



Research Article

<https://doi.org/10.22455/2541-7894-2024-17-67-89>

<https://elibrary.ru/ALTRQR>

UDC 821.161.1



This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

Radoje V. ŠOŠKIĆ

THOMAS PYNCHON'S *INHERENT VICE* AS A MENIPPEAN SATIRE

Abstract: This paper explores Thomas Pynchon's novel *Inherent Vice* through the lens of Menippean satire, elucidating in particular its intricate interplay of capitalism, counterculture, and spatial dynamics. Drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of Menippean satire, which highlights the carnivalesque inversion of societal norms and the critique of established power structures, the analysis delves into the manifold manipulations of human and spatial identities within the context of consumer culture. Examining the novel's portrayal of spatial conflicts, akin to Pynchon's earlier work *V.*, the paper contends that the streets and locales in *Inherent Vice* serve as metonymic battlegrounds, emblematic of broader social struggles between hegemonic powers and countercultural resistance. Through a juxtaposition of the forces of capitalism, represented by governmental and corporate entities, and the carnivalistic ethos of the hippie counterculture, the narrative underscores the tensions inherent in the shaping of American space and identity in the early 1970s. Central to the analysis is the characterization of Gordita Beach, a fictitious Californian town, as a dialectical space where divergent social forces converge and clash. Here, the imposition of capitalist ideals by figures like Mickey Wolfmann intersects with the countercultural resistance, creating a liminal terrain where socio-economic boundaries blur and alternate identities proliferate.

Keywords: Thomas Pynchon, Mikhail Bakhtin, Postmodernism, Menippean satire, space, identity, capitalism, counterculture, *Inherent Vice*.

Information about the author: Radoje V. Šoškić, Associate Professor, University of Priština in Kosovska Mitrovica, Filipa Višnjića St., 38220 Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7690-2145>. E-mail: radoje.soskic@pr.ac.rs.

For citation: Šoškić, Radoje. "Thomas Pynchon's *Inherent Vice* as a Menippean Satire." *Literature of the Americas*, no. 17 (2024): 67–89. <https://doi.org/10.22455/2541-7894-2024-17-67-89>

Acknowledgments: This study was supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovations of the Republic of Serbia (Contract No. 451-03-66/2024-01/200184).



Научная статья

<https://doi.org/10.22455/2541-7894-2024-17-67-89><https://elibrary.ru/ALTRQR>

УДК 82-1

This is an open access article
distributed under the Creative
Commons Attribution 4.0
International (CC BY 4.0)

Радое В. ШОШКИЧ

«ВНУТРЕННИЙ ПОРОК» ТОМАСА ПИНЧОНА КАК МЕНИППЕЯ

Аннотация: В статье роман Томаса Пинчона «Внутренний порок» рассматривается как мениппея, причем особое внимание уделяется характерному для него сложному переплетению капитализма, контркультуры и пространственной динамики. Опираясь на теорию менипповой сатиры, сформулированную М.М. Бахтиным, который подчеркивает присущие ей выворачивание наизнанку общественных норм и критику признанных структур власти, автор подробно анализирует многообразные метаморфозы личности и пространства в контексте культуры потребления. В статье прослеживается, как в романе изображены пространственные конфликты, перекликающиеся с более ранним произведением Пинчона «V», и высказывается мысль, что улицы и другие места, где разворачивается действие «Внутреннего порока», функционируют как метонимические поля сражений, символизирующие социальное противостояние господствующих авторитетов и контркультуры в целом. Сопологая силы капитализма, воплощенные в государственных структурах и предприятиях, с карнавальным духом контркультуры хиппи, Пинчон подчеркивает коллизии, определяющие американское пространство и идентичность в начале 1970-х годов. Центральное место в анализе занимает характеристика вымышленного калифорнийского городка Гордита-Бич — диалектического пространства, где сходятся и сталкиваются разнонаправленные социальные силы. Капиталистические идеалы, навязываемые такими персонажами, как Мики Волкманн, встречают здесь сопротивление контркультуры, так что образуется переходное пространство, где размываются социально-экономические границы и множатся альтернативные идентичности.

Ключевые слова: Томас Пинчон, Михаил Бахтин, постмодернизм, мениппея, пространство, идентичность, капитализм, контркультура, «Внутренний порок».

Информация об авторе: Радое В. Шошкич, PhD, профессор, Приштинский университет, ул. Филипа Вишница, 38220 Косовска Митровица, Сербия. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7690-2145>. E-mail: radoje.soskic@pr.ac.rs.

Для цитирования: Шошкич Р.В. «Внутренний порок» Томаса Пинчона как мениппея // Литература двух Америк. 2024. № 17. С. 67–89. <https://doi.org/10.22455/2541-7894-2024-17-67-89>

Исследование выполнено при поддержке Министерства науки, технологического развития и инноваций Республики Сербия, договор № 451-03-66/2024-01/200184.

In his seminal works *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1963) and *Rabelais and His World* (1965), the distinguished Russian literary theorist Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin expounded upon the theory of the carnivalization of literature. Proceeding from the premise that literary genre specifically ensures the unity and continuity of literary development by perpetually retaining elements of archaism, i. e., by always remembering its history, the Russian theorist introduced into contemporary literary scholarship a renewed, rich, and highly stimulating conception of the Menippean tradition. Bakhtin's investigations into Menippean satire, Socratic dialogue, i.e., the entire domain of serious-humorous literature, as an exceptional example of carnivalized literature, form the cornerstone of our study in which we will examine how the Menippean tradition influenced the oeuvre of Thomas Pynchon, with a specific focus on his novel *Inherent Vice* (2009).

Within scholarly discourse, Thomas Pynchon is widely acknowledged as a writer whose fiction aligns with the tradition of Menippean satire. However, there remains a noticeable dearth of comprehensive analyses of his novels within the context of this genre. John Stark, in discussing the salient features of Pynchon's works, notably emphasizes the vast erudition with which Pynchon elaborates his themes, suggesting that this attribute, among others, facilitates the categorization of his works within the realm of Menippean satire [Stark 1980]. Given the central focus of his inquiry, Stark briefly touches upon the Menippean elements in Pynchon's texts, although he acknowledges certain characteristics warranting more thorough exploration in this paper, such as the blending of prose and verse, the absence of a tightly structured plot, illogical sequencing of events, and stylized characters afflicted by paranoia as an extreme psychological condition.

In addition to Stark, it is essential to mention Theodor D. Kharper-tian, who, in his book *A Hand to Turn the Time: The Menippean Satires of Thomas Pynchon* (1990), analyzes the elements of satire in three of Pynchon's novels. While Kharper-tian identifies the novels *V.*, *The Crying of Lot 49*, and *Gravity's Rainbow* as exemplars of Menippean satire, his analysis insufficiently addresses the relationship between Pynchon's novels and Bakhtinian theses. As asserted by Steven Weisenburger in his review, Bakhtin demonstrates that satire continually challenges hierarchical relationships among values and expresses distrust toward any normative authority or transcendent signifier, thus bearing resemblance to literary postmodernism [Weisenburger 1990]. According to Weisenburger, Kharper-tian fails to fully harness the potential of Bakhtin's theory, instead

confining his analysis to a primary thesis that satire criticizes human errors and flaws according to rigidly defined rules.

According to Bakhtin, the history of Menippean satire begins with the disintegration of the so-called Socratic dialogue into other dialogic genres, among which the Menippean satire emerges, although its roots extend not only to the Socratic dialogue but also to the tradition of carnival folklore. The name Menippean satire is derived from the philosopher Menippus of Gadara from the 3rd century BC, who conceived the classical form of this genre, although his satires have not survived. The term “Menippean satire” was first introduced by Varro in the 1st century BC, who referred to his satires as “saturae menippeae,” yet Bakhtin emphasizes that even before him, Heraclitus Ponticus and Bion of Borysthenes wrote in genres akin to Menippean satire. In the centuries following Varro, other authors utilized Menippean satire, resulting in works such as Seneca’s *Apocolocyntosis*, Petronius’s *Satyricon*, Lucian’s satires, and Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses (The Golden Ass)*. Bakhtin identifies the end of the development of Menippean satire in its ancient phase with Boethius’s work *The Consolation of Philosophy* [Bakhtin 1984]. Following the ancient era, the Menippean satire continued to evolve in various forms during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, persisting in development through to contemporary authors. Bakhtin emphasizes that:

This carnivalized genre, extraordinarily flexible and as changeable as Proteus, capable of penetrating other genres, has had an enormous and as yet insufficiently appreciated importance for the development of European literatures. Menippean satire became one of the main carriers and channels for the carnival sense of the world in literature, and remains so to the present day [Bakhtin 1984: 62].

When it comes to the fundamental characteristics of this genre, Bakhtin primarily compares it with the Socratic dialogue, asserting that “the specific weight of the comic element is generally increased in the menippea, although this vacillates significantly in the diverse varieties of this flexible genre” [Bakhtin 1984: 63]. Alongside the element of laughter, he emphasizes that Menippean satire is liberated from the rules of the real world, which is why it is characterized by “an *extraordinary freedom of plot and philosophical invention*” [Bakhtin 1984: 63], with it being quite common for its heroes to be historical or legendary figures such as Diogenes or Menippus. Similarly, in Pynchon’s Menippean satires,

we encounter characters based on real individuals (for example, in the novel *Mason & Dixon*, we find Charles Mason, Jeremiah Dixon, George Washington, and Benjamin Franklin), whose stories intertwine with those of characters whose characterization is not based on real persons. Most of Pynchon's characters are not based on real individuals, and since many of them are flat characters embodying only a few traits, they correspond to the characteristics of Menippean satire, which, as noted by Northrop Frye, "deals less with people as such than with mental attitudes" [Frye 1957: 309]. Thus, in the Menippean satire, we encounter characters such as

Pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts, rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds, are handled in terms of their occupational approach to life as distinct from their social behavior. The Menippean satire thus resembles the confession in its ability to handle abstract ideas and theories, and differs from the novel in its characterization, which is stylized rather than naturalistic, and presents people as mouthpieces of the ideas they represent [Frye 1957: 309].

According to Bakhtin, the most important characteristic of the menippea as a genre is the fact that its "bold and unrestrained use of the fantastic and adventure is internally motivated, justified by and devoted to a purely ideational and philosophical end." In such texts, extraordinary situations are created for the "provoking and testing of a philosophical idea, a discourse, a *truth*, embodied in the image of a wise man, the seeker of this truth," but Bakhtin warns that this does not entail the "positive embodiment of truth," but rather a mode for searching after truth and testing it [Bakhtin 1984: 63]. In pursuit of this goal, characters in the Menippean satire embark on extremely fantastical journeys, ascending to the heavens, descending into the nether regions, venturing into fantastical lands, and encountering extraordinary situations. Given that the verification of an idea or truth lies at the heart of such works, Bakhtin argues that the content of the Menippean satire is essentially an adventure of idea or truth in the world, whether it pertains to earthly realms, the heavens, or the underworld. Consequently, the Menippean satire may involve the accumulation of ideas and digressions or episodes in which they are tested, resulting in what Frye terms an encyclopedic mixture: "The tendency to expand into an encyclopaedic farrago is clearly marked in Rabelais, notably in the great catalogues of torcheuculs and epithets of codpieces and methods of divination" [Frye 1957: 311]. In Pynchon's works, digressions abound

wherein Menippean characters journey in search of answers to certain questions, often experiencing surreal places¹, and encountering fantastical characters².

Although the Menippean satire effortlessly shifts the narrative from the everyday to the fantastic, an important characteristic is its ability to combine the fantastic and the mystical-religious element “with an extreme and (from our point of view) crude *slum naturalism*.” Bakhtin identifies settings characteristic of Menippean satire such as the high road, brothels, the dens of thieves, taverns, marketplaces, prisons, the chambers for erotic orgies of secret cults, emphasizing how the man of the idea-the wise man “collides with worldly evil, depravity, baseness, and vulgarity in their most extreme expression” [Bakhtin 1984: 63]. The protagonists in Pynchon’s novels also seek answers to their questions in peripheral locations where the vulgar or secular intersects with philosophical-religious reflections and questioning of ideas. Thus, characters frequent taverns (especially in *Mason & Dixon*), cafes, fast-food restaurants (for example, in novels like *The Crying of Lot 49*, *Vineland*, and *Bleeding Edge*), and gathering spots of criminals, robbers, prostitutes, and similar characters who inhabit the social underworld (as notably highlighted in *Against the Day*). Bakhtin recognizes the naturalism of the Menippean satire even in its earliest examples, in the texts of Bion of Borysthenes, Varro, and Lucian, though he emphasizes that such naturalism reached its fullest expression in Petronius’s and Apuleius’s Menippean satires, which later evolved into the novel form. He asserts that “the organic combination of philosophical dialogue, lofty symbol-systems, the adventure-fantastic, and slum naturalism is the outstanding characteristic of the menippea, and it is preserved in all subsequent stages in the development of the dialogic line of novelistic prose right up to Dostoevsky” [Bakhtin 1984: 63].

The fusion of fantasy, adventure, and philosophical contemplation leads to the creation of a text in which the world traversed by characters of the Menippean satire is portrayed as a realm of “ultimate questions”, wherein “ultimate philosophical positions are put to the test” [Bakhtin 1984: 63]. In the Menippean satire, everything is subjected to the foregrounding

¹ For example, in *Against the Day*, characters travel beneath the sand in a sort of flying machine and visit parallel worlds.

² Such as in *Mason & Dixon*, where the characters converse with a talking dog, or in *V.*, where Bongo-Shaftesbury appears, a character with an unusual electrical mechanism embedded in his body, and in *Against the Day*, where protagonists encounter time travelers.

of fundamental life questions, and what Bakhtin terms the philosophical universalism of the Menippean satire is simultaneously the reason for its tripartite structure. In other words, its narrative often extends across earthly space, the realm of gods, and the underworld, placing characters almost incessantly in a liminal position, between spaces, perpetually poised on the uncertain and fluid boundary thresholds that divide the contrasting realms of the Menippean satire. It is precisely because of the protagonists' position in the Menippean satire that Bakhtin identifies what he calls "experimental fantasticality", wherein the narrative is viewed from an exceptionally unusual standpoint, one at which the character arrives through free movement across thresholds that separate the diverse and often fantastical spaces of the Menippean satire. Regarding the fantastical spaces traversed by characters, Bakhtin particularly emphasizes how the Menippean satire often includes elements of social utopia, whether in dreams of utopia or in journeys to unknown lands, sometimes leading to the transformation of the Menippean satire into a utopian novel. Pynchon's novels depict numerous characters focused on similar quests for utopias, places that should serve as alternative spaces for living where they could realize certain ideals (given that they often recognize characteristics of dystopia in the world they inhabit) or as spaces that would somehow provide them with answers to their questions (for example, the utopian land of Shambhala in *Against the Day* or the mythical continent of Lemuria in *Inherent Vice*).

During such journeys through the world, where unusual situations are commonplace, characters of the Menippean satire undergo extreme psychological changes. Bakhtin emphasizes that the Menippean satire portrays, for the first time, peculiar moral and psychological states of humans, including various forms of madness, split personalities, unrestrained daydreaming, unusual dreams, passions bordering on madness, and suicides. A character experiencing these psychological changes or states is confronted with situations that "destroy the epic and tragic wholeness of a person and his fate: the possibilities of another person and another life are revealed in him, he loses his finalized quality and ceases to mean only one thing; he ceases to coincide with himself." Dreams, daydreams, and insanity "take the person beyond the bounds of his fate and his character," providing the reader with an opportunity to "look at a person in a new way." As the Menippean satire often contains hybrid or split personalities, it is not surprising that Bakhtin highlights it as a genre rife with "sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations: the virtuous hetaera, the true freedom of the wise man and his servile position, the emperor who becomes

a slave, moral downfalls and purifications, luxury and poverty, the noble bandit, and so forth” [Bakhtin 1984: 63–64]. These are texts that depict abrupt and frequent transitions from one state to another, encompassing unexpected falls and rises, as well as “unexpected comings together of distant and disunited things, mésalliances of all sorts” [Bakhtin 1984: 64]. Apart from Pynchon’s works brimming with literal character falls (thus, it is not surprising to encounter a scene in *Gravity’s Rainbow* where a character slips on a banana peel right at the beginning), they are also filled with scenes of moral falls and redemptions, as well as the aforementioned extreme psychological states, which can also function as rises and falls (scenes of paranoia, ecstasy, daydreaming, dreaming, revelry mixed with scenes of murder, torture, accident, and mourning). Hence, Pynchon’s characters often appear as fragmented or split personalities (or hybrids of opposing categories, such as human and animal), and their quest (coinciding with the reader’s experience of reading a fragmented text, trying to find its meaning) is focused on some form of stabilizing their own identity, or returning to the state before fragmentation.

In addition to the mésalliances recognized in the characterization of characters in the Menippean satire occurring at the level of plot, we can also notice them at the structural and formal level. Indeed, Bakhtin emphasizes how the Menippean satire often combines elements of different literary genres, hence we may encounter combinations of prose, poetry, and elements of dramatic text, but equally frequent is the borrowing of characteristics from various genres, sometimes with the intention of shaping a parody of a specific genre. Almost all of Pynchon’s works contain shorter poems, most of which are not taken from real, existing works (although they may resemble such works). However, as it is often not entirely clear who is singing in the text, these voices often function as a modern version of the ancient chorus commenting on specific events or narrating them through song. In such texts, there is a blending of styles and interaction of texts as a result of their juxtaposition, and it is important to emphasize how the free Menippean blending of prose and verse, as well as different genres and styles, can simultaneously evoke comedy because unexpected combinations create an impression of carnivalesque variability of the text.

In Bakhtin’s description, the carnivalesque spirit is one of the most important characteristics of the Menippean satire. Although festivities, rituals, and other forms of behavior that Bakhtin talks about were originally associated with the carnival that took place in public life, the carnivalesque

spirit can also be recognized in written literary forms. Therefore, the Menippean satire continues to depict a carnivalistic life, “life drawn out of its *usual* rut, [...] “life turned inside out,” “the reverse side of the world”. It is a world where “the laws, prohibitions, and restrictions that determine the structure and order of ordinary, that is noncarnival, life” are suspended, thereby suspending the usual hierarchical order that results in certain inequalities among people. This also implies the erasure of all boundaries, especially those between otherwise clearly separated social strata, resulting in “*free and familiar contact among people*” [Bakhtin 1984: 65]. Pynchon’s satires abound with a plethora of carnivalistic opposites — high and low, sacred and profane, human and animal, tragic and comic — reflecting the Menippean tradition of blending different categories and creating contrasts. Considering Bakhtin’s emphasis on dialogism, uninhibited creation of *mésalliances* can also lead to a certain form of dialogue between individuals or social strata that are separated according to the rules of socio-hierarchical relations. Such dialogues are unburdened by the rules that usually govern communication, so the abolition of hierarchical boundaries also affects the liberation of all forms of expression, which can then lead to the depiction of eccentric behavior, mockery, parody, as well as indecency and vulgarity in behavior and speech, sometimes even breaking taboos. All these features of Menippean satire, especially parody, subversion, or erasure of hierarchical boundaries, and *mésalliances* between the sublime and the mundane, can be recognized in our analysis of Pynchon’s novel *Inherent Vice*.

This paper will strive to analyze Thomas Pynchon’s novel *Inherent Vice* as a Menippean satire, wherein a significant position is held by the interplay of capitalism, counterculture, and spatial dynamics. Attention will be chiefly directed towards examining the diverse manipulations of human and spatial identities, as well as the individual’s position and response within the context of consumer culture. It is crucial to emphasize that *Inherent Vice* does not mark Pynchon’s inaugural foray into satirizing spatial governance issues, as the motif of space has been a recurring element in shaping the identities of individuals, communities, and broader national boundaries throughout his oeuvre.

Discussing similar spatial conflicts in Thomas Pynchon’s novel *V.*, Elizabeth Campbell refers to the street as a metonymic representation of urban civilization, an open territory and a battleground of the twentieth century between indigenous peoples and the forces of individuals or organizations in positions of power (while the space beneath the street,

among other things, represents the territory of the subconscious, fantasy, or escape from danger). Similarly, in the novel *Inherent Vice*, there is a rivalry between two opposing currents in the United States in the early 1970s. On one side are the representatives of capitalism, who, in various forms of collaboration with the organs of American government, promote the idea of an ideal American future of consumerism and conformity, a goal sought through the alteration of people's identities and spaces. The main representatives of this colonization effort are the American government and police, involved in the direct physical transformation of California's space, as well as builders and producers of consumer culture, along with those who propagate a mentality of fear, betrayal, and mistrust.

On the other side of this conflict lies the carnivalistic world of hippies, or the counterculture, whose members persist in alternative forms of behavior, seeking to find a way out of the dominant atmosphere of paranoia while simultaneously searching for the renewal of lost identities and a place to live removed from the new rewritings of American space. However, it will be noted that this carnivalistic segment of society, despite its numerous positive traits, has an ambivalent nature, as evidenced by the fact that the potential progressiveness of counterculture often stalls in politically passive regressions into nostalgia or fantasies of utopian spaces, with its members repeating the mistakes of the structures they once resisted, thereby acquiescing to conformity and changes in their own identities.

The significance of space in the characters' reflections on their own and others' identities is established from the first page of the novel. When Doc Sportello, a private investigator, visits Shasta Fey, his former girlfriend, after a year of absence, she walks along the alley and climbs the back steps "the way she always used to."³ Doc feels nostalgia for the past when Shasta always wore "sandals, bottom half of a flower-print bikini, faded Country Joe & the Fish T-shirt," and the reader's attention is directed to his nostalgia through Shasta's movement in the clearly defined space of the alley and back steps "the way she always used to." However, Shasta's return is discordant with the space that Doc associates with a nostalgic vision of Shasta, evident from her appearance. She is dressed more conservatively, "all in flatland gear," with hair "a lot shorter than he remembered," which contrasts with hippie symbols such as long hair and a more relaxed

³ Pynchon, Thomas. *Inherent Vice*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2012: 6. Hereinafter referred to as [IV].

style of dress. Since Shasta looks “just like she swore she’d never look,” Doc jokingly says, “That you, Shasta?”, to which she replies, “Thinks he’s hallucinating” [IV: 6]. Doc’s humor draws the reader’s attention to the change in Shasta’s identity from a member of the counterculture to a “nice city girl” in a relationship with Mickey Wolfmann, a “Gentleman of the straightworld persuasion” and wealthy mogul with numerous properties in his possession. As noted by John Liner, the fact that Doc decides to help Shasta and search for Wolfmann (who has recently disappeared, as will soon Shasta) will serve as one of the more prominent ironies in the text because Doc will thus act in the interest of the privileged class, to which Wolfmann belongs, while simultaneously being compelled to work against a part of society to which he himself belongs (although Liner emphasizes that due to the nature of his job, Doc is actually always confronted with irreconcilable differences between obligations to the law and to members of the hippie counterculture, or between loyalty to the working class and serving capitalist interests) [Liner 2016].

The convergence of signifiers emblematic of both mainstream cultural norms and countercultural ethos within the framework of Shasta’s identity finds further expression in the delineation of spatial identity prevalent throughout the narrative, particularly within the fictitious Californian town of Gordita Beach. This locale emerges as a dialectical space, a township portrayed as a somewhat sanctified refuge for countercultural devotees, yet simultaneously under the sway of entrenched forces of racism and capitalism. It serves as a canvas upon which Mickey Wolfmann endeavors to impose the tenets of capitalism through his architectural interventions. Notably, the etymology of the town’s name, rooted in the Spanish term “gordo,” meaning *fat*, evokes a sense of irony, implying the improbability of such a seemingly utopian haven — a notion succinctly encapsulated by the colloquial expression “fat chance.” Nonetheless, at the novel’s outset, select precincts of the town are indeed suffused with mirth and festivity, presenting themselves as carnivalistic arenas where socio-economic stratifications momentarily dissolve, or conversely, as havens sought for the obliteration of such demarcations.

Weeknights out here weren’t too different from weekends, so this part of town was already all ahoot with funseekers, drinkers and surfers screaming in the alleys, dopers out on food errands, flatland guys in for a night of hustling stewardesses, flatland ladies with all-too-grounded day jobs hoping to be mistaken for stewardesses [IV: 9].

In the town of Gordita, hippies, alcoholics, and drug addicts mingle with the town's regular citizens, and such a depiction of a world based on mixed perceptions is also reflected in the blurring of boundaries between the living and non-living. This is evident, for example, in the description of traffic noise:

Uphill and invisible, traffic out on the boulevard to and from the freeway uttered tuneful exhaust phrases which went echoing out to sea, where the crews of oil tankers sliding along, hearing them, could have figured it for wildlife taking care of nighttime business on an exotic coast [IV: 9].

At the center of the narrative are numerous characters who are comedic due to their otherness (often eccentric individuals on the fringes of society), characters who stand in opposition to Wolfmann's capitalist transformations of space, and who, with their unusual appearance or behavior, deviate from the reader's expectations. Doc shares his office "with a Dr. Buddy Tubeside, whose practice consisted largely of injecting people with "vitamin B12," a euphemism for the physician's own blend of amphetamines" [IV: 16]. Besides the character of the doctor representing a Menippean fusion of healer and drug injector (which is achieved by playing with the multiple meanings of the word "drugs," which can denote both narcotics and medicines), his name is a typical example of Pynchon's character naming. Namely, the English word "buddy" translates to "friend," while the surname "Tubeside" (eng. "tube" — television, "side" — side) could be translated as "the one who sits in front of the TV" or "the one glued to the TV." At the same time, Tubeside's waiting room is a portrayal of a carnivalistic world in miniature, where people of different ages, professions, appearances, and social statuses mix:

Doc still had to edge his way past a line of "B12"-deficient customers which already stretched back to the parking lot, beachtown housewives of a certain melancholy index, actors with casting calls to show up at, deeply tanned geezers looking ahead to an active day of schmoozing in the sun, stewardii just in off some high-stress red-eye, even a few legit cases of pernicious anemia or vegetarian pregnancy, all shuffling along half asleep, chain-smoking, talking to themselves, sliding one by one into the lobby of the little cinder-block building through a turnstile, next to which, holding a clipboard and checking them in, stood Petunia Leeway, a stunner in a starched cap and micro-length medical outfit, not so much an actual nurse uniform as a lascivious commentary on one [IV: 16].

Aside from Tubeside's waiting room, places like restaurants and cafes are also depicted as heterotopias (reminiscent of taverns from the novel *Mason & Dixon*) where a diverse assembly of characters congregates. Within these spaces, the range of conversational topics is unrestricted and uninhibited, thus enabling the interrogation of all possibilities, and at times serving as venues for contemplation of supernatural events or experiences. Denis's pizza with unknown ingredients will serve as a symbol of the carnivalistic freedom found in such locales. After ordering and receiving the pizza, Denis will bring it to the table where his friends are seated and declare, "I forget what I asked for on it," followed by the others' attempts to identify the pizza's ingredients:

'That's a papaya chunk,' Slim guessed, 'and these ... are these pork rinds?'
'And boysenberry yogurt on pizza, Denis? Frankly, eeww.' [...]
'Would you mind, Denis, actually, if I just took this piece of tofu?'
'That's a marshmallow,' Denis said [IV: 14–15].

The mentioned eccentric characters also exhibit a carnivalistic attitude towards space, as evidenced by their interpretations of spatial elements or characteristics. Through this process, they infuse the space with the traits of their own interpretations, thus deviating from the everyday and monotonous, and becoming peculiar. We will recognize this in Denis's extraordinary understanding of the inscription above the pharmacy:

"So Doc, I'm up on Dunecrest, you know the drugstore there, and like I noticed their sign, 'Drug'? 'Store'? Okay? Walked past it a thousand times, never *really* saw it — Drug, Store! man, far out, so I went in and Smilin Steve was at the counter and I said, like, 'Yes, hi, I'd like some drugs, please?' — oh, here, finish this up if you want" [IV: 13].

Instances akin to these, as well as similar contraventions of audience expectations, frequently derive from subversiveness and linguistic playfulness entwined with spatial dynamics, sometimes leading to the dismantling of entrenched hierarchical relationships through the playful merging of high and low categories. Pynchon's satire is imbued with allusions and quotations, thus rendering any cultural fragment a potential intertext of the novel, with humor arising precisely when disparate cultural elements find themselves in an unusual juxtaposition. The health food restaurant, "Price of Wisdom," situated above the premises of Ruby's Lounge, features a sign

directing passersby to the restaurant reading: “THE PRICE OF WISDOM IS ABOVE RUBY’S, JOB 28: 18” [IV: 239]. The whimsical juxtaposition of an actual biblical quote and the sign above the establishment is comedic precisely because it is unexpected, and such juxtaposition of conflicting cultural contents simultaneously conflicts with Wolfmann’s uniform spatial alterations. While Wolfmann’s character is presented as the embodiment of America’s desire to conquer the expanses of the American West (with Gordita Beach in the text serving as a place that needs to be conquered and changed), the conceptual backdrop of the countercultural movement towards the West is grounded in the desire to explore and embrace the new and unknown in the Pacific expanses. It can be argued that the significant movement towards the Pacific coast, with its decolonizing intent at its core, is fundamentally opposed to the American aspiration to conquer the “Otherness” of the West. Although the direction parallels the historical conquest of the continent, the countercultural movement is of a different nature, indeed antithetical to the historical westward march. Indeed, this “westward march” serves as one of the central driving forces in American history, representing a journey towards progress, wealth, expansion, and the conquest of foreign territory, which is then translated into something recognizable, domesticated, and clearly structured. The nature of this endeavor is elucidated by the conventional English term “frontier” for this borderland area.

Wolfmann’s transformation of California begins at a time when the counterculture of the sixties is undergoing its metamorphosis into the Nixon era, during which the erstwhile countercultural elements gradually assimilate into mainstream culture. The process of discarding extremes, or assimilating the marginal into the mainstream, occurs concurrently with changes in the spatial dynamics of California. This transformation ensued after the summer of 1969, when members of the cult gathered around Charles Manson committed a series of murders, thereby influencing the spread of paranoia among US citizens and casting many similar communities in the public eye as sources of threat. The impact of such a state of affairs on society’s attitude towards hippies will also be noted by Doc:

“Well, what I’ve been noticing since Charlie Manson got popped is a lot less eye contact from the straight world. You folks all used to be like a crowd at the zoo — ‘Oh, look, the male one is carrying the baby and the female one is paying for the groceries,’ sorta thing, but now it’s like,

‘Pretend they’re not even there, cause maybe they’ll mass murder our ass’” [IV: 180–181].

The frequent mention of the trial of Manson cult members throughout the novel conveys an atmosphere of distrust and heightened caution towards anything deviating from acceptable norms of behavior. Many members of the counterculture yearn for a return to values such as mutual trust, contrasting with the reality of the new decade dominated by the prevailing category of paranoia. In such a world, those most driven by “the ancient forces of greed and fear” strive to quell any resistance to authority and to marginalize anything subversive from the center. We observe how this process is carried out through new reconfigurations of space. Namely, such attitudes are reflected in parodic illustrations of the necessity to isolate any threat, exaggerated by security measures, from the community that has adapted to the center’s pattern.

Disguised as a representative for “Hairy Rope Home Security of Tarzana”, Doc feigns selling a home security system:

Aunt Reet had told him once long ago about the California homeowner’s belief that if you run a hairy rope all around your property line, no snakes will ever cross it. ‘Our system works on a similar principle,’ Doc now explained to the Tweedles, Art and Cindi, we set up a network of electric eyes hooked to speakers all along your property line. Anydody breaking the beam will trigger a pattern of subsonic pulses — some will produce vomiting, some diarrhea, any of it’s enough to send any intruder back where he came from with a hefty dry-cleaning bill to deal with [IV: 172–173].

Traveling through the paranoid communities of California, Doc, through a series of encounters and conversations, unveils the dominant spatial problems inherent in his surroundings, particularly those influencing the configuration of identity. In the above-cited excerpt, the unwanted intruder becomes the subject of dark humor (as the alarm will induce unwanted consequences of vomiting and diarrhea). Ironically, however, it redirects the reader’s attention to characters like Art and Cindi, whose fear of the Other is rooted in prejudice. The dark humor of this dialogue thus serves as a reminder that the fusion of capitalist power and fear management inscribes a new space on the palimpsest of California, simultaneously fueling paranoia in all those whose otherness makes them subject to capitalist changes. Although the conversation between Doc and Art Tweedle is

marked by a humorous tone, highlighting Art's obsession with protection and weaponry, this tone actually exposes Art's racism: "Won't be any darkies sneaking onto *this* watermelon patch anytime soon" [IV: 174]. We notice that even the role of the police and law enforcement officers is linked to Art's understanding of social order, emphasizing that the California police employ individuals like Art Tweedle to carry out unofficial tasks such as threats or surveillance. Additionally, characters recognize an increasing societal fascination with the police⁴. The hints of the transformation of the USA into a police state are further highlighted by comedic exaggeration in descriptions of the enormous sums of money invested in police forces. Doc will visit the police headquarters, which he dubs "Hippiephobia Central", and barely recognizes it as it has been transformed with federal funds "into a palatial cop's paradise featuring locomotive-size espresso machines, its own mini-jail, a motor pool full of rolling weaponry that would otherwise be in Vietnam, and a kitchen with a crew of pastry chefs working around the clock [IV: 44]. In America reconfigured in this manner, money serves as a tool for enhancing police forces to secure the center from the threat of marginal phenomena (such as the Manson family), but also as a means of executing spatial changes and delineations as a consequence of fear's influence.

The satirical exposure of paranoia in the above-cited passage on home security extends further to the spatial inscriptions reflecting violent acts of racial identity purification, as recognized in the assertion that black settlements were erased to make way for Wolfmann's Channel View Estates project. Since the words "Channel" and "View" suggest a focus on TV channels and viewing, it could be interpreted as replacing undesirable content with a singular, clearly curated view provided by television (i.e., a limited number of television channels). Tariq, a black character, reveals to the reader the background of the entire history of manipulations of racial identity in space: "Before the war, a lot of South Central was still a Japanese neighborhood. Those people got sent to camps, we come on in to be the next Japs" [IV: 19]. In this way, in space, one marginalized Other is replaced by a new Other, which still represents a margin that needs to be controlled by erasure or replacement with a more desirable option. Doc will thus observe at Wolfmann's construction site black pedestrians who, "bewildered as Tariq must have been, maybe also looking for the old neighborhood, for rooms lived in day after day, solid as the axes of space,

⁴ Pynchon's characters observe the same issue in *Bleeding Edge* (2001).

now taken away into commotion and ruin” [IV: 21]. However, the novel does not only depict spatial and racial transformations of the twentieth century, but also other injustices from the distant history of American society, which simultaneously serve as the underlying text for more recent manipulations of spatial identity:

Long, sad history of L.A. land use [...] Mexican families bounced out of Chavez Ravine to build Dodger Stadium, American Indians swept out of Bunker Hill for the Music Center, Tariq’s neighborhood bulldozed aside for Channel View Estates [IV: 20].

In recounting his release from prison and return to his old neighborhood, Tariq describes the changed environment he returns to as follows: “Nobody and nothing. Ghost town. Except for this big sign, “Coming Soon on This Site,” houses for peckerwood prices, shopping mall, some shit” [IV: 19]. Through their descriptions of space, characters recognize the implicit racial segregation of American space. For instance, Doc recalls the last time a black person (in this case, a motorist) was seen in Gordita Beach, where “anxious calls for backup went out on all the police bands, a small task force of cop vehicles assembled, and roadblocks were set up all along Pacific Coast Highway” [IV: 17]. In a similar darkly humorous description, we learn that a black family actually intended to move to Gordita Beach, but “the citizens, with helpful advice from the Ku Klux Klan, had burned the place to the ground and then, as if some ancient curse had come into effect, refused to allow another house ever to be built on the site” [IV: 17]. Given that a park was later built in the area where “by the laws of karmic adjustment, were soon gathering at night to drink, dope, and fuck, depressing their parents, though not property values particularly” [IV: 17], it is evident that the space is simultaneously a Menippean fluid place of racial and ideological conflict and the traumas that arise from them.

The conquest and transformation of space by capitalist symbols such as shopping centers or affluent suburbs implies the displacement of the subversive element of counterculture, a movement whose identity is not based on the principle of controlling space and possessing it. The carnivalized identity of counterculture is marked by change (often associated with the heterotopia of the sea, emphasized by references to motifs of ocean waves and surfing), movement, and the quest for new ways of thinking and existence, in line with Bakhtin’s road chronotope. It is important to recall that this chronotope emphasizes movement, encounter, and dialogue. In other

words, the surfer and hippie identities of counterculture are Menippean identities that transcend boundaries and are constantly in flux, identities diametrically opposed to the class to which magnate Crocker Fenway belongs, and who wants to ostracize all “non-homeowning infidels,” as he calls them, from his space and send them “to some crowded exile far away, where they could be safely forgotten” [IV: 301]. In Fenway’s vision, these “infidels” are cheap labor whose identity can be transformed into consumer goods or merely temporary residents that people like Fenway can purchase with symbols of consumer society such as a car or even just a “chili dog, for Christ’s sake. [...] We will never run out of you people. The supply is inexhaustible.” On the other hand, members of Fenway’s class have the right to all other goods: “Real estate, water rights, oil, cheap labor—all of that’s ours, it’s always been ours” [IV: 299].

Considering all these factors, it's evident that the transformation of the environment within Wolfmann’s Channel View Estates project and Fenway’s reshaping of space into affluent suburbs instills a sense of fear of imminent catastrophe among members of the counterculture, which will also alter their own identity. Such interventions in space, as Doc’s aunt Reet calls them, constitute an “assault on the environment” [IV: 12]. Interestingly, the imminent construction of new settlements is advertised with billboards (“Coming Soon on This Site”), which, when viewed from this perspective, also carry a tone of threat. Aunt Reet says the following:

“Someday,” she prophesied, “there will be computers for this, all you’ll have to do’s type in what you’re looking for, or even better just talk it in — like that HAL in *2001: A Space Odyssey*? — and it’ll be right back at you with more information than you’d ever want to know, any lot in the L.A. Basin, all the way back to the Spanish land grants — water rights, encumbrances, mortgage histories, whatever you want, trust me, it’s coming” [IV: 10–11].

By directly referencing the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), the similarity between the paranoia felt by the characters in Pynchon’s novel and the protagonist of Kubrick’s film is emphasized, as he struggles against the computer system HAL and its attempts to alter the protagonist’s living space. Just as the ruling structure fears subversive or foreign elements of society that need to be assimilated or ostracized in the process of rewriting space, these elements also fear the future change of their identities, which can be inferred from the warning given to Doc by his mother in a nightmare:

‘And you, someday you’re gonna have to conform.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Be like everybody else’ [IV: 178].

Given that “being like everyone else” for the characters actually means conforming to behavioral patterns that presuppose an uncritical attitude towards ruling structures and the spread of a culture of paranoia, they seek to resist such patterns with their comedic and often self-ironic view of the world. Humor thus becomes a key component in achieving their Menippean interrogation of the conditions and outcomes of the process of conforming, as well as certain shortcomings of the counterculture itself. Consequently, we find numerous jokes about the police, which in the text function as an authority whose values are desirable to imitate in the process of conformity, but humor reveals that it is often a corrupt body in which the counterculture has lost trust. When Boris, one of the members of the group following Mickey Wolfmann, suggests to Doc that he should seek help from the police in the investigation, Doc will respond incredulously: “What are you a doctor of, tripping? University of what planet again?” [IV: 132]. In a conversation with his acquaintance Fritz, Doc expresses a similar attitude sarcastically commenting on the increasing number of “cop shows”:

‘Yeah, but nowadays it’s all you see anymore is cops, the tube is saturated with fuckin cop shows, just being regular guys, only trying to do their job, folks, no more threat to nobody’s freedom than some dad in a sitcom’ [IV: 86].

In light of Doc’s growing awareness of the collusion of authorities, police, and capitalism, he interprets the media’s dissemination of the behavioral pattern embodied by the police as a summons to conformity: “Right. Get the viewer population so cop-happy they’re beggin to be run in” [IV: 86].

Distrust in authorities extends even to the highest echelons of US politics, with President Richard Nixon appearing as a grotesque caricature shouting from the television screen: “There are always the whiners and complainers who’ll say, this is fascism. Well, fellow Americans, if it’s Fascism for Freedom? *I... can...dig it!*” [IV: 106]. Considering the slogan’s origins in countercultural vernacular, which President Nixon appropriates to justify authoritarian rhetoric antithetical to countercultural ideals, it’s

understandable that the characters recoil from conformity that would align their identities with the behavioral patterns of unreliable authorities in American society. It is important to note that the construction of the impression of the unreliability of these authorities largely relies on the assumed knowledge of the reader, who knows that President Nixon played a central role in the Watergate scandal in the 1970s. Later in the novel, Doc will, once again using humor, criticize the invincibility of the FBI, directly implicated in manipulations with Mickey Wolfmann:

You could catch the FBI in the act of sodomizing the president in the Lincoln Memorial at high noon and local law enforcement would still just have to stand around and watch, getting more or less nauseated depending which president [IV: 244].

In addition to Nixon and the FBI, the text also contains satirical echoes of the consequences of the policies of California Governor Ronald Reagan (who, as readers of the novel *Vineland* are aware, would go on to have even greater influence on American society after becoming President of the United States in 1981). Reagan's policies will impact changes in the identity of Japonica Fenway, daughter of Crocker Fenway:

Owing to Governor Reagan's shutdown of most of the state mental facilities, the private sector had been trying in its way to pick up some of the slack, soon in fact becoming a standard California child-rearing resource [IV: 149].

Neoliberal capitalism has thus enabled the private sector to profit experimentally in the field of psychiatric care. Although Crocker sends Japonica for regular maintenance at one of these institutions, she will outwardly appear as "a Cybernetic Organism, or cyborg, programmed to eat and drink, converse and socialize, while Real Japonica tended to important business elsewhere," and Japonica in her thoughts will become a "Kozmic Traveler" [IV: 150], thus dividedly escaping the reprogramming of her own identity. Through these scenes, as well as numerous other examples, the text highlights the paranoid view of the characters towards authorities who no longer enjoy their trust. However, it is important to emphasize that humor appears in the text even when describing cases in which counterculture, despite being aware of the conditions and consequences of conformity, still fails to resist unwanted changes in identity or even

directly acquiesces to them. Taking into account the laughter of self-irony associated with counterculture, its members often fail in their attempts to oppose dominant behavioral patterns, thereby undermining their vision of some kind of utopian community. Therefore, in the comedic mode in which they are portrayed, the reader inevitably recognizes their oscillation between the creative and philosophical freedom of counterculture and the pessimistic view of conformity.

The literal translation of the novel *Inherent Vice* would be *primordial sin* or *innate flaw*, evoking associations with the original sin from the Bible. However, the term also denotes a characteristic inherent in all physical bodies, predisposing them to decay or dissolution, thereby echoing themes of entropy, notably emphasized in Pynchon's short story "Entropy" and the novel *The Crying of Lot 49*. According to the second law of thermodynamics, the entropy of a closed system never decreases but tends toward increase, leading to a state of maximum disorder.⁵ As Sauncho remarks, "It's what you can't avoid" [IV: 303], suggesting that the nightmarish scenario of American society may indeed be an inevitable aspect of Pynchon's characters' future. Sauncho's reflection on the future of the United States towards the end of the novel, which can be interpreted as an extremely pessimistic vision, is an evolution of thought from lamenting nostalgia to a mythical discourse of alternative futures. In this context, Sauncho criticizes the broken promises of the present:

Sauncho was giving a kind of courtroom summary, as if he'd just been handling a case. '...yet there is no avoiding time, the sea of time, the sea of memory and forgetfulness, the years of promise, gone and unrecoverable, of the land almost allowed to claim its better destiny, only to have the claim jumped by evildoers known all too well, and taken instead and held hostage to the future we must live in now forever. May we trust that this blessed ship is bound for some better shore, some undrowned Lemuria, risen and redeemed, where the American fate, mercifully, failed to transpire...' [IV: 294].

⁵ In his seminal study *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* (1998), Richard Lehan defines entropy in the following way: "We have moved in the twentieth century from apocalypse to entropy. The first two laws of thermodynamics explain the nature of entropy: first, the amount of energy in the universe is fixed, and energy can never be increased or diminished, only transformed; second, every time energy is transformed from one state to another, there is a loss in the amount of energy available to perform future work. Entropy is that loss of energy in a closed system" [Lehan 1998: 123].

Memory, which should provide a blueprint for realizing a new utopian order, is unreliable and marked by a “glittering mosaic of doubt” [IV: 303]. Similarly to *Vineland*, in *Inherent Vice*, the characters recognize mechanisms of autocratic repression rooted in surveillance, manipulation, and paranoia. However, they also perceive the impotence of hippie and similar movements in resisting the profound colonial changes in American reality during the 1960s and 1970s. The Menippean laughter of irony, pastiche, and black humor juxtaposes the urban landscape aligned with the prevailing political ideal of control with the comically disorderly margins inhabited by followers of counterculture. This perspective on the state of affairs is expressed through periodic references to Lemuria, whose inhabitants settled in the area of California, which Sauncho ironically describes as follows: “Oh, nice refuge. Nice, stable, reliable piece of real estate” [IV: 303].

Despite this irony, let us not forget that the novel indeed portrays a series of effective renewals. For instance, Doc’s redemption of Coy’s identity and the reunion of the Harlingen family serve as successful Menippean resurrections, effectively de-zombifying Coy and saving him from serving a center ruled by money, paranoia, and the manipulation of human identities. Coy’s resurrection thus stands in stark contrast to numerous examples of dehumanization, while also incorporating a critical distancing from the utopian fantasies of the failed countercultural project of the 1960s, and a clear awareness of the trajectory of American society towards the totalizing control of late capitalism.

REFERENCES

Abrams 1999 — Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1999.

Bahtin 1978 — Bahtin, Mihail. *Stvaralaštvo Fransoa Rablea i Narodna kultura srednjeg veka i renesanse*. Beograd: Nolit, 1978.

Bakhtin 1984 — Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Bakhtin 1989 — Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *O romanu*. Translated by Aleksandar Badnjarević. Beograd: Nolit, 1989.

Campbell 1988 — Campbell, Elizabeth. “Metaphor and *V*: Metaphysics in the Mirror.” *Pynchon Notes*, no. 22/23 (1988): 57–69.

Frye 1957 — Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Hutcheon 1988 — Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1988.

Jakovljević 2012 — Jakovljević, Mladen M. “Heterotopija u Pinčоновим romanima V. i Duga gravitacije.” *Zbornik za jezike i književnosti Filozofskog fakulteta u Novom Sadu*, no. 2, (2012): 375–387.

Kharpertian 1990 — Kharpertian, Theodor D. *A Hand to Turn the Time: Menippean Satires of Thomas Pynchon*. Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1990.

Lehan 1998 — Lehan, Richard. *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998.

Liner 2016 — Liner, John. “Utopia and Debt in Postmodernity; or, Time Management in *Inherent Vice*.” *Orbit: Writing Around Pynchon* 4, no. 1, (2016). <https://doi.org/10.16995/orbit.174>

McHale 1992 — McHale, Brian. *Constructing Postmodernism*. London & New York: Routledge, 1992.

Perišić 2010 — Perišić, Igor. *Uvod u teorije smeha: kratak pregled teorije smeha od Platona do Propa*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2010.

Propp 1984 — Propp, Vladimir. *Problemi komike i smeha*. Translated by Bogdan Kosanović. Novi Sad: Nišro Dnevnik, 1984.

Stark 1980 — Stark, John. *Pynchon's Fictions: Thomas Pynchon and the Literature of Information*. Athens & Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980.

Weisenburger 1990 — Weisenburger, Steven. “A Hand to Turn the Time: The Menippean Satires of Thomas Pynchon,” and: “Writing Pynchon: Strategies in Fictional Analysis” (review). *Modern Fiction Studies*, no. 4 (32) (1990): 580–583.

© 2024 Радое В. Шошкич

Дата поступления в редакцию: 03.05.2024

Дата одобрения рецензентами: 30.09.2024

Дата публикации: 25.12.2024

© 2024 Radoje V. Šoškić

Received: 03 May 2024

Approved after reviewing: 30 Sept. 2024

Date of publication: 25 Dec. 2024