond the development of particular weapons systems. Through this support, over the past five decades, the DOD [Department of Defense] has fostered the partnership and significantly affected agendas for research at universities and industry.

Both the CIA and the Department of Defense thereby exert direct influence over the education system, and in particular the university system. The CIA gains in recruitment numbers from this involvement, and the Department of Defense receives

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87 Pynchon, Vineland, p. 248.
89 Jeffreys-Jones, p. 230.
90 Jeffreys-Jones, p. 230.
technological advances in the development of not purely weapons systems but all areas of scientific research.

An element of scientific research conducted secretly by the CIA, and to a lesser extent the army, was drug tests. The CIA involved U.S. universities, pharmaceutical houses, hospitals, state and federal institutions and private research bodies in their search for control of the mind\(^92\) (similarly Brock Vond initiates a “Political Re-Education Program, or PREP” in *Vineland*, where “the law, *his* law, would provide that detainees in civil disturbances could be taken to certain Justice Department reserves and there examined for snitch potential”\(^93\)). The CIA experiments “had to remain absolutely secret,”\(^94\) and were to some extent a continuation of Nazi experiments. Immediately after the war special U.S. investigating teams were sifting through the experimental records at Dachau for information of military value and military authorities sent the records, including a description of the mescaline and hypnosis experiments, back to the United States.\(^95\)

The CIA adopted various code-names for its mind control experiments, where the first project, in 1950, was called BLUEBIRD, then came ARTICHOKE. The most durable cryptonym was MKULTRA.\(^96\) Under project ARTICHOKE experiments were conducted on subjects, who were unaware of the nature of their situation. These experiments were labelled “terminal experiments” because they were “carried through to completion,”\(^97\) which on occasion included the death of the subject.

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92 Freemantle, p. 81.
93 Pynchon, *Vineland*, p. 268.
95 Marks, p. 11.
96 Freemantle, pp. 80-81.
97 Marks, p. 32.
The CIA experiments, and to a lesser extent army experiments into the use of
LSD and “germ warfare weapons,” were legitimised by rumours that the Russian
State was conducting similar tests. “One enthusiastic experimenter was Dr Ewen
Cameron,” who conducted, among various experiments for the CIA, tests into
“depatterning”:

Cameron’s experiments were in ‘depatterning,’ that is wiping completely
clean the minds of his patients with intensive electroshocks and prolonged use
of drugs. Patients were given combinations of the drugs Thorazine, Nembutal,
Seconal, Veronal and Phenergan and usually slept throughout most of a
fifteen- to thirty-day period. This was combined with two or three daily
electroshock treatments. The purpose of the Agency-inspired treatment was to
establish whether, once having erased a person’s mind, it could then be
‘repatterned.’

The CIA did not limit themselves to experiments with LSD and other drugs in
America, but conducted experiments abroad. The use was during interrogation of
people suspected of being foreign agents spying upon Americans and U.S.
installations or native Americans suspected of being traitors.

In *Vineland* Brock Vond conducts a drug-assisted interrogation, within
America and on an American citizen, in a government building. The building was
originally intended “to reassure, to discourage too many questions, to turn to use
whatever residue of nation-love might be hidden among the tens of thousands of
traumatized nuclear refugees it was designed to impress.” It is in this building
where DL discovers and retrieves Frenesi. Frenesi then tells DL of her experience in
this “administration building,” which was part of “the Cold War dream.” In this
facility “they’d started her on 5mg Stelazine plus 50 of Thorazine, injected in ever-

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98 Freemantle, p. 84.
99 Freemantle, pp. 82-83.
100 Freemantle, p. 90.
101 Freemantle, p. 90.
102 Pynchon, *Vineland*, p. 255.
103 Pynchon, *Vineland*, p. 255.
increasing doses till they thought she was calmed down enough to take them orally.”\textsuperscript{104}

She refers to both “shrinks” (psychiatrists) and “orderlies” who assisted in the administering of the drugs, where, in many respects, this interrogation resembles the techniques adopted by the CIA in their drug experiments and in particular the use of available facilities to conduct these operations. This action by Brock Vond in \textit{Vineland} is nonetheless a government endorsed and government funded operation (since Brock Vond is a government employee and could not have gained access to the building and its staff without some level of authorisation and backing). Brock Vond has, by this time, already received authorisation “to destabilize and subvert PR³ with funding from one of the DOJ discretionary lines.”\textsuperscript{105}

The CIA is allegedly involved in the trade of illegal narcotics (and this involvement is referred to in \textit{Vineland}). There is historical evidence of CIA involvement with narcotics (in particular heroin) in South East Asia. In 1960 it was rumoured:

In Washington, that the CIA in Southeast Asia was actually \textit{running heroin} and using it as a currency for paying for covert operations in Saigon, Pnom Phen, and Vientiane […]. It was only too true. The CIA was spreading drugs and corruption through Asia.\textsuperscript{106}

The origins of CIA involvement with opium and heroin most probably occurred in the 1950s while training Chinese Nationalists in Burma:

In between raids on China, the ‘Chinats’ (as distinguished from the ‘Chicom’) found time to […] become the opium barons of The Golden Triangle, that slice of land encompassing parts of Burma, Laos and Thailand which was the world’s largest source of opium and heroin. CIA pilots flew the stuff all over, to secure the co-operation of those in Thailand who were important to the military operation, as a favour to their Nationalist clients,

\textsuperscript{104} Pynchon, \textit{Vineland}, p. 260.
\textsuperscript{105} Pynchon, \textit{Vineland}, p. 212.
\textsuperscript{106} Mosley, pp. 457-458.
perhaps even for the money, and, ironically, to serve as cover for their more illicit activities.\textsuperscript{107}

The involvement of the CIA in the trade of illegal narcotics has allegedly continued into the present. According to Michael Levine (author of the 1993 book \textit{The Big White Lie}), the CIA is “primarily responsible for the burgeoning drug activity from Central and South America into the United States, and that the biggest drug dealers were CIA assets.” Levine allegedly “found that federal judges and Justice Department prosecutors dramatically dropped the amount of bail for high-level drug traffickers who were CIA assets, and who had been accidentally charged.”\textsuperscript{108}

There are many bizarre aspects of the epidemic drug trafficking into the United States by the CIA and its co-conspirators. One is the billions of dollars spent each year to ‘fight’ drug trafficking, using the same government agencies to ‘fight’ the battle as are themselves implicated in the drug trafficking. The American public is paying the salaries and government-related costs associated with the drug smuggling, and drug interdiction.\textsuperscript{109}

According to Levine, the American public ironically pays for both the cost of the importation of narcotics into America by government agencies, and the law enforcement involved in preventing these same activities. Hence it is stated in \textit{Vineland} that “wheresoever the CIA putteth its meathooks upon the world, there also are to be found those substances which God may have created but the U.S. Code hath decided to control.”\textsuperscript{110}

The U.S. Government has a distinct and ongoing foreign policy. In the Third World the American Government has employed a deliberate strategy to maintain a suitable environment for the development of American multinational corporations.

\textsuperscript{107} Blum, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{109} Stich, p. 344.
\textsuperscript{110} Pynchon, \textit{Vineland}, p. 354.
It is as true now as ever, that American multinationals derive significant economic advantages from Third World countries due to their being under-industrialized, under-diversified, capitalist-orientated, and relatively powerless. It is equally true that the consequence of American interventions has frequently been to keep Third World countries in just such an underdeveloped, impotent state.\textsuperscript{111}

This involvement in the Third World may be viewed as a form of American monopoly of both power and resources in many of these least developed countries. This did not occur by chance and is the consequence of a clear policy by the U.S. Government to maintain and profit from an unequal relationship.

In the post-war period, various American corporations have subsequently developed capacities in foreign countries:

The chief difference today between the contemporary economic order and its prewar condition is the pervasive internationalization of capital. This is coincidental with an enormously increased command of resources and financial assets. The dominant corporations now are transnational in their operations and their physical locales. The leading companies (industrial and service) carry on their business in dozens of countries. IBM, for example, is active in more than 100 countries.\textsuperscript{112}

This involvement in foreign countries is encouraged and supported by American government agencies such as the CIA, where the CIA has been involved both directly and indirectly in the development of corporate America: According to Denis Freney in \textit{The CIA’s Australian Connection}, there is a long list of CIA men associated with the big U.S. corporations and of corporation men associated with the CIA. The multinational corporations help the CIA find cover for its agents and recruit part-time agents, and many of the biggest U.S. corporations are big contractors to the CIA and other intelligence agencies.\textsuperscript{113}

\textsuperscript{111} Blum, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{112} Schiller, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{113} Denis Freney, \textit{The CIA’s Australian Connection} (Sydney: Denis Freney, 1977), p. 5.
The United States Government has sought assistance from the United Nations in the internationalisation of American culture and capital, where it suits their foreign policy. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), at the urging of the United States, also endorsed a principle that underlay and ennobled the expansion of the American cultural industries. This was the doctrine of the ‘free flow of information.’ Unexceptional and even highly desirable as an abstract standard, in practice the free-flow idea gave a green light for the global penetration of the products of U.S. media-cultural conglomerates like CBS, Time, Inc., J. Walter Thomson, 20th Century Fox and others. Any nation’s effort to regulate that flow was sternly rejected as tantamount to totalitarianism.\textsuperscript{114}

The United States Government then began to attack the UN, and, in this particular example, UNESCO, when its interests were not being served:

Internationally, the persistent U.S. government attacks on the United Nations and its educational-scientific-cultural organization (UNESCO) deserve immediate repudiation. For years, the federal government has withheld a portion of its dues, severely obstructing the UN’s activities. Additionally, the United States withdrew from UNESCO in 1984. Past dues should be paid in full, re-entry into UNESCO effected, and the proper respect to international efforts that seek cultural and informational sovereignty given.\textsuperscript{115}

The U.S. Government has a deliberate policy with regard to the expansion of American cultural influence and capital, and this is illustrated with regard to the American Government’s relationship with the UN.

The foreign policy directly relates to the domestic policy, including the emphasis on mass culture, a capitalist and consumer-based society, technology and the encouragement of “mammoth corporations”\textsuperscript{116} referred to in \textit{White Noise}. Popular culture and the mass media may provide a means to maintain the power structure of modern America and can also be used to divert attention away from what is actually occurring both overseas and even within the borders of America.

\textsuperscript{114} Schiller, pp. 141-142.
\textsuperscript{115} Schiller, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{116} DeLillo, \textit{White Noise}, p. 83.
The deliberate policy by the American Government to promote American interests within the global environment is not confined to U.S. capital and mass culture, where another form of American dominance over the rest of the world is in the development of global surveillance in the field of Signals Intelligence. An international intelligence network was formed in the post-war period in continuation of the World War II alliance between the United Kingdom and the United States, which was developed primarily to counteract the threat of Communism.

Under the secret UKUSA Agreement (formulated and accepted in 1947) between Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, the U.S. was the dominant partner and hence determined much of the direction of this intelligence union, where this dominance has only continued and increased into the present:

The primary aspect of the Agreement was the division of SIGINT [Signals Intelligence] collection responsibilities among the First Party (the United States) and the Second Parties (Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand). The world was divided into areas of responsibility, with each nation having the primary responsibility for SIGINT collection in a particular area.117 An international network was formed in the Agreement, which could intercept various forms of communications and which was formed with America at the centre of the operation.

The reason for the dominance of the United States is due primarily to their intelligence capacity, where a shift in power occurred between Britain and the U.S. most notably during World War II:

The reversal in the SIGINT relationship is well-illustrated by the change from British to US control of security procedures. In early 1941 the British strictly limited the number of Americans with ULTRA clearances and the names of all those indoctrinated were required to be reported to the Government Code and Cipher School. Today, it is the United States that controls the clearances and determines indoctrination requirements.118

118 Richelson and Ball, p. 7.
The United States also subsidises, to a great extent, both British and Australian signals intelligence activities and, presumably, those of Canada and New Zealand as well.

The U.S. in the post-war period has maintained military dominance among Western nations and therefore exerts significant influence in determining collection priorities:119

The US thus sits at the node of the information distribution process. According to one former NSA officer, ‘[a]ll information comes to the United States, but the United States does not totally reciprocate in passing all the information to the other powers.’120

The intelligence agencies of the United States are at the centre of an international intelligence network, which involves various foreign agencies, stations and a combined satellite network.

The CIA has played a major role in the development of overhead reconnaissance systems, such as the U-2 aircraft and KH-11121 and RHYOLITE satellites.122 Although the National Security Agency is mostly responsible for Signals Intelligence and the National Reconnaissance Office manages satellite reconnaissance programs for the entire U.S. intelligence community,123 the CIA oversees and directs these intelligence operations. The Director of the CIA is also the Director of Central Intelligence and is responsible for managing the activities of the entire intelligence community.124

The CIA therefore controls the various SIGINT satellites, where

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119 Richelson and Ball, p. 8.
120 Richelson and Ball, p. 8.
121 John Barth refers to the “KH-11 satellite surveillance system,” Barth, Sabbatical: A Romance, p. 88.
122 Richelson and Ball, p. 107
123 Richelson and Ball, p. 97.
124 Richelson and Ball, pp. 107-108.
Since 1970 [until approximately 1988], the United States has successfully launched some 12 geostationary SIGINT satellites – six Rhyolite/ Aquacade satellites, one Argus, four Chalet/ Vortex satellites, and one Magnum satellite. These satellites have grown progressively larger and more capable. About three-quarters of them have been controlled from Pine Gap [Australia]. The Menwith Hill facility in Yorkshire has been responsible for controlling the Argus satellite and those Chalets which have been used primarily for COMINT [Communications Intelligence] collection, but Pine Gap remains by far the most important ground station in the US geostationary SIGINT satellite program.\footnote{Desmond Ball, \textit{Pine Gap: Australia and the US geostationary signals intelligence satellite program} (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988), pp. 27-28.}

Australia is strategically important country in the U.S. global surveillance satellite network, where the operation at Pine Gap is central to the U.S. signals intelligence operation. As confirmed in 1983 by CIA Director William Casey, the CIA administers Pine Gap,\footnote{Ball, p. 1.} where currently at Pine Gap, Australia,

There are senior US personnel from the National Security Agency, the leading signals interception body, the National Reconnaissance Office, which operates intelligence satellites, and the CIA. It has 26 antennas, 14 of them with white domes, and accompanying the huge technological upgrade has been a big increase to more than 850 Australian and US personnel. [...] Pine Gap already receives intelligence information from three geostationary satellites over the Indian Ocean, and another satellite above Indonesia is to be linked to the ground station this year. It can intercept a range of microwave communications – including mobile telephone, telex and the Internet – and is now tapping into the transmission of information related to Iraqi military planning. The sophisticated new antennas mean that Pine Gap is also able to locate mobile radio and radar transmitters.\footnote{Craig Skehan (Defence Correspondent), “Pine Gap prepares for war.” \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} (30 September 2002, No. 51499), p. 6.}

Australia performs a vital role in the international signals interception network of the United States,\footnote{In the conclusion I refer to Australia’s role in the future and Australian Literature (Patrick White).} where the facility at Pine Gap has currently been shifted to intelligence gathering in Iraq, including target identification, ahead of a threatened...
U.S.-led first strike. The range of the signals interception and intelligence gathering capability is here highlighted, where the target, at Pine Gap, is Iraq.

The NSA has via computer an enormous capacity to store and sort intelligence. According to James Bamford, in *The Puzzle Palace: A Report on America’s Most Secret Agency* (c.1982), the NSA has a “vacuum cleaner approach to intelligence collection – whereby it sucks into its system the maximum amount of telecommunications and then filters it through an enormous screen of ‘trigger words.’” Often “innocent” Americans (and also foreign citizens) enter this system:

This happens with considerable frequency because of the way in which names and phrases are jam-packed into the computers. Even though NSA’s specialized supercomputers have enormous storage capacities, the tremendous number of targets forces the Agency to squeeze the watch lists together as tightly as possible.

Similarly, in *Vineland*, there is a particular reference to the computer databases of the U.S. Federal Government, as Roy states “you’ve been bumped off the computer to make way for the next generation, all ‘em deeply personal li’l ones and zeros got changed to somebody else’s.” This form of sophisticated computer database and co-ordination of all intelligence is an indirect reference to the NSA, and unites the earlier references in the novel to surveillance technology and the COINTELPRO files of the FBI.

This database reference is only one aspect of the function of the state in *Vineland*, which is frequently viewed as menacing and an intrusion into the lives of ordinary citizens. Brock Vond represents the potential for misuse of power by the American Government and frequently oversteps the boundaries of the law. He is only

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131 Bamford, p. 364.
a low-level representative of the state, but through him the American Government has a clear presence throughout the novel. Despite this, we are never allowed to enter the world of secret power, referred to in the narrative as “the Real Ones,” outside of witnessing the obvious consequences of decisions, policies and other executive orders made by the senior levels of command within the U.S. Government and to lesser extent corporate magnates.

The reference to “all ’em deeply personal li’l ones and zeroes,” typifies the capability of the U.S. Federal Government to both acquire and access information on both foreign nationals and American citizens and the progress and application of computer technology in storing this seemingly limitless amount of data. Similarly, *White Noise* also refers to a comprehensive computer database on U.S. citizens, which includes “your genetics, your personals, your medicals, your psychologicals, your police-and-hospitals” (DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 141). This database is accessed by a state-employed SIMUVAC technician (ostensibly on behalf of the narrator), although the computer system is presumably not available to the general public in any complete or undiluted form.

Unlike the FBI or even the CIA, there is no legislation which limits the NSA’s activities or which demands public accountability for the actions of this government agency:

> Despite its size and power, […] no law has ever been enacted prohibiting the NSA from engaging in any activity. There are only laws to prohibit the release of any information about the Agency.  

The NSA is, however, influenced and directed by the Central Intelligence Agency, and in particular the Director of Central Intelligence. Indeed the Director of Central

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133 Pynchon, *Vineland*, p. 276.
134 Bamford, p. 4.
Intelligence, Walter Bedell Smith, in 1951 was involved in the formation of the new agency (created on 24 October 1952), and recommended in a memo to the National Security Council the chain of command.

The various UKUSA nations each have an equivalent agency to the NSA in America: the Australian, Defence Signals Directorate (DSD); the British, Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ); the Canadian, Communications Security Establishment (CSE); and the New Zealand, Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB). These various agencies are encouraged and to some extent sponsored by the NSA. The NSA has

Subsidised the allies by providing the sophisticated computer programmes used in the system, it undertakes the bulk of the interception operations and, in return, it can be assumed to have full access to all the allies’ capabilities.\(^{136}\)

A computer system codenamed Platform is the system that then links all the major UKUSA station computers in the ECHELON system.\(^{137}\) The ECHELON system is the NSA’s system, which now links all the dictionary computers of all the participating countries.\(^{138}\)

Each station in the ECHELON network has computers that automatically search through the millions of intercepted messages for ones containing pre-programmed keywords or fax, telex and e-mail addresses. For the frequencies and channels selected at a station, every word of every message is automatically searched (they do not need your specific telephone number or Internet address on the list).\(^{139}\)

\(^{135}\) Richelson and Ball, p. 100.
\(^{137}\) Hager, p. 40.
\(^{138}\) Hager, p. 41.
\(^{139}\) Hager, p. 29.
The NSA is in command of this global system: “There is only one agency which, by virtue of its size and role within the alliance, will have access to the full potential of the ECHELON system: the agency that set it up – the NSA.”

The American Government has great influence and power around the world, most notably in the post-war period. With great power there is also great responsibility, and, according to certain historical documents and also the novels referred to throughout this thesis, the American Government has not always acted with the best interests of society and the individual in mind. In this thesis I concentrate on the chosen texts and on the topic, where popular culture has increasingly become institutionalised by the power structure and culture industry of post-war America. This is revealed foremost in the four chosen texts, where this preface is designed to provide historical evidence which complements the argument throughout the rest of the thesis.

The Literary texts discussed in this thesis have relevance to actual events. For this reason I have given reference to relevant historical events in the preface, where the intention is to complement the textual analysis in the body of the thesis and clarify terms used and references made in both the thesis and the novels. I have deliberately maintained separation between this historical information and the thesis, although (as I have demonstrated) this information relates to events and agencies or institutions mentioned in the texts.

The four chosen texts directly relate to developments which occurred and are still occurring in post-war America. In particular these developments take place in the increasingly institutionalised role of popular culture and popular mythology in post-

140 Hager, p. 51.
war America. A system is formed which is founded on popular culture and popular
myth, and the texts either define (the two novels by Barth) or illustrate this
development (the two novels by DeLillo and Pynchon). In the introduction and
conclusion I provide some Literary context for the four chosen texts and the period,
and refer to relevant post-modern theory. Finally, in the preface, introduction, body,
and conclusion all outside sources are stated and clearly delineated, where the rest of
the work is my own original contribution.