INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

University Microfilms International
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road. Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Order Number 9510638

The muteness of humanity: Ineffability and identity in Melville's "Mardi", "Moby- Dick" and "Pierre"

Brown, William Lansing, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1994

Copyright ©1994 by Brown, William Lansing. All rights reserved.

U·M·I
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Muteness of Humanity:

Ineffability and Identity in Melville's

Mardi, *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre*

by

William Lansing Brown

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1994

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

© 1994

William Lansing Brown

All rights reserved

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

5/6/94
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

5/6/94
Date

Executive Officer

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Abstract

The Muteness of Humanity: Ineffability and Identity
In Melville's Mardi, Moby-Dick and Pierre

by William Lansing Brown

Advisor: Professor David S. Reynolds

This dissertation on Herman Melville's writings is foremost and essentially a study of ineffability in his works: symbolic silences; character-muteness; narrational indirections, and discursive indeterminacy --all of which bespeak, in an author given at so many moments to passages of unsurpassed eloquence and verbal reach, a persistent and oftentimes disturbing obsession with the failure of discourse and the futility of words. This paradoxical sense of failure is seen on many levels in Melville's works. It is evidenced in his major tales, sketches and poetry, as a sometimes despairing record of his own feelings of defeat as a writer. In another light it evokes the sense of cultural failure--religious, political, familial--that Melville as an author responding deeply to his times internalized. The more one probes the voided word and the problem of silence in Melville, the more the problem of "voided identity," or dissociation of personality, becomes evident. The ineffability problem in Melville seems to reside foremost in the tension between his will to discourse as an author, and his innate capacities as a symbolist, wherein the deeper, figurative, and largely unformulatable questions are brought

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

into play. The moments of highest symbolic import in Melville's writings, moreover, are also paradoxically those when verbal effusion, lofty eloquence or frenzied prolixity come to the fore in the context of imminent identity-loss. Shifting narrational strategies, experimentation with form, and the raising of symbolic meaning over vocative statement, all give evidence to Melville's ambivalent sense of self and word.

The introduction sets forth the outlines of this study, which is essentially a merging of psychologistic and textual approaches. Chapters one, two and four look at ineffability in the light of Melville's inscribed sense of interiority in Mardi, and a Voyage Thither, Moby-Dick and Pierre, or the Ambiguities, drawing upon perspectives from modern depth psychology. The Jungian engagement with the anima archetype is seen as a paradigm of Melville's feminine projections within these novels, and as a crucial component of his will to creativity. Chapters three and five introduce James Hillman's imaginal archetypal psychology as a mode of visionary poetics within which to view, more specifically, those same phenomena. Chapter six concludes the study with a look at Gnosticism as an informing principle in Melville's identity-making novels. Throughout, Melville is seen as inscribing an agon in which silence and identity-loss are borne out of the encounter with the self.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Table of Contents

Preface..ix

Introduction..1

Chapter One/

Mardi:
The Region of the Everlasting Lull....................16

Chapter Two/

Fallen Words and the Loss of Self in Moby-Dick...........71

Chapter Three/

The Rhetoric of 'Spirit' and 'Soul' in Moby-Dick:
A Hillmanian Approach................................109

Chapter Four/

Introjection and Silence:
The Fractured Ethos in Pierre........................126

Chapter Five/

"I Look, You Look, He Looks; We Look, Ye Look, They Look":
Melville, Hillman, and the 'Splintered' Imago.........204

Chapter Six/

The 'Gnostic' Melville:
Demiurgic Art and the Problem of Selfhood.............223

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Abbreviations

<u>M</u> <u>Mardi, and a Voyage Thither</u>. Eds. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker and G. Thomas Tanselle. Chicago: Northwestern Univ. Press and the Newberry Library, 1970.

<u>R</u> <u>Redburn: His First Voyage</u>. Eds. Harrison Hayford, et. al. Northwestern-Newberry, 1969.

<u>W-J</u> <u>White-Jacket: The World in a Man-of-War</u>. Eds. Harrison Hayford, et. al. Northwestern-Newberry, 1970.

<u>M-D</u> <u>Moby-Dick, or The Whale</u>. Eds. Harrison Hayford, et. al. Northwestern-Newberry, 1988.

<u>P</u> <u>Pierre, or The Ambiguities</u>. Eds. Harrison Hayford, et. al. Northwestern-Newberry, 1971.

<u>PT</u> <u>The Piazza Tales, and Other Prose Pieces, 1839-1860</u>. Eds. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougal and G. Thomas Tanselle, et. al. Northwestern-Newberry, 1987.

<u>Co</u> <u>Correspondence</u>. Eds. Harrison Hayford, et. al. Northwestern-Newberry, 1993.

<u>J</u> <u>Journals</u>. Eds. Howard C. Horsford, with Lynn Horth. Northwestern-Newberry, 1989.

<u>C</u> <u>Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land</u>. Eds. Harrison Hayford, Alma A. MacDougall, Hershel Parker and G. Thomas Tanselle. Northwestern-Newberry, 1991.

<u>SP</u> <u>Selected Poems of Herman Melville</u>. Ed. Hennig Cohen. New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 1991.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Acknowledgements

First, and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude to David Reynolds, my dissertation advisor, for giving his solid encouragement and support to this project. And doubly so, because under his guidance I have been allowed the freedom to test some uncharted, even risky, critical waters. His careful readings and helpful suggestions have enabled me to move decidedly in the direction of clarity and growth. To Neal Tolchin I am equally grateful. As my second reader he has been generous with his comments, and I have benefitted greatly from his wise counsel. I am thankful as well to Bill Kelly for his very thoughtful readings and comments.

To my former teachers and present associates in the English Department at Queens College, Bette Weidman, Mario D'Avanzo, and Kay Kier, I owe a special debt of gratitude for knowledge shared and for support over the years. And to Marianne Hauser, who reawakened me to the world of mind.

Encouragement has come as well from Joyce Sparer Adler, and from John Bryant, of the Melville Society, both of whom have read some of this material in its earlier stages, and from Doris Albrecht, of the C. G. Jung Foundation.

My deep appreciation also goes to Rhoda Sirlin, for her constant help and giving of self; to my sisters Marilyn and Madelon; to Laura Wadenpfuhl; to the Group, and to Lena Furgeri, who was there at the inception, and who remains, unstintingly there...

Thanks also go to Shawn Collier, for his "practical" assistance, and just for being a real good guy.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A Note on the Title

The phrase, "muteness of humanity," occurs in the following passage in Moby-Dick's Chapter 51, "The Spirit-Spout," a chapter suffused with Melvillean silences:

> ...Few or no words were spoken; and the silent ship, as if manned by painted sailors in wax, day after day tore on through all the swift madness and gladness of the demoniac waves. By night the same muteness of humanity before the shrieks of the ocean prevailed; still in silence the men swung in the bowlines; still wordless Ahab stood up to the blast....

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Com' io divenni allor gelato e fioco,
nol dimandar, lettor, ch'i' non lo scrivo,
pero ch'ogne parlar sarebbe poco.

[O reader, do not ask of me how I
grew faint and frozen then--I cannot write it:
all words would fall far short of what it was.]

--Dante, *Inferno*, XXXIV, 22-24

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Preface

This dissertation on Herman Melville's writings is foremost and essentially a study of ineffability in his works: symbolic silences; character-muteness; narrational indirections, and discursive indeterminacy--all of which bespeak, in an author given at so many moments to passages of unsurpassed eloquence and verbal reach, a persistent and oftentimes disturbing obsession with the failure of discourse and the futility of words. This paradoxical sense of failure is seen on many levels in Melville's works. It is evidenced in his major tales, sketches and poetry, as a sometimes despairing record of his own feelings of defeat as a writer. In another light it evokes the sense of cultural failure--religious, political, familial--that Melville as an author responding deeply to his times internalized. The more one probes the voided word and the problem of silence in Melville, the more the problem of "voided identity," or dissociation of personality, becomes evident. The ineffability problem in Melville seems to reside foremost in the tension between his will to discourse as an author, and his innate capacities as a symbolist, wherein the deeper, figurative, and largely unformulatable questions are brought into play. The moments of highest symbolic import in Melville's writings, moreover, are paradoxically also those when verbal effusion, lofty eloquence or frenzied prolixity come to the fore in the context of imminent identity-loss. Shifting narrational

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

strategies, experimentation with form, and the raising of symbolic meaning over vocative statement, all give evidence to Melville's ambivalent sense of self and word. The psychological questions thereby become, for the discerning readers and critics of Melville, also the questions of textuality, narratology, and genre.

The introduction sets forth the outlines of this study, which is essentially a merging of psychologistic and textual approaches. Chapters one, two and four look at ineffability in the light of Melville's inscribed sense of interiority in Mardi, and a Voyage Thither, Moby-Dick and Pierre, or the Ambiguities, and see the encounter with the feminine as a crucial component of his will to creativity. Chapters three and five introduce James Hillman's imaginal archetypal psychology as a mode of visionary poetics within which to view, more specifically, those same phenomena. Chapter six concludes the study with a look at Gnosticism as an informing principle in Melville's identity-making novels. Throughout, Melville is seen as inscribing an agon in which "silence" and "identity-loss" are borne out of the encounter with the self.

I must caution at the outset that this study aims to suggest only in the broadest terms the outlines of a literary career whose shape, to my knowledge, has never been adequately measured. Any attempt to mark the trajectories of Melville's mind and art are bound to make one feel at times like an Ahab futiley stabbing at the whale with a mere six-inch blade, or more aptly like those blind philosophers in Mardi, groping at

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the many-rooted banyan tree, each one laying hold to but an insignificant part of the whole. The critical paths in this study necessarily overlap, but I trust they do not contradict one another. For Melville's writings open out to the deeply significant questions of mind itself--"It is the world of mind; wherein the wanderer may gaze round, with more of wonder than Balboa's band roving through the golden Aztec glades" (*M* 157)--as well as to the ways those questions, once formulated, begin to interrogate themselves.

But where to find the most illuminating theories or approaches to bridge the poles of thought when reading Melville in this light--that is, between the symbolized projection of identity, and the more overt contingencies of text? With the help of Derridean, Lacanian, and other modes of psychoanalytic discourse, a nexus of critical opinion has emerged over the past twenty years dealing with this very paradox in the larger sphere of Western literature. Fruitful inroads have been formed, and identity, or "selfhood," has been increasingly seen as an agon that manifests itself, not so evidently as an aspect of anything which we can call mind, or psyche, but rather as a function of the rhetorical process itself. Inevitably, even Freud himself has come under this kind of revisionism and been elevated to the level of a literary over a psychological thinker. "Self-fashioning," in short, has become the fashion in literary theory. Lacan's dictum that "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other" has helped illuminate and make more apparent the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

crisis of selfhood as it is registered in literature from the Renaissance to the post-Enlightenment era to modernism. Lacan's "mirror-stage" has been instrumental in attempting to define a contextual identity for personae within a work as well as for the creating author. Harold Bloom, originating a theory of revision which takes as its pivotal focus the Oedipal contest between ephebe and precursor author, moves away from the strictly psychological ground of Freudian thought to place that struggle as best he can within the literary process itself, where it is enacted by a succession of troping, or rhetorical displacement. Typology, homology, and Gnosticism (the last most notably the province as well of Bloomian criticism) also afford vantages from which reader and critic significantly and sometimes confusingly traverse the spheres of mind and text. And often these criticisms raise just as many questions about the palpability or impalpability of selfhood as they do about the word.

Melville was nascently aware of many of the problems facing modern readers, and in many respects his works foreshadow the arena of contemporary criticism. The impelling myth in Moby-Dick is that of Narcissus, symbolically linked throughout the novel with the themes of selfhood, reflection and "the ungraspable phantom of life." Bound up everywhere with these themes, indeed underpinning them, is the cogito ergo sum of Descartes, the novel's impelling and most important philosophical proposition. And when Melville sets out these mythological and philosophical subtexts only to undercut and deflate them at almost

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

every turn, he reveals himself to be an early deconstructionist. Such inherent self-cancellation pervades the Melvillean oeuvre. Blended with these strands of thought, moreover, are Melville's subtextual infusions of religious thought, ancient and esoteric philosophies, proximate and not so proximate literary influences, his political thinking, as well as his own lived experience. All of these aspects of Melville's mind and art provide an inexhaustively rich and fecund ground for literary exegetes of nearly every stripe.

The psychological approaches in this study were strongly influenced by the commentaries of Henry A. Murray, William Braswell, Lawrance Thompson and others who have addressed the concept of fragmentation, ego-loss, and self-splitting in Melville's works. They also find inspiration in the theories of Walter Ong (The Presence of the Word, 1967) and Erich Kahler (The Inward Turn of Narrative, 1973), each of whom sees the question of ineffability integrally bound up with the breakdown of personality in the modern era. This study draws as well on the "oneirocriticism" of Gaston Bachelard (The Poetics of Reverie, 1969), and seeks affinities with the more recent "cross-cultural" theories of imagination enunciated by Wilson Harris (The Womb of Space, 1983). But most significantly, it marks out a vaster locus of criticism within the perspectives of James Hillman's archetypal depth psychology.

Martin Bickman, in his essay "Melville and the Mind" (1988), alerts readers to the revisionary Jungian thinking of James Hillman and its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

potential for Melville criticism. As useful approaches, Bickman cites Hillman's "polytheistic" psychology and its focus on the healing of selfhood through the making of narratives, and Hillman's warning that the myths about the self can harden into neuroses if they are taken literally rather than metaphorically. Melville's works implicitly reflect such open-ended psychologizing. Melville's modernity further reveals itself in its portrayal of a truly forward-looking phenomenology of mind: psyche, not as "thing" or "entity," but as "process," an idea advanced by Hillman and other post-Jungian thinkers. Hillman's archetypal psychology, interestingly enough, finds remarkable affinities with Bakhtin's notion of a "dialogic principle," which can also go a long way toward illuminating the dissociation of self and word that we find in Melville. As a deconstructive methodology, it has certain parallels as well in Derridean thought. The Hillmanian approach, all but passed over by contemporary criticism, can usefully augment those theories which advance or foreground the notion of text as process. The present study is therefore in large measure a response to Bickman's call for Hillmanian approach to Melville. But this dissertation makes an even wider claim: it seeks to build bridges that will enable us to see Hillman's imaginal archetypal psychology in a compatible light with other methods of criticism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Introduction

I tell you,
he'll look on you all with an eye you have the color of.
He'll not say a word because he need not, he said so many.

--Charles Olson, "Letter for Melville, 1951"

In *Moby-Dick*'s fifty-second chapter, titled "The Albatross," the whaler *Pequod* encounters the *Goney*, a ghastly looking ship whose hull, masts and rigging have been bleached white by sun and spray, and whose aspect, along with the tattered appearance of her crew, betokens the vessel's nearly four years' voyage upon the sea. Captain Ahab, standing on the *Pequod*'s quarterdeck, calls out: "Ship Ahoy! Have ye seen the White Whale?"

But in raising his speaking trumpet to reply, the captain of the strange craft loses his grip on the trumpet, and it plummets into the sea. Amid a rising wind, he vainly strives to make himself heard. The distance between the two vessels increases, while the crewmen of the *Pequod* mark "in various silent ways...this ominous incident at the first mere mention of the White Whale's name to another ship."

Then Ahab, surmising by the *Goney*'s aspect that it will shortly be bound home for Nantucket, raises his own trumpet, loudly hailing: "Ahoy there! This is the *Pequod*, bound round the world! Tell them to address all future letters to the Pacific Ocean! and this time three years, if I am not at home, tell them to address them to--" (*M-D* 237).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Silence, speechlessness, failed communication, "dead letters"--these portentous themes, raised to a dramatic pitch during the abortive wordless encounter of the Pequod and the Goney in Chapter 52 of Moby-Dick, are not only central to the awesome quest for the White Whale and to much of the philosophical probing in Herman Melville's sea novel, but also lie close to the core of Melville's sensibilities as an author. Throughout Melville's prose writings, which include the nine novels and fourteen tales and sketches appearing between 1846 and 1857, and the posthumously published Billy Budd (which finally appeared in print in 1924), numerous passages embodying the idea of silence occur.

Sometimes these silences are imagistic, descriptive, or dramatic; sometimes they are characterological; sometimes they are linked to philosophical expression; at other times they evidence themselves by the very absence of explicit statement through the use of irony, indirection, ambiguity, or negatively affixed words. Such silences nearly always bespeak a Melville tormented, like Moby-Dick's narrator Ishmael, with "an everlasting itch for things remote" (7), a Melville relentlessly seeking out the ineffable and doggedly attempting to put it into words. They bespeak a prolix Melville, an eloquent Melville, a word-infatuated Melville--yet a Melville who at bottom knows that the eternal verities must remain forever voiceless. And they oftentimes bespeak a Melville who has come to the end of his philosophical rope, as it were, a Melville who rails at the very act of putting his thoughts into words.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A number of critics have previously addressed the topic of silence in relation to Melville and his writings. Robert Forsythe has suggested that Melville adapted Carlyle's "praises of silence" in Sartor Resartus for Pierre.[1] M. O. Percival has explored the links between Ahab and silence.[2] John Seelye has called attention to the use of silence as a symbol by Melville and has suggested that one may trace a "pattern of silences" in Melville's works.[3] James Guetti has shown how Melville's exploitation of the limitations of language and his avoidance of a single perspective or vocabulary in Moby-Dick dramatize both the "voicelessness" of Ishmael and the ineffability of the White Whale.[4] Maurita Willet, in a broadly informed and sensitive article, has placed Melville's interest in silence squarely amid a range of religious and literary traditions extending from the Hebraic idea of Divine Logos to American Transcendentalism.[5] John Middleton Murray, Willard Thorp, and Alan Lebowitz are among the critics who have dealt with Melville's biographical silence: his long, thirty-year abandonment of prose writing following the publication of The Confidence-Man in 1857.[6] Lebowitz, in fact, sees Melville reaching his novelistic "dead end" in The Confidence-Man, with silence "the only likely sequel."[7] And Kenneth Dauber, in a fairly recent study on democratic poetics, has explored the rhetoric of the nonverbal in Melville in the light of shifting representations of selfhood and authorship within our American culture.[8]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Still, as Maurita Willet points out, no "comprehensive" treatment of Melville and his silences yet exists.[9] The present study initiates an attempt to fill that lack. But whereas other studies have touched upon various aspects of Melvillean silence, this one will attempt, foremost, to view silence in relation to the question of "identity," or "selfhood." The philosophic, religious, literary, and cultural impetuses that lay beneath the many expressions of silence and the unspeakable in Melville's works are important, and they can be seen as having a direct bearing on the problem of identity. Indeed, many of the silences that we find in Melville are bound up once and irrevocably with his perceptions of himself as a writer and with the frustrations he encountered while developing and perfecting his craft.

Moreover, those inscribed aspects of Melville's life and career open out to larger questions involving the phenomenology of selfhood. The three most revealing novels in this regard, <u>Mardi, and a Voyage Thither</u>, <u>Moby-Dick</u>, and <u>Pierre, or the Ambiguities</u>, may be viewed as a "Trilogy of Descent" into the self, wherein Melville's drive to artistic creation, and his corollary pull toward the negation of narrative--as well as a voided sense of self--are most evident. While foregrounding the problem of identity, this study also examines Melville's silences in the light of their religious, literary, and mythological influences. In addition, it attempts to place those silences in a meaningful culture-specific context, with an eye toward uncovering the psychohistorical implications

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of reticence and the unspeakable. Throughout, a merging of contemporary critical thought with perspectives afforded by depth psychology is undertaken.

The dead-ends of expression that we so frequently encounter in Melville-- the ineffability, the blankness, the muteness of personae--can be seen as well in the light of a crisis in language that is also an aspect of the transition from Romanticism to modernism. This "retreat from the word" (the phrase is George Steiner's) puts Melville initially in company with the Romantics, notably Wordsworth, whose poetry evoked "the still, sad music of humanity," and attempted to engage the perceptive and transforming powers of the mind through a new awareness of language. Language, by its very nature, is constantly being tested against its limitations; an organic thing, subject to decay, it is ever confronting its own inadequacies of meaning. The reclamation of the power of speech in Wordsworth's poetry and the oratorical breadth of Melville's prose, together with the countervailing impulse toward muteness and repose in each, bespeak a recognition of the deceptive, or double nature of words. Seen first in the context of the Romantic crisis in language, and then against the prevailing linguistic disorder which characterizes the modern age, Melville's works stand forth as truly revelatory documents in the evolution of the Western mind.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Romantic crisis, moreover, looks forward to the modern age, and beyond, to post-modern consciousness. William Blake, whose works Melville would discover only very late in his lifetime, is the most forward-looking in this regard. Blake saw the problem most acutely and cast the conflicting world-views in his poetry into warring psychological principles. And Melville is closest to Blake in beginning to recognize and depict the human psyche in terms of a "multiplicity" that can best be recognized in the light of modern depth psychology. Such infelt multiplicity, experiencing the world as "polysensuum" (the thought is put forward by Babbalanja, the dominant philosophical voice in Mardi), is something that suffuses nearly all Melville's efforts as a writer. But that will to heterogeneity, seen most dramatically in Moby-Dick's profusion of voice, form and content, also carries with it the imminence of dissociation, of fragmentation, of losing one's center. On the one hand, there is an attempt to render the plenum of a world and all its outward and inward potentiality by expanding consciousness through words; on the other, an omnipresent loss of faith in words as vehicles of thought and expression. Ever behind Melville's will to create, and linked with the will to heterogeneity, is that counter-impulse to negation and silence, an attempt, to borrow a phrase from Norman O. Brown, "to get the nothingness back into words."[10]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In each of Melville's major novels we see a movement toward the subverting of narrative, the turn being particularly pronounced in Mardi, in sharp contrast to the earlier Typee and Omoo where the narrational "I" is prominent throughout. We lose Taji, the wandering quester in Mardi, about a third of the way into the novel, and his identity is subsumed by the counterpoised voices of his fellow travellers Media, Mohi, Babbalanja and Yoomy, as they discourse on the mores and philosophies of various island-kingdoms. At other times the omniscient authorial voice in this novel becomes so insistent, as if in abreaction to the fragmenting narrative, that it becomes questionable whether the narrator Taji, or Melville himself, is speaking. These narrational indirections anticipate the pull to digression in Moby-Dick where we also lose the first-person narrator as Ishmael's identity is eclipsed by a welter of other identities and voices. The shift of focus from the narrator's voice to a splintering or chorus of voices, all vying for our attentions, and the extreme fluidity of personae in Melville's works, often have the effect of "cancelling out" determinate voice and casting into doubt the veracity of subjective truth, and, by implication, the efficacy of words themselves. In Pierre we see Melville, in an attempt to tack away from the problem of identity-loss in Moby-Dick, resorting for the first time in his career to third-person narration. Yet the struggle undergone by the main character is seen, even from this more distanced perspective, to be one of increasing inner fragmentation. Pierre, not uncoincidentally,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is also the novel wherein Melville's thematic and symbolic silences are the most strikingly evident. Still later, in The Confidence-Man, we have Melville's most sophisticated exercise in indeterminacy. In that darkly comic novel of shape-shifting and disguise, the identity principle undergoes its most extreme contortions, where amid endless naming and renaming, truth, and the very efficacy of words, are subject to searing and parodic analysis.

The phenomena of metamorphosing identity and verbal indeterminacy in Melville inscribe one aspect of what Walter Ong in his meditations on silence and the word has defined as "the shifting sensorium" in the modern era.[11] Ong sees in the transmutation of language--from its origins in sound into the visual form of writing and print--the introduction of a whole new set of structures within the psyche, with far-reaching implications for the way the world and selfhood are perceived. One of those implications--the major one as Ong sees it--is the depersonalization of experience, weakening "the sense of presence in man's life-world," rendering the world "profane," and making it "an agglomeration of things."[12]

In Melville, the implicit indictment of words as communicative media points to similar phenomena. Seen amid a deeper context of ego-loss, the process involves us in the very Cartesian agons of skepticism and doubt in which Melville plumbed his thoughts. On the other hand, those

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

selfsame questions, viewed in the context of late-twentieth century thinking, open out to parallel ones involving the state of language and human psychology. Wilson Harris best defines the parameters of the latter inquiry when he discusses the phenomenon of "otherness," and the validity of mental images as distinct from intellectual conclusions in his study The Womb of Space. Harris, viewing Faulkner's writing in the light of a practice which I later hope to show is every bit as paramount in Melville, sees a cross-cultural restoration of the "orders of the imagination," and an enrichment in depth which "suggests an activity of image beyond given verbal communication into non-verbal arts of imagination."[13] That process, or what Harris calls "kinship with images," is a result in the literature he has studied of an emphatic shift "from ruling ego to intuitive layers of self or selves," a shift, which I am trying to demonstrate, is dramatically inscribed in Melville.[14]

Putting our own turn on Ahab's imperative to Starbuck in "The Quarter-Deck" chapter of Moby-Dick to find the "lower layer" of meaning, perspectives afforded by Jungian psychology can be very useful in illuminating the will to dissociation in Melville. Indeed, in the mythic subtexts of Mardi, Moby-Dick and Pierre we can see a pre-allegorizing of the Jungian encounter with the facets of a composite selfhood. In the following chapter we see how that process results in a fracturing of alter-ego selves as Mardi's narrator Taji journeys into the metaphorical

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"world of mind." Sections of that chapter dwell on the encounters with "otherness," particularly with the Jungian "anima" as a repository of the repressed aspects of selfhood. The archetypal journey inheres in many of Melville's works if they are read as paradigms of the Jungian individuation process. Henry A. Murray, Edward Edinger, Martin Pops, James Baird and James Kirsch have taken up related inquiries, and have all but established Melville as a forerunner of depth psychology. The present study, apart from the psychohistorical theories of Walter Ong and Erich Kahler, draws its impetus specifically from archetypal perspectives. But most importantly, it takes up Martin Bickman's call for the direct application of James Hillman's imaginal theories to the writings of Melville, particularly in regard to the "multiplicity" of selfhood that Melville so often portrays.[15]

But however useful Jungian theory may be in examining Melville's thought, I do not think that even Melville himself would rest secure in the assertion of a "collective unconscious," especially if that concept is seen as a reformulation of the Emersonian Oversoul, or anything approaching it. Any rigorous examination of Melville's writings in the light of depth psychology ought therefore to accomodate itself along more revisionary lines of analysis. Hillman's imaginal archetypal psychology affords a means of doing just that, while also helping us to span a troubling critical abyss.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This study thereby effects a shift between the ground of psyche to the sphere of rhetoric, replicating, in a fashion, the very agon of Melville's authorial career. Support and encouragement for this approach is drawn from recent works which have foregrounded the revisionary aspects of Melville's mind and art. To Bryan Short's recent study Cast by Means of Figures: Herman Melville's Rhetorical Development (1992), this thesis owes a particular debt of gratitude.[16] In enunciating the view of Melville as rhetorician, Short brings to light aspects of authorial identity and the will to silence on which this study also builds its case. Short's emphasis, like mine, is on the maturation of Melville's mind and art, and on a Melville who constantly examined, tested and rethought his own premises. I think we both could agree that Melville was, to turn a D. H. Lawrence aphorism to another end, "a deconstructionist before deconstruction found paint." But while supporting Short's thesis and finding myself in sympathy with it, I seek a more overembracing and phenomenological view. This study therefore does not aim to discredit or undermine the archetypal approach, but rather attempts to establish its compatability among other schools of criticism.

Difficult as that task may seem, it is a necessary one. Moreover, it can elucidate the very struggles Melville underwent as he honed and shaped his art, as he wrestled with the angel of his own selfhood. Jeffrey Steele makes a crucial observation in this regard, detecting in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pierre, or the Ambiguities a significant change in Melville's focus on selfhood and the grounding conceptions of an authorial identity. "Melville," he says, "stands at the threshold of momentous change in the imagination of the psyche and its buried power.

> By turning away from idealizations of the unconscious toward the recognition of the mind's physical basis, he anticipates all those later writers--ranging from Nietzsche to Derrida--who see self representation as a fictional activity rather than as a Neoplatonic memory of essential truth. The only self that we can know, Melville reluctantly apprehends in Pierre, is the self that we construct. Instead of finding a living myth in the unconscious, he comes to see that our vision of the unconscious is a fiction that gives shape to our understanding of motivation and belief.[17]

It is the realization of a predicated, or constructed, selfhood that Melville works toward in the writing of Mardi, Moby-Dick and Pierre, and the very fact of "identity-making" that I hope to foreground in the chapters that follow. In noting the imperative of critical self-examination in this process, Steele moves us closer, I believe, to the true enterprise of Melville, and to the spirit of inquiry which this study seeks to emulate.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1]Robert Forsythe, introduction to Pierre, or the Ambiguities, by Herman Melville (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930) xxxvi. Melville's adaptation of Carlyle's docrine of silence in Moby-Dick and Pierre is also mentioned by F. O. Matthiessen in American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (London: Oxford Univ.Press, 1941) 385n.

[2]M. O. Percival, A Reading of Moby-Dick (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1950) 52-66.

[3]John Seelye, "The Ironic Diagram," in The Recognition of Herman Melville, ed. Hershel Parker (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1967) 363-364.

[4]James Guetti, The Limits of Metaphor: A Study of Melville, Conrad and Faulkner (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967) 20, 26.

[5]Maurita Willet, "The Silences of Herman Melville," American Transcendental Quarterly, 7 (Summer 1970) 85-92.

[6]John Middleton Murray, "Herman Melville's Silences," Times Literary Supplement, 10 July 1924: 23; Willard Thorp, "Herman Melville's Silent Years," University Review, 3 (1937) 254-262; Alan Lebowitz, Progress Into Silence: A Study of Melville's Heroes (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1970).

[7]Lebowitz 6, 204.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[8] Kenneth Dauber, The Idea of Authorship in America: Democratic Poetics from Franklin to Melville (Madison: The Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1990) 192-228.

[9] Willet 85.

[10] Norman O. Brown, Love's Body (New York: Random House, 1966) 259.

[11] Walter J. Ong, The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967) 1.

[12] Ibid. 162.

[13] Wilson Harris, The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983) xviii-xix.

[14] Ibid. 5.

[15] Martin Bickman, American Romantic Psychology: Emerson, Poe, Whitman, Dickinson, Melville (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988) 174.

[16] Bryan C. Short, Cast by Means of Figures: Herman Melville's Rhetorical Development (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1992).

[17] Jeffrey Steele, The Representation of the Self in the American Renaissance (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1987) 168.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Herman Melville, by Beckwith, 1994.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter One

Mardi: The Region of the Everlasting Lull

> "...various States I have seen in my Imagination; when distant they appear as One Man, but as you approach they appear as Multitudes of Nations."
>
> --William Blake,
> *A Vision of the Last Judgement*

Mardi, and a Voyage Thither, as more than one critic has noted, is the place where any serious study of Melville must begin. For it is in this novel of misdirections and indirections that we find the germinating ideas upon which Melville builds so much of his later art. The book was to have been another semifictitious narrative, like *Typee* and *Omoo*, based upon his exploits in the South Pacific in the early 1840s. Yet as Melville set to work on *Mardi* in the fall of 1847 other claims began to press in upon him, and by March of the following year he was writing his English publisher John Murray to complain of "an invincible distaste" for a "narrative of *facts*." He told Murray that his instinct was to "out with the Romance," claiming that instincts are "prophetic and better than acquired wisdom" (*Co* 106). When *Mardi* finally appeared in March of 1849, its readers were probably expecting another Polynesian adventure-cum-travelogue in the vein of the earlier works. But reading on, they soon found otherwise. Melville had alerted them, however, by what can only be seen, in retrospect, as a much understated preface:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> Not long ago, having published two narratives of voyages in the Pacific, which in many quarters were received with incredulity, the thought occurred to me, of indeed writing a romance of Polynesian adventure, and publishing it as such; to see, whether, the fiction might not, possibly, be received for a verity: in some degree the reverse of my previous experience.
>
> This thought was the germ of others, which have resulted in Mardi. (*M* xvii)

There are many other "germs" in *Mardi*, for the book is Melville's baptism as symbolist, the work where he plunges deeply into the true matter of his art. And it is mostly by way of *Mardi*'s many symbolic forays and rhetorical digressions, often at the expense of the narrative line, that it assumes the measure of a deeply revealing work, affording privileged glimpses into Melville's state of mind in the midst of the creative act. As a record of the quest for authorial identity, as well as a register of inner fragmentation, it unfolds as a vivid portrayal of the phenomenology of the creative will. It is a work, moreover, that calls searchingly into question the nature of selfhood and the efficacy of words.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Whether taken for a "verity" or no, the opening chapters of Mardi recount the plausible unfolding of events in a plausible world. What begins as merely the adventurous tale of a westward voyage to the islands of Polynesia, however, becomes, by chapter 40, the unfolding of a symbolic and discursive quest for an ideal vision of truth. As an archetypal journey, Mardi immerses us in a quasi-mythical world. An unnamed mariner-hero, despondent amid the monotony of shipboard life, jumps ship with a Scandinavian mate named Jarl to encounter his fate amid a many-islanded realm of South Sea kings and demigods. Approaching the archipelago of Mardi with his companion, the narrator kills Aleema, an island priest, in the rescue of the fair-skinned maiden Yillah. Landing on the island of Odo, he is taken by the native Mardians for a long-lost demigod named Taji, and assuming that guise, he lives contentedly with Yillah until one day, suddenly, she disappears. Jarl, who had served as an abortive alter-ego up to this point, is left behind as Taji sets out to hunt among the isles for Yillah. In Jarl's place and sailing with Taji are four Mardian companions: the king and demigod Media; the mystic-philosopher Babbalanja; the Mardian historian Mohi, and the poet Yoomy, sometimes called "the Warbler." Along the way, Taji is pursued by the arrow-wielding sons of the dead Aleema, as well as by the flower-bearing messengers of Hautia, a dark island priestess with seductive powers. During the course of the voyaging and landing at various island worlds, the four native mariners endlessly discourse on the manners, mores, and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

cosmologies of the peoples they encounter, all but eclipsing the voice of the narrator Taji. The fourfold colloquy stretches over most of the remaining chapters of the book, with the lion's share of the discourse being given over to Babbalanja.

The elements of philosophical dialogue, allegory, romance and symbolism in Mardi receive their impetus from the experiences and encounters the mariners undergo during their odyssey through the archipelago, which becomes more and more for the reader a thinly veiled parody of the nineteenth-century political world. Among the islands the party visits are Valapee, or the "Isle of Yams," ruled by a child-king, Peepi, who has inherited the souls of numerous of his forebears; Juam, now ruled by the effeminate king Donjololo but formerly (so Mohi informs us) under the reign of the fierce and fratricidal Majorca; Mondoldo, governed by a fat and jolly king named Borabolla; Maramma, along the way to whose sacred central peak the mariners meet the aged, blind and hypocritical guide Pani and visit the Mardian temple of Oro; Diranda, an island nation given over to deadly war games to alleviate the pressures of overpopulation; Dominora (England), whose imperialistic king, Bello of the Hump, is engaged in a campaign to undermine the rule of neighboring Porpheero (Europe), and Vivenza (the United States), a militarily strong island nation boasting a tradition of freedom and equality, yet whose southern region still practices a form of feudalism. They also visit lesser islands in the Mardian chain and learn of Serenia, a land of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

perpetually blooming verdure where the people live according to the Christian-like creed of Alma, a religion based on love and charity. Along the way, Taji is intermittently pursued by the dead Aleema's arrow-wielding sons, as well as by mysterious flower-bearing messengers from Hautia, the seductive Queen of Flozella a Nina, who, it seems, has spirited Yillah to her island in hopes of luring Taji there. The voyage concludes with the hitherto skeptical and doubting Babbalanja undergoing a religious conversion on Serenia and remaining behind on that island, and with the other three Mardians returning to Odo after visiting Flozella a Nina and finding no trace of Yillah there. The book ends on an inconclusive note, with Taji's resisting both the further blandishments of Hautia and the efforts of Mohi and Yooomy (who have been sent back to Hautia's island by Media) to rescue him and take him to Serenia, and his striking out alone across the open seas in pursuit of the "phantom" Yillah.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The foregoing synopsis is intended to provide the reader unfamiliar with Mardi some idea of the novel's plot and of the book's truly idiosyncratic nature. Still, it can hardly begin to do justice to all that transpires within Mardi's pages. As we read on, the narrative line is virtually forgotten as Melville's other preoccupations come to the fore. Foremost among these is the authorial search for truth as it is rhetorically portrayed through the dialogues of Media, Mohi, Babbalanja and Yoomy. As he is to do later with the humanity-in-microcosm crew of the Pequod in Moby-Dick, Melville presents us with a splintering of world-views in Mardi. But while not offering as elaborate an array of attitudes as we find in that later work, he does render a well-defined counterpoise of mentalities in Mardi, with each of the four native questers laying claim to his own philosophical demesne. It is through the words of these characters that Melville's own ideal vision of truth is pursued as Mardi inexorably assumes its shape as a philosophical novel. Evidence of the authorial search for truth manifests itself elsewhere in the novel, apart from the verbal interchanges of the four mariners: in the digressive chapters "A Calm," "Dreams," and "Sailing On," as well as in those passages where we seem to hear, not the voice of the narrator Taji, but Melville's own, a voice in contention with a multiformity of visions of truth.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Mardi is a wild and inconsistent book. Even so, commentators have been able to look beyond Mardi's idiosyncracies to claim its place of importance in Melville's developing authorial vision. F. O. Matthiessen speaks of Melville's "double discovery" in the writing of Mardi, that of "his inner self and the social and intellectual world of which he was a part," and likens the process to a "new birth."[1] Milton R. Stern suggests that Melville, in groping toward the germ of a theme while writing Mardi, succumbed completely to the "onslaught of the germ."[2] And Richard Brodhead sees the truer plot of Mardi as that of "Melville's self-creation."[3] In the light of these and similar observations, the notion that Mardi is a book deeply revelatory of the interiorizing mind cannot be overlooked.

Behind Melville's will to creation in Mardi is a counter-impulse of negation, a pull to silence. And as the splintering of consciousness becomes the novel's impelling mode, all the more frequent are the invokings of ineffability and the failure of words. In the intellectual ferment of the book's writing, Melville seized upon every reference he could find--religious, literary, philosophical, canonical, apocryphal and otherwise--in order to address questions that would continue to vex him throughout his career. Indeed, Mardi's frequent allusions to enigmas that seemingly admit of no resolution only deepen the reader's sense of how finely attuned Melville was to the unspeakable.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In a very real sense, the working and reworking of Mardi coincided with what is probably the most important phase of Melville's intellectual development. To augment his Pacific recollections in the writing of the novel, Melville foraged through whaling narratives, travelogues, and other sources, among them Charles Darwin's Journal, J. Ross Browne's Etchings of a Whaling Cruise and William Ellis's Polynesian Researches. But beyond the mere hunger for facts was his increasingly voracious yearning for resolutions to questions that lay past the veil of surface realities. And by the early months of 1848 it was clear to Melville that his newest work would portray no voyage to earthly realms, but rather into "the world of mind" (557). Mardi was, in fact, becoming a distillate into which was flowing all his thinking on philosophical and literary matters up to that time. He read Chapman's translation of Dante, Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, and Seneca's Morals, in addition to Thomas Browne, Hartley, Thomas Taylor on the Neoplatonists, Ossian, Rabelais and Byron.[4] Allusions in Mardi to Priestley, Kant, Spinoza, Virgil, Goethe, Berkeley and Froissart also suggest more than a passing acquaintance with these authors during this period. Evidence of Melville's reading during the composition of Mardi also reveals that this was a time when he began to incline toward those philosophies which embraced dualism, paradox and skepticism, and during which he also began to explore the darker metaphysics of Zoroastrianism, Manicheanism and Gnostic thought.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

But as critics have pointed out, Melville also culled ideas from the most ephemeral and popular sources, among them penny-newspaper accounts, reformist and religious tracts, yellow novels, and other quasi-literary materials.[5] Also catching Melville's attention as he began work on Mardi in the early months of 1849 were a series of astronomy lectures given separately by John P. Nichol and Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel and receiving notable attention in the press. Merrell Davis, in fact, points to Nichols's likening of space to an archipelago as a source of Melville's extended astronomical troping in Mardi.[6] But Davis may have overlooked the note of ineffability in Mitchel's words, and the yearning toward the transcendent, that resonate with so many of Melville's passages in Mardi. It is very possible that Melville gleaned some of his thought and diction from Mitchel's discourse on the "silence" of the heavens:

> Far away from Earth, in the boundless Ocean of Space, mighty worlds wing their rapid flight, voiceless in their movements--silent in their career. Yet as they sweep onward in their courses, they are measuring out the vast periods of Time, and in their configurations tolling out the deep-toned bell of Eternity itself....Let us then leave this world of ours, its cares, its turmoils, its woes, its confusions, and converse with the far off stars.[7] [Emphasis mine]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In that the Mardian archepelago is imaged forth as a newly discovered grouping of stars, an influence may have been at work here. Considering, too, Melville's repetitive themes of "voicelessness," "silence," "time" and "eternity" in Mardi, Mitchel's thoughts become doubly resonant in the light of passages like the following one in chapter 58:

> Far and wide was deep low-sobbing repose of man and nature. The groves were motionless; and in the meadows, like goblins, the shadows advanced and retreated. Full before me, lay the Mardian fleet of isles, profoundly at anchor within their coral harbor. Near by was one belted round by a forthy luminous reef, wherein it lay, like Saturn in its ring.
>
> ***
>
> From earth to heaven! High above me was Night's shadowy bower, traversed, vine-like, by the Milky Way, and heavy with golden clusterings. Oh stars! oh eyes, that see me, wheresoe'er I roam: serene, intent, inscrutable for aye, tell me Sybils, what I am.--Wondrous worlds on worlds! Lo, round and round me, shining, awful spells: all glorious, vivid constellations, god's diadem ye are! To you, ye stars, man owes his sublest raptures, thoughts unspeakable, yet full of faith. (M 178-79)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Melville's passage is representative of the lofty effusions that color his novel from beginning to end, often bespeaking a yearned-for beatitude or a repose of the soul that verges on the ineffable. But while a meditative centering of self and soul amid the repose of nature is often sought in Melville's works, such a state is less frequently portrayed. More likely to be encountered are those silences in which Melville, like his predecessor Byron, attempts to portray the dark and delimiting side of the Romantic sublime, moments wherein narrator or protagonist is caught in an agon of skepticism, paralysis, or failure of the will. It is within these counter-epiphanies that Melville's rhetoric of silence and the fact of "identity-loss" in *Mardi* are most meaningfully confronted.

A foretaste of *Mardi*'s romantic and philosophical concerns is provided in the novel's very first chapter, "Foot in Stirrup." The narrator is the embodiment of the Romantic quester as he seeks surcease from his "bitter impatience" of the "monotonous craft" on which he is sailing and pines for intellectual and spiritual companionship amid a crew in which "there was no soul a magnet to mine" (4). Could the skipper "talk sentiment or philosophy?" the narrator asks. "Not a bit. His library was eight inches by four: Bowditch, and Hamilton Moore" (5). And now that the skipper has set the *Arcturion*'s course for cold Siberian waters in search of right whales, abandoning her luckless pursuit of "the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

gentlemanly Cachalot in southern and more genial seas," the narrator (still unnamed and not yet having taken on the guise of the demigod Taji) begins to think of stealing away on one of the whaler's lifeboats and making his way toward the numerous isles that lay to the west, which, to him, seem invested "with all the charms of dream-land" (7).

Meditating on those isles amid the dull, plodding "silence" of his watch on the ship's mast-head, the narrator all but loses himself in the throes of his reveries. He sees enticing "visions" in the high-piled western clouds: "airy arches, domes, and minarets," vistas "leading to worlds beyond." In a "trance," he tells us, his spirit had become lost amid "the cadence of mild billows laving a beach of shells, the waving of boughs, and the voices of maidens, and the lulled beatings of my own dissolved heart, all blended together" (7-8).

With this frenzied blending or identification of the narrator's spirit with the clouds and the sea and other facets of the natural world, Melville, at the outset, seems true to his stated purpose, voiced in the book's preface, of making a real "romance" out of Mardi (xvii). Like Byron's Childe Harold, Melville's narrator is all too aware of life's insipidness and seeks his spirit's solace in the sweep of nature. But there is an imminence of something here that exceeds even the limits of a Byronic response.

In the endless stasis of the calm the narrator finds the signature of his own alienation, a vexing of the spirit that very nearly defies the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

power of words to express it. The enduring calm revives certain "nameless associations" which he had felt "upon first witnessing as a landsman this phenomenon of the sea" (9).

To enter upon a calm unsettles a landsman's mind and "tempts him to recant his belief in the eternal fitness of things." It "almost makes an infidel of him." The calm is a place where "existence itself seems suspended." If the landsman is a reader of books, "Priestley on Necessity occurs to him" and he "grows madly skeptical" (9).

And more than this,

> To his alarmed fancy, parallels and meridians become emphatically what they are merely designated as being: imaginary lines drawn round the earth's surface.
>
> The log assures him that he is in such a place; but the log is a liar; for no place, nor any thing possessed of a local angularity, is to be lighted upon in the watery waste.
>
> At length horrible doubts overtake him as to the captain's competency to navigate his ship. The ignoramous must have lost his way, and drifted into the outer confines of creation, the region of the everlasting lull, introductory to a positive vacuity.
>
> Thoughts of eternity thicken. He begins to feel anxious concerning his soul.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> The stillness of the calm is awful. His voice begins to grow strange and portentuous. He feels it in him like something swallowed too big for his esophagus. It keeps up a sort of involuntary humming in him, like a live beetle. His cranium is a dome full of reverberations. The hollows of his very bones are as whispering galleries. He is afraid to speak loud, lest he be stunned; like the man in the bass drum. (9-10)

Amid the calm there is "the consciousness of utter helplessness." But it would be vain to try to idle out the calm; a calm is to be "endured" and there is "enough to attend to, Heaven knows" (10).

Ultimately, and perhaps most frustratingly, the calm is delimiting of physical volition--one's will and one's resolve are powerless against it. It is fully as hopeless as a bad marriage in which the mariner "has taken the ship to wife, for better or worse, for calm or gale; and she is not to be shuffled off." All this, "and more than this," we are told, "is a calm" (10).

The description of the calm in Chapter 2 of Mardi is like nothing encountered in the earlier Typee or Omoo. Certain descriptive passages in those works do suggest an awed stillness or speechless repose. One thinks of the narrator Tommo's offshore glimpses of island glens and his description of the hushed temple ruins in Typee. But nowhere in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Melville's previous writing is there quite this sense of existential vacuity. In Mardi's hellish and paralytic calm, Melville found a major motif, akin, in its suggestiveness of death-in-life and imminent annihilation, to Poe's "black and lurid tarn" in "The Fall of the House of Usher," as well as to Coleridge's "sunless sea" in "Kubla Khan." The calm is adumbrative of many other "sea silences" found throughout his works. It foreshadows not only the calms found in Moby-Dick, but also that descriptive "muteness" of the sea figuring so dramatically in "Benito Cereno" and attending the desolation of the Galapagos Islands in the "Encantadas" sketches.

The calm in Mardi, like the sea-borne "vortices" of Moby-Dick, is the blank, atrophied end of reverie, the delimiter of all imaginitive volition. The calm is nature in her most indifferent and mocking repose. But it is the extreme loss of bearings that so unsettlingly imperils Mardi's narrator when caught in its trances, the agon of "identity-loss" that most threatens. In the blank featurelessness of the calm he has seen something rather more ominous than the scrawled signature of a malevolent deity. He has looked in and seen the mirrored abysms of his own fractionating selfhood.

Apart from this, and just as significantly, the chapter "A Calm," taken together with the narrator's mast-head reverie at the end of Chapter 1, sets forth the trope of "reverie-and-recoil" that we see Melville returning to repeatedly in his later writings and which is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

brought to a focus in Moby-Dick's figure of Narcissus, "who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned" (M-D 5). That response also underlies Ishmael's near identity-loss in "The Mast-Head" (159), as well as in "The Try-Works," where he suddenly pulls himself back from the thrall of reverie to avert the "fatal contingency" of losing his grip on the tiller and turning the boat about (424).

In Chapter 16, "They are Becalmed," the narrator and Jarl find themselves in another ocean lull, where everything is "fused into the calm: sky, air, water, and all." The silence is "that of a vacuum. No vitality lurked in the air. And this inert blending and brooding of all things seemed gray chaos in conception." The few "cat's paws of wind" that visit the mariners are "faint as the breath of one dying," and the planks of their small boat begin to warp and splinter amid "the scorching silence" (48-49). Yet another calm, this one "airless and profound," visits the mariners when they board an abandoned brigantine in Chapter 36 (116). And the calm is never very far from mind, even in the later chapters of the book, when Babbalanja, musing on eternity and death, proclaims: "Ay, thy children's children will walk over thee: thou, voiceless as a calm" (238); and it is Babbalanja, moreover, who sees the calm heralding Queen Hautia's approach in Chapter 88 as a force both "like unto Oro's everlasting serenity, and like unto man's last despair" (267).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is important to note that Babbalanja sees the calm in its dualistic aspects, because it is a key oxymoronic image in Melville's writings. Taken to its greatest pitch of expression, it is becomes the birthing ground of whales in Moby-Dick, the place where Ishmael centrally disports in "mute calm" and bathes himself "in eternal mildness of joy" (M-D 389). Still, we must note again that this Melvillean symbol, when first encountered in Mardi, appears in its its most daimonic guise, presaging Melville's inexorable pull toward the darker, interiorizing aspects of nature and human existence.

Another aspect of silence evidences itself in the early pages of Mardi, namely the muteness of the narrator's companion Jarl, and of the reclusive and misanthropic native woman Annatoo, whom the two mariners encounter along with her husband Samoa on the abandoned brigantine, the Parki. Both Jarl and Annatoo are precursors of a character-type we meet in many guises and frequently in Melville's later works. Like Melville's discovery of the calm as a figure to image forth concerns that he was beginning to feel deeply as a writer, the introduction of these characters, short-lived as their appearance may be, is important. Because here, aside from the foreboding impasses of communication between Tommo and his native captors in the earlier Typee, we find Melville openly portraying muteness of character within the framework of broader thematic silences. However, owing to the fact that Mardi is an

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

experimental book, and to the reckless abandon with which Melville worked his narrative line, both Jarl and Annatoo attain only the dimension of partially developed characters. Nevertheless, their importance in the Melville _oeuvre_ cannot be underestimated. They are the first notable avatars of silence in all of Melville's works. Jarl and Annatoo prefigure a host of silent Melvillean "Isolatoes," which includes not only Bartleby, but also the lone, landless seaman Bulkington in _Moby-Dick_, Hunilla, the castaway Chola widow of the "Encantadas" sketches, the "Lamb-like mute" of _The Confidence-Man_, and, ultimately, Billy Budd.

The narrator alludes frequently to Jarl's inscrutability and reticence in the opening chapters of _Mardi_. Hailing from the isle of Skye in the Hebrides, the "Skyeman," as he is otherwise dubbed by the narrator, "was a lone, friendless mariner on the main, only true to his origin in the sea-life that he led." But he may, the narrator muses, be descended from a host of progenitors that includes all the blended generations of heaven and earth--from Alfred, from Homer, and from "the hierarchies of seraphs in the uttermost skies; the thrones and principalities of in the zodiac." Whether linked in bloodline to sages, kings or poets, Jarl, like all his fellow men, is but a part of the universal brotherhood of creation, all things forming "but one whole; the universe a Judea, and God Jehovah its head" (12).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Here, in the third chapter of Mardi, "A King for a Comrade," Melville has once again struck a rich imaginal vein and one that becomes central to Moby-Dick: the commonality of all mankind, the sea-brotherhood of man, and the microcosmic world of ships and sailors that banishes all ethnic and religious distinctions, uniting all mariners in one grand purpose. In such a world as Jarl inhabits, "the New Zealander's tattooing is not a prodigy; nor the Chinaman's ways an enigma. No custom is strange; no creed is absurd; no foe, but who will in the end prove a friend" (12-13). Old Jarl's world is one that is, if not accustomed to speechlessness, at least lacking an identifiable idiom:

> Now, in old Jarl's lingo there never was an idiom. Your aboriginal tar is too much of a cosmopolitan for that. Long companionship with seamen of all tribes: Manilla-men, Anglo-Saxons, Cholos, Lascars, and Danes, wear away in good time all mother-tongue stammerings. You sink your clan; down goes your nation; you speak a world's language, jovially jabbering in the Lingua-Franca of the forecastle. (13)

In ascribing to Jarl a lineage with "heroes and kings" as well as with the "sea-brotherhood of man," the narrator leagues his companion with the transpersonal. Indeed, he introduces his apostrophizing of Jarl with the comment: "To ourselves, we all seem coeval with creation," and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

concludes by noting, "All things form but one whole; the universe a Judea, and God Jehovah its head."

Melville also connects Jarl to the concept of a "Lingua Franca," for Jarl is in the narrator's eyes a "primordial" man. Closer to the gods, and to the orgins of things, he speaks a "purer" language, the language of Adam, as it were, in which all "mother-tongue stammerings" dissolve. Jarl is linked in the narrator's mind to the Godhead, and to "all the blended generations of heaven and earth." Something of the transcendence of language is suggested here: for it is the first instance in Melville's writings where we find muteness, genealogy, and the origins of things mentioned in the same context. This linking of identity-blending with unspeakability might be said to embody a wish on Melville's part to reify symbolic thought through an immersion in the _ur-language_ of myth. _Mardi_'s narrator seems to be searching for some self-complementary quality in Jarl, an aspect of his own incompletedness. And Melville, as author, appears to be seeking character-vessels to contain his own and increasingly atavistic vision, a vision which all too keenly realizes its separation from a primordial wholeness of self.

But even the narrator's lofty and idealistic musings cannot conceal for very long his lurking lower sympathies in regard to Jarl's taciturnity: in truth, the Skyeman was "very illiterate; witless of Salamanca, Heidelberg, or Brazen-Nose"; in matters of geography, "poor Jarl was deplorably lacking," believing the world to be formed "in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

manner of a tart; the land being a mere marginal crust, within which rolled the watery world proper"--perceptions of a condescending nature stemming just as much perhaps from the narrator's own intellectual isolation as from any inherent muteness of character in Jarl. Indeed, the narrator takes pains to reveal to us that, although he himself had shown "as brown a chest, and as hard a hand, as the tarriest" of any of his shipmates on board the Arcturion, still, there was "something in me that could not be hidden; stealing out in an occasional polysyllable; an otherwise incomprehensible deliberation in dining; remote, unguarded allusions to Belles Lettres affairs; and other trifles superfluous to mention." Still, Jarl is described as "an honest wight; so true and simple, that the secret operations of [his] soul were more inscrutable than the sublest workings of Spinoza's" (13).

Further musings on "dear, dumb Jarl" occur in Chapter 11, "Jarl Afflicted with the Lockjaw," wherein the narrator, confined in the small open boat with the Dane, apostrophizes him thus:

> Quietly, in thyself, thou didst revolve upon thine own sober axis, like a wheel in a machine which forever goes round, whether you look at it or no. Ay, Jarl! wast thou not forever intent upon minding that which so many neglect--thine own especial business? Wast thou not forever at it, too, with no likelihood of ever winding up thy moody affairs, and striking a balance sheet?

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> But at times how wearisome to me these everlasting reveries in my one solitary companion. I longed for something enlivening; a burst of words; human vivacity of one kind or other....
>
> But how account for the Skyeman's gravity? Surely it was based upon no philosophic taciturnity; he was nothing of an idealist; an aerial architect; a constructor of flying buttresses. It was inconceivable, that his reveries were Manfred-like and exalted, reminiscent of unutterable deeds, too mysterious even to be indicated by remotest hints. Suppositions all out of the question.
>
> His ruminations were a riddle....what could I fall back upon but my original theory: namely, that in repose, his intellects had stepped out, and left his body to itself. (35-36)

Of Annatoo and Samoa, the castaway figures encountered aboard the _Parki_, there is not altogether too much that we can say, except to note their brief appearance in the narrative as prototypes of Melvillean muteness. Samoa, with half his body covered by tattoos, and having having only a stump for an arm, is a walking hieroglyph of incompleteness. And while Samoa may have derived in part (pun unintended) from Melville's reading of Poe's _Narrative of A. Gordon Pym_, another disjuncted sea-travelogue with which _Mardi_ has remarkable

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

affinities and wherein dismemberment is a theme, he is most notably seen as an inchoate precursor of both Ahab and Queequeg in Moby-Dick. But it is Annatoo who clearly holds a fascination for Mardi's narrator. Like Jarl, she is an enigma. The termagant wife of Samoa, she has mysteriously secreted herself away in the ship's hold with a cache of pilfered shipboard items and nautical instruments. As perplexing as the purposes for which she has hoarded these items is the very character of Annatoo herself. Questioned about the disappearance of the ship's chronometer, Annatoo maintains "an air of inflexible stupidity" and her "dead-wall countenance" supersedes "the necessity for verbal deceit" (94).

Annatoo is "silent and invisible as a spirit." "Useless to inquire" as to her long disappearances and sudden reemergences on board the ship:

> Whether she thus stood sentry over her goods secreted round about: whether she performed penance like a nun in a cell; or was moved to this unaccountable freak by the powers of the air; no one could tell. Can you?
>
> Verily, her ways were as the ways of the inscrutable penguins in building their inscrutable nests, which baffle all science, and make a fool of a sage.
>
> Marvelous Annatoo! who shall expound thee? (102)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

No isolated phenomenon, Anattoo's muteness occurs in a larger context of silence. The very decks of the brigantine, "whose tragic hull was haunted by the memory of the massacre" which had occurred aboard the ship, "the drowsy stillness of the tropical sea-day," and the reticence of both Jarl and Samoa, are among the silences of which the narrator is well aware. The ship is likened to "a deserted old tenement" whose "vacant halls seem echoing of silence," and once again the narrator realizes again his own separateness and alienation:

> And so far as the indulgence of quiet strolling and reverie was concerned, it was well nigh the same as if I were all by myself. For Samoa, for a time, was rather reserved, being occupied with thoughts of his own....And as for my royal old Viking, he was one of those individuals who seldom speak unless personally addressed. (100)

It is important to note that even this early in the book, Melville seems to be expressing his own intellectual alienation through the voice of his narrator. A few pages earlier, amid some of these instances of muteness, silence and alienation, a curiously reflexive comment appears. We can only wonder what Melville was thinking when he put these painfully ironic words in the mouth of his narrator:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> The log book had also formed a portion of Anattoo's pilferings. It seems she had taken it into her studio to ponder over. But after amusing herself by again and again counting over the leaves, and wondering how so many distinct surfaces could be compacted together in so small a compass, she had very suddenly conceived an aversion to literature, and dropped the book overboard as worthless. Doubtless, it met the fate of many other ponderous tomes; sinking quickly and profoundly. What Camden or Stowe hereafter will dive for it? (94)

This comment on the futility of words and writerly fame is the progenitor of many similar thoughts in Melville. It is an insistent theme in the later pages of Mardi as well as in works that follow, and one that is often despairingly linked with muteness. The passage also remarkably foreshadows the humorous account of Lemsford, the gun-deck bard in White-Jacket, who had stashed his verses in the barrel of a twenty-four-pounder on the main-deck, only to have them blasted, or "published," into oblivion during a ship's salute. (W-J 191-92) In that Lemsford's manuscript is titled "Songs of the Sirens," moreover, we might not be too far off mark in seeing this passage as Melville's own veiled commentary on the earlier critical fate of Mardi.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In order to better understand the frequent thematic and figurative notations of silence in Mardi, we need to place them within the context of Melville's deepening intellectual growth during the period of the book's writing. Mardi does not really come into its own as a philosophical novel until after the narrator's rescue of the maiden Yillah in Chapter 40. But however narrational in purpose the preceding chapters may be, it takes no very discerning reader to note that these pages contain in their tone and in their wealth of allusion, something far larger and more expansive than the demands of narrative would normally require. And they are far different in tone and content than the pages of Typee and Omoo; already, they contain the "different strain" which, to F. O Matthiessen's mind, set Mardi apart from Melville's earlier novels.[8]

In addition to the explicit identification of the narrator as a Byronic hero and the many other literary allusions, we also find in these early pages a profusion of philosophical references and citing of names of philosophers, again, all evidences of Melville's quickening intellectual development and the omnivorous reading he engaged in prior to and during the novel's composition. This is an extreme departure from the earlier narratives, and as Merton Sealts has observed, there is only one citing of a philosopher's name before Mardi, that being a reference to Hobbes in Omoo.[9] Burton on the "Blue Devils," Whitson on the "theory concerning the damned and the comets," "Priestley on Necessity," Kant,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Salamanca and Heidelberg--are some of the names invoked in Mardi's opening pages, and which form a context for the narrator's burgeoning consciousness as he concerns himself with matters ranging far beyond the quotidian realities of seafaring or the practical exigencies of escaping the Arcturion and charting a course in an open boat upon unfamiliar seas.

In fact, expansiveness of mind is everything here. With the linking of Jarl to Scandinavian sea-legends, and the resort to Homeric allusion, the narrator assumes the dimensions of a "transpersonal Quester."[10] Both the monotony of the ship and the entrapment in the calm symbolize the stasis of self and soul preluding the immersion into epic or archetypal consciousness. As in Dante the orientative mode in Mardi is "depth," and the journey undertaken a symbolic descent into the self: "Though America be discovered," says the narrator, "the Cathays of the deep are unknown" (39). It is a voyage of "lost souls...tossed along by the chains which enfilade the route to Tartarus" (30).

Mardi's narrator finds scant solace in the course of his journey. The perplexing state of mind experienced in the calm, the agon of skepticism and doubt, remains fairly constant for him throughout. Thoughts of mortality, questionings about existence, and ambivalence to both his fellow humans and the visible universe about him, are aspects of the narrator's consciousness that plague him to the inconclusive end of his travels. It is a brooding consciousness, and the ocean "so much blankness to be sailed over" (11).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The heroic frame of mind and the will to heterogeneity are important facets of Melville's epic reach in Mardi, in that the novel unfolds as a record of the narrator's striving toward the realization of a universal or collective identity. Anticipating the skewed narration in Moby Dick, Melville's novel begins in first-person, only to give way to an intermittent succession of voices. But critics who have seen the splitting of narrative in either novel wholly in terms of a compositional flaw miss the point. To force as crude and mechanistic a simile as Leon Howard's "straw in glass of water" onto an organic work like Moby-Dick, or to see the split identities of Taji and Babbalanja as a narrative failing in Mardi, as Merrill Davis seems to do, is to misapprehend the nature of these novels and the inner imperatives that brought them into creation.[11]

It is interesting to watch Melville's grand experiment unfold in Mardi, as he attempts to give voice, with varying degrees of success, to his developing philosophic and thematic concerns through a succession of alter-ego characters: first, through Jarl, then Samoa, and when these prove inadequate to the purpose, through the four native questers: Media, Babbalanja, Mohi and Yoomy. The dialogic interplay comprising the bulk of Mardi's middle and later chapters can be viewed as an unfolding into psychic multiplicity and deepening levels of archetypal consciousness. As noted earlier, Mardi is the book in which Melville takes the plunge into truly symbolic writing. And it is in the character of Yillah that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

he finds the catalyst for that transition. For Yillah marks a sense of ego-loss on the part of Melville, while at the same time imaging forth as a femme inspiratrice, introductory to intuitive and wordless modes of being and thought. The engagement with the feminine is crucial in the light of the personal as well as collective psychologies which help to illuminate Melville's works. For Mardi's narrator, Yillah indeed appears as a veritable muse-figure, the elusive silent "phantom" of his soul's longing; for the projecting author, Melville, she can be said to represent the activating "anima," prelusive to an experience of inner multiplicity.[12]

The slaying of Aleema in Chapter 41 and the subsequent rescue of Yillah is the rite of passage for Taji, but in a more encompassing sense it is an initiation for Melville. The Oedipal implications of the episode are noteworthy and have been amply commented upon by Edwin Haviland Miller, Neal Tolchin and other critics.[13] The slaying of the father (the name "Aleema," is curiously close to that of Melville's father, "Allan") and the quest for the nurturing mother are themes that resonate in Melville's personal history and in his works. Aleema and Yillah emerge as as introjected parental, or imago-figures, crucial to the portrayal of inner experience in Mardi. And it is just as important to note that they function as absent or absconded imago-figures for the duration of Taji's quest. But while Freudian thought is certainly valid in bringing the psychological complexities in Melville to light, this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

study shifts the emphasis from the strictly personal to the transpersonal, to the realm of depth psychology, wherein the encounter with the feminine is seen to play no small part. In fact, as I hope to show in succeeding chapters, archetypal perspectives, notably in the light of Jungian and post-Jungian thought, can help us to understand the psychological dimensions of Melville without losing sight of what is most essential to an understanding of his works: the will to self-actualization as it reveals itself in the midst of the creative act. As a signifying novelistic moment, the double encounter with Yillah and Aleema is vital. For just as his narrator has struck and shed blood and committed an irredeemable act, so Melville, by this point in his novel's formulation, has cut deeply into the mysteries within himself. From this point forward, _Mardi_ unfolds as the curiously self-reflexive works that it is, a novel that in veiled as well as overt ways habitually comments upon its own creation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The mysteries of wordlessness, silence, and ineffability surround the figures of Yillah and her dark counterpart Hautia. There is, in fact, a striking polarity between these two female figures in Mardi, and one that is central to the increasingly mythical subtext of the novel. Yillah, the white-skinned, golden-haired maiden who becomes the object of Taji's pursuit, and Hautia, the dark, sensuous seductress who is anything but guileless in her efforts to ensnare the narrator, are the most evident aspects of Melville's will to ambiguity thus far in Mardi. They can also be seen as embodiments of the split-anima archetype that is so prevalent in nineteenth-century American fiction.

Yillah and Hautia call to mind the figures of Alice and Cora, the respective light and dark women of James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans, the former, pallid and golden-haired, with a soul as "pure and spotless as her skin," and the latter, swart and raven-haired, imaging forth, in Leslie Fiedler's words, "all that early nineteenth century male gentiltity privately lusted for in a female, but publicly denied, would not marry."[14] We think also of the wan Priscilla in Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Blithedale Romance--sequestered from the world by the devious Westervelt in very much the same manner that Yillah is held captive through the priestly duplicity of Aleema--and of the dark and passionate Zenobia. Mardi is the novel of Melville's wherein the duality of the light and dark feminine first manifests itself, laying the groundwork for the quest to self-actualization in Moby-Dick and Pierre.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

By the close of the narrative, Taji comes to the inner knowledge that Yillah and Hautia are the doubling aspects of his own soul's yearnings:

> Nevertheless, in some mysterious way seemed Hautia and Yillah connected. Yillah was all beauty, and innocence; my crown of felicity; my heaven below;--and Hautia, my whole heart abhored. Yillah I sought; Hautia sought me. One, openly beckoned me here; the other dimly allured me there. Yet now was I wildly dreaming to find them together. But so distracted my soul, I knew not what it was, that I thought. (643)

Yillah is a creature straight out of the realm of myth. Relating what she knows of her past to the narrator, she declares herself "more than mortal" and originally from Oroolia, the "Island of Delights" (137). By some "mystical power" she had been spirited away from her birthplace, transformed into a flower, and exhaled as a mist which, in turn, condensed itself back into the form of the young maiden. Of her aborted fate, prophecied in a dream of Aleema's, she relates how she was to have been borne to a whirlpool on the coast of an island called Tedaidee, there to descend in a canoe and be cast up in an inland fountain of Oroolia (137-138). Yillah's conception of the world is Platonic, consisting of "deceptive" shadows. Kept in seclusion in the "silent interior" of the island of Amma under the jealous protection of Aleema,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yillah can relate to the narrator only what the native priest has told her about her history (154).

The narrator, however, sees Yillah as a victim of "the strange arts of the island priesthood" who has been craftily deluded into "the constant indulgence of seraphic imaginings" (139). Continually looking into the sea, she is a feminine Narcissus, and the narrator is lulled into reverie along with her: "As we glided along, strange Yillah gazed down into the sea, and would fain have had me plunge into it with her, to rove through its depths" (145). In a foreshadowing of Ishmael's identity-loss to Ahab in Moby-Dick, the narrator states, "Her dreams seemed mine" (159). But even as he is drawn into sympathy with Yillah's entrancing visions, the dissembling face of nature begets in him a state of recoil and doubt. Peering into the water, he sees a troubling vision of the floating corpse of Aleema.

Though aware of her "dangerous imaginings," the narrator does little to enlighten Yillah or set her straight about her past. He feigns identity as a demigod, passing himself off as "her friend and preserver, a better and wiser than Aleema the priest" (142). The narrator's duplicity is part of his own self-deception, however, for Yillah still remains "the earthly semblance of that sweet vision that haunted [his] earliest thoughts" (158).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It isn't long before the narrator finds his deception of Yillah beginning to whither, even as he seems intent on helping her to sustain the belief that the "nameless affinitities" between them are owing to their "having in times gone by dwelt together in the same ethereal region." Ambivalence reigns in the narrator's mind as the light of his duplicity dawns upon him:

> But if it was with many regrets, that in the sight of Yillah, I perceived myself dwarfing down to a mortal; it was with quite contrary emotions, that I contemplated the extinguishment in her heart of the notion of her own spirituality. (159)

For a time the question of propping up his "failing divinity" very nearly becomes a moot one for the narrator as the knowlege of the heart supersedes that of the head, and as both he and Yillah pass their days in gladness. The whirlpool on the coast of Tedaidee portending Yillah's fate enters less and less frequently into either of their minds. The narrator deludes himself temporarily into thinking he has found the answers to his visions.

Both Merrell Davis and Milton Stern are among the critics who have recognized in Yillah a conception of the narrator's own ideality. Davis, in fact, sees Yillah as "a partial answer to the Narrator's romantic visions from the Arturion's masthead."[15] But it is Stern who sees

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yillah's primary characteristics as "sadness, silence and a separateness from humanity which makes her nonexistent and unattainable....

> To the quester she is the tantalizing and vague stirring of memory which wordlessly recalls the ideality from which he took his own origin, trailing clouds of glory which wish only to rejoin the existence-giving nimbus.... In direct contrast to Jarl, Yillah remembers an other-worldly existence before she was reborn.[16]

Stern further observes that "the virgin Yillah,, untouched by material existence," represents in Melville's novel "conscious soul" in its "pure state":

> It is the unvitiated Adamic intellect, fresh from God, blessed with a Golden Age transcendent, innocent, believing perception which makes beatitude possible.... Yillah is the bliss which was man's right before all the dullness and heaps and tasks and blocks of history were thrown at him"[17]

It is the memory of that wordless "state of being anterior to an earthly existence" to which Yillah harkens, and which also resonates inside the narrator (153). The ineffable sense of a pre-existent wholeness ("unvitiated Adamic intellect") becomes personified in Yillah,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

luring Taji on in his long and fruitless search for her through the Mardian isles.

Queen Hautia, on the other hand, augurs the dark and shadowy aspects of the Yillah quest. Hautia makes her sudden appearance on the third day following the narrator's arrival on the island of Odo, where he has assumed the identity of Taji. Like Yillah, Hautia is a figure invested with mystery and muteness. In a portentous simile she is compared to "the inscrutable incognitos sometimes encountered, crossing the tower-shadowed Plaza of Assignations at Lima" (186). Her three flower-bearing emissaries intermittently accost Taji during his search for the missing Yillah, and function as counterparts to three arrow-wielding sons of the dead Aleema who are also in pursuit. In all her seductive fluidity, Hautia (her name seems a pun on the word "haughty," foreshadowing an aspect of Mrs. Glendinning in Pierre) reminds the reader of Keats's Lamia, though a more disturbingly reticent and elusive type. She is an aspect of the dark and denied feminine, a figure potentiating repressed sexual desire--a Lilith archetype. Symbolistically, Hautia is the annihilating calm in human guise, the "vortex that draws all in" (650).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is only with the advent of the Yillah/Hautia quest motif that Mardi comes into its own as a novel, allowing Melville's deeper preoccupations to come to the fore. And primemost among these is the authorial search for truth as it is rhetorically enacted in the dialogues of Media, Babbalanja, Mohi and Yoomy. It is within these chapters that ineffability finds its place not only as an aspect of symbolic portrayal or character or theme, but as the very "core" of Melville's ontological concerns as a writer. In this light, selfhood and word emerge as the figure-and-ground enigmas central to Melville's struggle to authorship.

The dialogic chapters that comprise most of the remaining pages in Mardi point to a radical de-structuring of world, identity, and word. Taji's quest recedes as a narrative concern, serving only as a framework to sustain the epistemological forays given over to his fellow mariners and the island sages they encounter. The overshadowing of of Taji's first-person voice fairly sets the pattern for the disappearing "I" of Ishmael in Moby-Dick.

John Irwin, in fact, speaks of the "cannibalization" of the writer's self in Melville, and likens it to a process that he sees in Poe's Narrative of A. Gordon Pym.[18] The comparison with Pym is an apt one, in that its author, like Melville, employs the vehicle of a sea-journey to quasi-mythical realms to frame his excursions into speculative fancy. Like Mardi, Poe's novel is "all episode," and in its manner of portraying characters in a chain of alter-ego relation to its narrator, it also

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

casts the very notion of identity into question. Irwin addresses the sense of "hieroglyphic doubling" between author and text in the context of his discussions of Poe, Melville, and other figures of the American Renaissance, his main concern being with the problem of symbolic representation of selfhood.[19] At another point, Irwin speaks resonantly to the splintering of consciousness upon which so much of the present study builds its case:

> [It] is precisely Melville's concern with the mystery of the split and double nature of human consciousness that keeps drawing him back toward the abyss, toward an inescapable notion of the self as "a nothing" that "casts one shadow one way, and another the other way" and toward the question of why "a nothing should torment a nothing." It is an almost inevitable movement: from recongnizing the mutually constitutive nature of bipolar opposites and thus the illusory character of any privileging of one pole over the other...to feeling that the self with its mysterious bipolar structure is not in itself a thing, not an enduring substance, but rather a changing function of symbolic relationships....[20]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Irwin's quotations from Pierre notwithstanding, Melville had expressed his thoughts on the vacuity of selfhood much earlier in Mardi. In chapter 116, for example, we find Yoomy and Hivohitee the Pontiff conversing within the darkness of the dreaded hermit's pagoda, "the inmost oracle of the isle":

> At last the silence was broken.
>
> "What do you see, mortal?"
>
> "Chiefly darkness," said Yoomy, wondering at the audacity of the question.
>
> "I dwell in it. But what else do you see, mortal?"
>
> "The dim gleaming of thy gorget."
>
> "But that is not me. What else dost thou see?"
>
> "Nothing."
>
> "Then thou hast found me out, and seen all!..." (360-61)

The bulk of metaphysical inquiry in Mardi is put into the voice of Babbalanja, however. As the major and eclipsing alter-ego of Taji, he is a mouthpiece for the voicing of Melville's core philosophical concerns within the novel. Yoomy's encounter with Hivohitee is merely a prelude to a more extended discourse in chapter 135: "Babbalanja Discourses in the Dark." The chapter is one of a number that invoke the Mardian theme of the vacuity of self in the face of wordlessness. Yet it is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Babbalanja's assertion of self "against the armed and crested Lies of Mardi" (430) that puts him in contention with all orthodoxies and systems of belief. In this respect, he prefigures Ahab. And where Ahab is victimized by his own monomania yet driven by a plurality of inner vicissitudes, or "malicious agencies" (M-D 184), Babbalanja identifies with the spirit of Oro, or omnipresent oneness, yet would "destroy all intellectual individualities" (M 427). Babbalanja goes on to claim that "men but differ in the sounds that come from their mouths, and not in the thoughts lying at the bottom of their beings. The universe is all of one mind" (428). As Ahab gives no quarter to thoughts of blasphemy in his "Quarter-Deck" speech and sees all reality in terms of "pasteboard masks" (M-D 164), Babbalanja, in the vein of a Gnostic thinker asks, "What jargon of human sounds so puissant as to insult the unutterable majesty divine?" (M 428)

Babbalanja is nevertheless "sick with the spectacle of the madness of men, and broken with spontaneous doubts." He sees "but two things in all Mardi" into which he can put his faith:

> "--that I myself exist, and that I can most happily, or least miserably exist, by the practice of righteousness. All else is in the clouds; and naught else may I learn, till the firmament be split from horizon to horizon. Yet, alas! too often do I swing from these moorings." (428)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In response to Media's counsel to stop fevering his soul and "take creeds as they come," Babbalanja reaffirms his will to skepticism: "Faith to the thoughtless, doubts to the thinker" (428). But then Media, being only half-mortal, does not really have to bother himself with such questions. He remains above the epistemological fray because he is not subject to the passions that afflict his human companions. As a figuration of self, he stands forth as the embodiment of self-deceit. In contradistinction to Babbalanja, he is unconcerned about the malady of evil in the universe. His *laissez-faire* obtuseness, moreover, seems an early prototype of that state of mind Melville portrays in the character of Captain Amasa Delano in "Benito Cereno," and notably so because he seems blind to his own humanity.

The disjunction of faith that Melville inscribes in *Mardi* is the germination of a debate that extends into all his later writings. In *Mardi* the argument often resides in the tension between the one and the many, and more specifically between a will to monotheism, and a resurgent strain of polytheism. The monism of world, self, and creation is repeatedly brought into question as things tend toward fragmentation and multiplicity. And whereas Babbalanja had spoken of his identification with the oneness of Oro that would destroy individualities, it is King Media who most centrally stands in denial of the forces of multiplicity. His identification, in turn, with the divine

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

right of kingship leagues him with the perpetuation of a monotheistic ethos. All the more does it vex him, then, to hear Babbalanja's claim that "many dumb, passive objects" continually alternate in his being (459).

In light of the polarities of imagination that Melville seems to be exploring in Mardi, James Hillman's thoughts may be of interest. Hillman, a post-Jungian who speaks often of a "polytheistic" structure of consciousness, has made multiplicity of mind a major focus of his interest. Recounting the history of the cultural battle to deny polycentricity, Hillman cites the work of Karl Jaspers, Karl Barth and Teilhard de Chardin, thinkers that in his view have championed the cause of monism and raised demonlogy to the level of a "huge theological bugbear." Hillman notes specifically the emphasis these writers put on the necessity of "silencing" the speech that is manifested in images. This was one of the ways, he claims, that the early Christian writers sought to depotentiate polytheism. It was above all "to deny the power of the word (Logos) to inner voices. To open the door to inner voices lets in the powers of darkness, the daimons of antique religion, polytheism, and heresy."[21]

With respect to Mardi's invoking of "mysteries not to be revealed to posterity, and things at war with the canonical scriptures" (297), Hillman's thoughts seem especially relevant. For the denial of daimons

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and their exorcism, he says, "have been part of Christian psychology,

> leaving the Western psyche few means but the hallucinations of insanity for recognizing daimonic reality. By refusing even the possibility of more than one voice--except the voice of the devil --all _daimones_ became demonic and anti-Christian in their message, and in their very multiplicity.... Introspection's course and limits were set by a consciousness that insisted on unity.[22]

The counter-claims of multiplicity in _Mardi_ are portrayed in similar ways. In the context of the novel's descent into philosophical darkness, all ontological bases are challenged. It is Babbalanja who speaks for the notion of existence as a "polysensuum" (357), this after proferring a tale to relate the difficulty of right worship in a world with a multitude of idols. His tale of the blind men groping at the banian tree, each one laying hold of a root and claiming _it_ to be the trunk, bespeaks the inefficacy of belief, as well as the limitation of egocentric thought. This kind of parodying suffuses the dialogic chapters of _Mardi_ and is of the type that Melville brings to a polish in the "Doubloon" chapter of _Moby-Dick_. There, all the perspectives on the coin's meanings devolve to the cracked gibberish of the cabin-boy Pip, all are cast into doubt. In _Mardi_ the undecidability of belief causes only confusion in the realm of young King Peepi, the ruler of Valapee,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Isle of Yams, whose "numerous anonymous souls" beget in him all manner of conflicting claims (202). These "assorted souls," we read,

> were uppermost and active in him one by one. To-day, valiant Tongatona ruled the isle, meditating wars and invasions; to-morrow, thrice discreet Elandoo, who, disbanding the levies, turned his attention to the terraces of yams. And so on in rotation to the end.
>
> Whence, though capable of action, Peepi, by reason of these revolving souls in him, was one of the most unreliable of beings. (203)

We are reminded here of Annatoo's possession by "scores of devils" (113), as well as of "the Plujii," provoking spirits thought to inhabit the island of Quelquo. Babbalanja unsettles his companions by finding in the account of the Plujii a "hiatus" to his own system of metaphysics, a body of thought which sounds heretically Gnostic in character: "No; there must exist some greatly inferior spirits; so insignificant, comparatively, as to be overlooked by the supernal powers; and through them it must be, that we are thus grievously annoyed" (264).

These and similar passages in <u>Mardi</u> continually work to subvert the monism of self and the sense of the imperial "I." Yet it is in abreaction to the novel's fragmenting narrational integrity that the "I"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

most often reaserts itself. Plot line and discursive material vie for place, and the manifest story is put aside in favor of digressions like the following one from chapter 97, "Faith and Knowledge." An omniscient narrative voice (Taji's? Melville's?) comes forward to proclaim, "It is because we ourselves are in ourselves, that we know ourselves not" (297). Identity and the efficacy of truth-seeking are once again brought into question as an infelt multiplicity of selves arise to speak, yet all are subsumed to the oneness of the narrating ego:

> With the Israelites, I fainted in the wilderness; was in court, when Solomon outdid all the judges before him. I, it was, who suppressed the lost work of Manetho, on the Egyptian theology, as containing mysteries not to be revealed to posterity, and things at war with the canonical scriptures; I, who originated the conspiracy against that purple murderer, Domitian; I, who in the senate moved, that great and good Aurelian be emperor. I instigated the abdication of Diocletian, and Charles the Fifth; I touched Isabella's heart, that she hearkened to Columbus. I am he, that from the king's minions his the Charter in the old oak at Hartford; I harbored Goffe and Whalley; I am the leader of the Mohawk masks, who in the Old Commonwealth's harbor, overboard threw the East India Company's Souchong; I am the Vailed Persian Prophet; I, the man in the iron mask; I, Junius. (297)[23]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is an inescapable subjectivity from which the narrating voice in Mardi cannot free itself. The flight from language and the desire for ineffability are seen as issuing from struggle to flee the burdens of identity, of a selfhood that feels all too keenly the weight of an inherited past. This is, in fact, the defining agon in Pierre, or the Amibiguities, and it is in that novel's adoption of third-person narration that we see Melville finally effecting a move to greater objectivity. With no Ishmaelean persona to provide cover, the shift is seen as a necessary one, a defense against the claims of an imprisoning and endless subjectivity. For Taji, the narrator of Mardi, the escape is motivated by the guilt he suffers over the slaying of Aleema, whose emissaries plague him to the inconclusive end of his journey. For him, there is no other option than a lapse into narrational invisibility. For the retreat from self is also the retreat from words. As a figuration of Melville's own authorial self, Taji is drawn first to the annihilating calms, then to a successive merging of self with Jarl, Samoa, Yillah/Hautia, and his four Mardian companions. The identity-lapse is virtually accomplished in the eclipsing of Taji's voice by Babbalanja's, whose dark, prolix musings form the philosophical core of the book. Taji's pushing off in the closing pages of the novel beyond Serenia--where even the skeptical Babbalanja has found peace--is the ultimate leap into narrative non-identity.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The incompleteness of the voyage, in fact, bespeaks the partitiveness of self lying at the core of the will to muteness in the novel. For every horizon breasted, another looms and beckons. Although no hard evidence exists for Melville's having read Emerson prior to or during his writing of Mardi, certain passages in the book read as almost unmistakable parodies of the Concord philosopher's thought.[24] And whether intentional or not, the pushing back of the horizon of knowing in Mardi to reveal only "so much blankness to be sailed over" (11) seems a dark corollary to the grounding in faith and optimism that Emerson voices in "Circles." And where Emerson ties ineffability to the fact of human incompleteness in "The Oversoul," claiming that we live "in succession, in division, in parts, in particles," Melville has Babbalanja saying, "We have had vast developments of parts of men; but none of manly wholes. Before a full-developed man, Mardi would fall down and worship" (593).[25] That imagined fulness is owing to the felt diminishment of self, however. And where Jarl had been linked with the "blended" generations of mankind (12), Babbalanja here offers the counter-claim to that thought:

> We are all idiot, younger sons of gods, begotten in dotages divine; and our mothers all miscarry. Giants are in our germs; but we are dwarfs, staggering under heads overgrown. Heaped, our measures burst. We die of too much life. (593)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Not long afterward, Babbalanja amplifies his discourse on the knowledge of head and heart. And the words, as Melville has them coming forth, seem a strange admixture of Emerson and Carlyle:

> We are full of ghosts and spirits; we are as grave-yards full of buried dead, that start to life before us. And all our dead sires, verily, are in us; that is their immortality. From sire to son, we go on multiplying corpses in ourselves; for all of which, are resurrections. Every thought's a dead soul of some past poet, hero, sage. We are fuller than a city. Woe it is, that reveals these things. He knows himself, and all that's in him, who knows adversity. To scale great heights, we must come out of lowermost depths. The way to heaven is through hell. We need fiery baptisms in the fiercest flames of our bosoms. We must feel our hearts hot--hissing in us. And ere their fire is revealed, it must burn its way out of us; though it consume us and itself. (593-94)

The effulgence of self that consumes the self resides at the very core of Melville's search for authorial identity in Mardi. The will to muteness is best understood, then, as a function of Melville's experience of infelt dissociation in writing the book. "My cheek blanches white while I write; I start at the scratch of my pen; my own mad brood of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

eagles devours me...; my thoughts crush me down till I groan...." (368). Melville anticipates Ahab as Prometheus, his heart fed upon by a vulture, "that vulture the very creature he creates" (M-D 202). Mardi is thus a "self-consuming artifact," and the book that most closely prefigures Pierre in that it nearly loses itself to its own inscriptive processes. Yet as Bryan Short has so aptly observed, the capacity of Melville's voice to "throttle--mutilate--its own creative representations" is the very thing that enables him to move in the direction of a "new rhetorical challenge."[26]

It is fitting then, that Melville's novel should end on a note of irresolution, with Taji unable or unwilling to rest in any safe ideational haven. And where Taji speaks of abdicating, the reader is left wondering whether Babbalanja--he of the dark skepticisms and bedeviling prolixity--is the real abdicator. Babbalanja's abandonment of the quest for that which is "past finding out" (634) is Melville's realized trope for the desire to foreswear authorship, to abandon the word. Babblanja ceases being Babbalanja, in fact, with his conversion to the "oneness" of the religion of Alma. He, not Taji, is the broken vessel of identity-loss and the figure with nothing left to declare. As a partial projection of Melville's authorial identity, Babbalanja signals Melville's own feelings that the book he has written is "but a poor scrawled copy of something within" (601).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Babbalanja's inconsistencies mirror the very inconsistencies of the novel. Beliefs, whether secular or religious, epistemological or poetic, underlie and sanction selfhood. And the role that beliefs play in Mardi cannot be overemphasized. Internal conflict, therefore, is vital to the inconsistency of self that pervades the novel. The loss of faith, most notably in the grounding conceptions of identity, is the agency most directly responsible for Mardi's fragmenting narrative authority. The narrator's disorientation in the face of the calm is but the prefiguration of frenzied identity-loss in the "Dreams" chapter, or in "Sailing On," where the authorial voice admits to having "chartless voyaged" (556). Like the fictional Mardian scribe Lombardo, Melville seems to have written right on, "and in so doing got deeper and deeper into himself" (595).

Mardi dramatically summarizes the notion that literary texts can authorize as well as challenge the metaphysical grounds of identity. It is the first book of Melville's that inscribes the agon of an ungraspable inner selfhood. In the most meaningful sense, the novel can be said to bear out Leo Bersani's claim that language doesn't merely describe identity, "but actually produces moral and perhaps even physical identity," even as it allows "for a kind of dissolution or at least elasticity of being induced by an immersion in literature."[26] Or, as Melville would frame the prescriptive adage for authorial identity in Pierre: "Nimble center, circumference elastic you must have" (P 54).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Succeeding chapters of this study will continue to focus on Melville in the context of his creative unfolding toward an authorial identity. Mardi is the first work in which the will to silence becomes clearly and unmistakably an aspect of that process. Within its pages, Melville is nothing if not relentless in pursuit of philosophical truth, and truths about variegated humanity, even as he seems to recoil from the very knowledge that his book inscribes. Mardi is a perplexing and sometimes exasperating novel to read. But it is a necessary one to an understanding of all that follows--and especially Moby-Dick. For it is the work wherein Melville's will to discourse, and his innate capacities as a symbolist, first struggle to articulate a vision that becomes, in that later novel, as truly majestic an expression of the creative mind as anything we can find in world literature.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1]F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1941) 378.

[2]Milton R. Stern, The Fine-Hammered Steel of Herman Melville (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1957) 67.

[3]Richard Brodhead, Hawthorne, Melville and the Novel (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973) 125.

[4]Merrell R. Davis, Melville's Mardi: A Chartless Voyage (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1952) 51-52, 58, 62-66; Merton R. Sealts, Melville's Reading: Revised and Enlarged Edition (Columbia, S. C.: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1988) entries 88, 89, 102, 108, 154, 174, 175, 243, 293, 372, 417, 458, 532.

[5]David S. Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989) 49-50, 280, 308.

[6]Davis 68-69.

[7]Prof. O. M. Mitchell, A Course of Six Lectures on Astronomy, Delivered in the City of New York (New York: Greeley and McElrath, 1848) 3. The passage has been quoted more recently by Kevin J. Weddle, "Old Stars: Ormsby Mitchel," in Sky and Telescope vol. 71, no. 1 (January 1986) 14.

[8]Matthiessen 378.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[9] Merton R. Sealts, Melville's Reading in Ancient Philosophy (doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1942) 23.

[10] Martin Leonard Pops, The Melville Archetype (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 1970) 44.

[11] Leon Howard, Herman Melville: A Biography (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1951) 167; Davis, 198-99.

[12] James Hillman addresses some of the difficulties in defining anima's relation to unity and multiplicity, citing the various contexts in which Jung speaks of the phenomenon. Jung's assertion that the individual has a "plurality of souls" is acknowledged, as is his interest in "dissociated fragments as personalities." But because anima comprises so many "contrarities," says Hillman, "a psychology true to anima describes soul in so many contrary ways. From the perspective of delight in plurality, anima as uni-personality is merely one of her many guises." Hillman notes that when describing anima, Jung's imagination turns frequently to "the polyvalence of pagan myth," but admits to struggling with Jung's insistence on unity of anima "in face of evidence that could just as well have turned it the other way." Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985) 153-59. An archetypal reading of Mardi's dialogics on unity and multiplicity suggests that Melville was nascently formulating the same debate. At best, perhaps all we can say is that anima is introductory to an experience of multiplicity, which is the way I've stated it in the text

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

above. Subsequent chapters will explore anima phenomenology in Melville in greater detail, and notably in the light of Hillman's archetypal psychology.

[13]Edwin Haviland Miller, Melville (New York: Persea Books, 1975) 145; Neal L. Tolchin, Mourning, Gender, and Creativity in the Art of Herman Melville (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988) 70-71.

[14]Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Dell, 1960) 197.

[15]Davis, 128.

[16]Milton R. Stern, The Fine-Hammered Steel of Herman Melville (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1957) 109-10.

[17]Ibid. 112.

[18]John T. Irwin, American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1980) 150.

[19]Ibid. 61-64, 136, 153, 258-61, 321-23.

[20]Ibid. 320.

[21]Hillman, Healing Fiction (Barrytown, N. Y.: Station Hill Press, 1983) 64.

[22]Ibid. 65.

[23]Although evidence suggests that Melville did not encounter the writings of Thomas De Quincey until December of 1949, months after he had published Mardi, this passage bears remarkable likeness to one appearing

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in Confessions of an English Opium Eater. De Quincey is describing his horror amid the "Oriental imagery, and mythological tortures," of an opium dream:

> Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sun-lights, I brought together all creatures.... I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas: and was fixed, for centuries, at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia: Vishnu hated me: Seeva laid wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris.... I was buried, for a thousand years, in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in the narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids....

Confessions of an English Opium Eater, ed. Althea Hayter (London: Penguin, 1971) 109.

[24]Sealts, 59, 75, 172: entry 180.

[25]Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays: First and Second Series, intro. Douglas Crase (New York: Library of America, 1983) 156.

[26]Bryan C. Short, Cast by Means of Figures: Herman Melville's Rhetorical Development (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1992) 66.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Two

Fallen Words and the Loss of Self in Moby-Dick

> As language points to its own transcendence in silence, silence points to its own transcendence--to a speech beyond silence.
>
> --Susan Sontag

Both an identity--and a world--are invoked in the very first line of Moby-Dick: "Call me Ishmael." The word calls things into being; naming things confers existence upon them. And Ishmael's narrational speech-act is but one of many "namings" in a work that, from its "Extracts" through chapters on cetology, whiteness, mast-head standing and beyond, contains a surfeit of discourse on the metaphysical as well as the here-and-now. Yet Moby-Dick, in spite of its verbal effusions, its oratorical breadth, its frequent and numerous prolixities, is also freighted, like so many of Melville's other works, with an omnipresent sense of the void, and of the futility of words.

What is named is just as often unnamed: "God keep me from ever completing anything," Ishmael exclaims in the "Cetology" chapter. "This whole book is but a draught--nay, but the draught of a draught" (M-D 145). The fear of verbal failure in the face of the unspeakable pervades Ishmael's narrative. So "well nigh ineffable" was Moby-Dick's whiteness "that I almost despair of putting it in comprehensible form," we are told in "The Whiteness of the Whale" (188). Anatomy, the systemizing of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

thought and language, and the failure of words are linked as well in "The Prairie" as we are asked to contemplate, along with Ishmael, the whale's wrinkled visage:

> ...If then Sir William Jones, who read in thirty languages, could not read the simplest peasant's face in its profounder and more subtle meanings, how may unlettered Ishmael hope to read the awful Chaldee of the Sperm Whale's brow? I put that brow before you. Read it if you can. (347)

The world as text and the unreadability of same in this passage is the reduplication of a concept that suffuses Moby-Dick from beginning to end. We are once again back with Ishmael near the outset of his journey, vexed before the mysterious oil painting in the dimlight of the Spouter Inn. It was only "by dint of much and earnest contemplation, and oft repeated ponderings," that you began to find out what "that one portentuous something in the picture's midst" actually depicted (12-13). Nor is the symbolizing in Queequeg's tattoos--his very body is a text all unreadable--ever fully revealed. Moreover, the many portents and omens that attend the Pequod during its journey are invested with dark and shadowy meanings. Ahab's livid white scar; the Persian harpooneer Fedallah, who "remained a muffled mystery to the last" (231); the "Spirit-Spout" that eludes the crew night after night off the Azores;

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the nine gams of the Pequod, each encounter being a mirror of fate; ultimately the "whiteness" of Moby Dick himself: all exist in the novel as "signs" of destiny to be deciphered or left unregarded by the crew.

The hieroglyphic sense, and the raising of the pictorial over the vocative, are thereby features of Melville's novel that we encounter again and again as the capabilities of language are tested and brought into question. As we noted in the previous chapter, the hieroglyphic, and the notion of the world as "text," are prominent themes in Mardi, and a Voyage Thither. But in Moby-Dick the hieroglyphic truly emerges as a metaphor in its own right, often implying the inadequacy of words. As such, it is integrally woven into the fabric of the novel, part of the overall "accretion" of ineffability that works to subvert meaning and undo the very fact of narration. And thus, in a journey fraught with indecipherable meanings, Ishmael virtually talks himself into silence. Indeed, his voice goes "mute" amid the welter of competing ones at several points in the novel.

But the language of undoing in Moby-Dick does not in every instance directly invoke the ineffable. More often, what we encounter is a discourse of ambiguity or indeterminacy, as many passages attest. A characteristic passage occurs in the "Moby Dick" chapter, wherein Ishmael, meditating on the White Whale's intentionality in attacking men and ships, is deliberately and perlexingly vague:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> But though similar disasters, however little bruited ashore, were by no means unusual in the fishery; yet, in most instances, such seemed the White Whale's aforethought of ferocity, that every dismembering or death that he caused, was not wholly regarded as having been inflicted by an unintelligent agent. (183-84) [Emphasis mine.]

The piling up of negatives, qualifiers and affixes is typically Melvillean, and serves to keep the reader immersed in an exercise of endlessly exfoliating ambiguity. Part of the sophistication of Melville's art derives from his ability to replicate in the reader's mind the selfsame doubt and irresolution undergone by those mariners who have heard all manner of conflicting accounts concerning the White Whale, Moby-Dick. Meaning is thus perpetually deferred, and the reader is continually faced with a self-cancelling text about the unreadability of its very own subject.

In the following chapter, "The Whiteness of the Whale," which some critics see as the philosophical core of the novel, Ishmael copiously discourses on the very subject of whiteness. He endlessly catalogues its deific as well as diabolical associations, only and finally to exhaust meaning to irresolution: "But thou sayest, methinks this white-lead chapter is but a white flag hung out from a craven soul; thou surrenderest to a hypo, Ishmael" (194). And as if to stretch the reader

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

upon the rack of his subject even further, Ishmael continues, effecting a shift from the second-person mode to the more implicative "we." At this point it becomes clear that the foregoing disquisition and its accumulation of facts are only a prelude to the main matter of Ishmael's theme. Thoughts of nothingness and death pervade his commentary on whiteness from this point forward:

> Is it by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the milky way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows--a colorless, all-color of atheism from which we shrink? (195)

Whiteness, like the very principle of light, is the "mystical cosmetic" and a "subtle deceit" which touches all objects with its own "blank tinge." It is the very emblem of irresolution, skepticism, and doubt, the central figuration of the ineffable within a nexus of ineffability:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> ...--pondering all this, the palsied universe lies before us a leper; and like wilful travellers in Lapland, who refuse to wear colored and coloring glasses upon their eyes, so the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him. And of all these things the Albino whale was the symbol. Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt? (195)

The "dumb blankness, full of meaning" that Ishmael ascribes to the whiteness stands as the central oxymoronic statement within a narrative whose language everywhere tends toward ambiguity or self-cancellation. Whiteness thus becomes the clear metaphoric equivalent of muteness, a link which also figures centrally in Melville's later tale "Bartleby the Scrivener," wherein authorial selfhood and failed communication are dramatically focussed themes.

The recurrent symbols of the ineffable in Melville: the sea-calms, the descriptive and dramatic silences, the many instances of character-muteness, vie with verbal sense and speak, as true symbols often do, to a multiplicity of meanings. Though variously hinting at the religious or spiritual essence of things, Melville's silences are only rarely those of tranquil acceptance or beatific repose. In _Mardi_ we see a yearned-for sense of oneness and sublimity betrayed in the double-edged experience of the calm. And in _Moby-Dick_, as elsewhere in Melville's writings, we more

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

frequently encounter those silences arising out of tremor or revolt, paralytic speechless silences in which protagonist or narrator is caught in an existential moment of rage, fear, defiance or doubt. The brooding, simmering reticence of Ahab; the unyielding reticence of Bartleby; the stammmering hesitancy of Billy Budd; the frenzied verbal capitulations of Ishmael: these character-silences and negations, as well as the very Gothic turns that infuse the drama in Moby-Dick and "Benito Cereno," bespeak the more insistent nullity that we find in Melville. In such instances we see an abreaction to the plight of both language and identity on the part of Melville. For those symbolic silences and mute personae show themselves as emissaries of his own vacated or fractured sense of self and soul, and their world is one where both the word and human individuality have taken defensive--if not defiant--stands against the void.

It hardly needs emphasizing that selfhood and individuality are paramount themes in American culture, and keenly realized in the literature of the American Renaissance. And they are powerful themes in Moby-Dick. But in Melville's critiquing and undercutting of Transcendental thought we often find the obverse and corollary invoked: non-being, or the vacuity of self. The polarities in Melville are drawn and dramatized ever more starkly than in, for example, Emerson's polarities of the "Me" and the "Not Me." The optimism in Emerson's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Self-Reliance," moreover, is taken to its perilously opposite ends in Captain Ahab's will to assert the primacy of his selfhood, in his abreactive and defiant war on creation. Ahab's overweening response to the white fire of the mastheads in "The Candles": "...a personality stands here....I own thy speechless, placeless power" (507) is crucial because it is at once a supreme assertion of selfhood as well as a response to the void that is felt both within and without. It is a truly seismographic moment in Moby-Dick, expressive of the will to merge with the impersonal and the elemental. It adumbrates other like moments in Melville's writings--Mortmain's tasting of the ash-laden Dead Sea waters in Clarel comes to mind--and in its defiant celebration of the void significantly leagues Melville with his near-contemporary Nietzsche.

But Ahab's quest is the shadow-quest of Ishmael's, and Ishmael's encompassing journey is one of searching for identity and relation to the world. Mirrored in the other dramatis personae in the novel, Ahab foremost among them, are figments of Ishmael's own self and soul. The impelling myth in Moby-Dick is that of Narcissus, "who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned" (5). Selfhood, or the quest for wholeness of same, is "the silent form or phantom" which lures both Ishmael and his dark counterpart Ahab. Both Ishmael and Ahab are modern Jonahs embarked on the archetypal night-sea journey into the shadow side of consciousness, a journey largely, as Melville portrays it, into the unspeakable.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figurations of silence abound in Moby-Dick, as the "ungraspable phantom" theme is replayed again and again, and worked into its fullest artistic expression in the "Spirit-Spout," and in the "wordless" gam of the Pequod and Goney in "The Albatross."

Muteness first evidences itself as a theme with thoughts of silent "water-gazers" in "Loomings" and resurfaces with Bulkington's brief and wordless appearance in "The Spouter Inn." It continues with Queequeg's silent fasting in "The Ramadan" and reappears in "The Prophet," as the old figure of the wharves departs from Ishmael and Queequeg muttering, "The ineffable heavens bless ye...." This, after his "half-hinting, half shrouded" warnings about their signing on to the Pequod (93). Ahab's first appearance on deck after long reclusion is marked by silence as well. "He looked like a man cut away from the stake" says Ishmael, and of "the lividly whitish" scar running down his face, a "tacit consent" among the crew forbade any mention (123). Ishmael observes in him

> a determinate, unsurrenderable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of [his] glance. Not a word he spoke; nor did his officers say ought to him; though by all their minutest gestures and expressions, they plainly showed the uneasy, if not painful, consciousness of being under a troubled master-eye. And not only that, but moody stricken Ahab stood before them

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> with a crucifixion in his face; in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe. (124)

Then there is the awful decorum of silence in "The Cabin Table," where Ahab presides at the crew's meals like a "mute, maned sea-lion" before his "deferential cubs" (150). Still later, the silences are many, and frequent.

Beginning with the chapters "The Prophet" and "Ahab," Ishmael's formerly half-whimsical narrative tone cedes more and more ominously to shadowy thoughts and doubtful speculations as the mysteries surrounding Ahab and the collective fate of the crew deepen. Self-doubt gives way to expressions of near-despair, and of the inability of words to convey moods, feelings and ideas. This is notably the case at the close of "Cetology," where, by Ishmael's own admission, his epistemological system stands "unfinished....God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught --nay, but the draught of a draught" (145). Thoughts of failed discourse, as noted earlier, begin to pervade the narrative from this point forward. And as ineffability increasingly rises to the level of a theme in Moby-Dick, the more "loss of self" begins also to evidence itself as a distinct and problematical concern.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Identity is brought strikingly into question at the close of "The Mast-Head," as Ishmael, standing watch on a dreamy afternoon, all but loses himself in reverie. Leaguing himself with all the "mast-head standers" in human history from the Egyptians on down, he ultimately draws lessons for those Nantucket shipowners who would furnish an "asylum" for that "sunken-eyed young Platonist" who is

> ...lulled into such an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie...that at last he loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature....In this enchanted mood, thy spirit ebbs away to whence it came; becomes diffused through time and space; like Cranmer's sprinkled Pantheistic ashes, forming at last a part of every shore the round globe over. (159)

The loss of bearings, like that undergone by Mardi's narrator in the throes of the calm, evocative also of White-Jacket's fall from the yard-arm into the "speechless profound of the sea" (W-J 392), is dramatically rendered in the subsequent and concluding passage. Again, what most unsettles the narrator here is the stark realization of selfhood in the face of its own annihilation:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> There is no life in thee, now, except that rocking life imparted by a gently rolling ship; by her, borrowed from the sea; by the sea, from the inscrutable tides of God. But while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch; slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror. Over Descartian vortices you hover. And perhaps, at midday, in the fairest weather, with one half-throttled shriek you drop through that transparent air into the summer sea, no more to rise for ever. Heed it well, ye Pantheists! (M-D 159)

Although the warnings about pantheism and loss of self within the "all" of existence are frequent in Moby-Dick and have caught the attention of readers, the symbolic meanings in regard to selfhood still call for further scrutiny. Bryan Short's recent study of Melville's rhetorical development (1992), and Edward Edinger's Jungian treatment of Moby-Dick (1975), are among the commentaries that give adequate precedence to the circle as a core figuration of selfhood in Melville's novel. But Short sees Melville engaging, at least through the writing of Pierre, in "a psychological vision of selfhood which preserves the notion of a center, even if that center is empty."[1] Edinger offers the archetypal symbol of the "mandala" as a means to interpretaton in "The Castaway," "The Grand Armada" and "The Doubloon."[2] These are each in their own ways very insightful commentaries. But the question not

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

brought sharply enough into focus by either is why figurations of the circle should so often coalesce <u>precisely</u> at those moments when selfhood is most acutely realized, or as in "The Mast-Head," when identity-loss most threatens.

I want to extend the lines of inquiry here, and especially as they relate to the Jungian notion of the mandala as an integrating symbol in the individuation process. The figurative sense of "Descartian vortices" in "The Mast-Head" would seem, in this light, to anticipate the image of the circle evoked at the close of "The Castaway," in the passage describing the abandonment of Pip. The black cabin-boy, having fallen off Stubb's whaleboat and been left behind on the open seas, takes a turn to insanity amid the unspeakable lonesomeness of his fate: "The intense concentration of <u>self</u> in the middle of such a heartless immensity, my God! who can tell it?" (414) In what may very well be an anti-transcendentalist jibe at Emerson's dictum that "the health of the eye demands a horizon," Melville writes: "Pip's <u>ringed horizon</u> began to expand around him miserably....The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul...." (414) [Emphasis mine.]

Here too looms the threat of annihilation in stasis, Pip's watery expanse evoking once again the diabolical calms of <u>Mardi</u>. Here is the same imminence of selfhood's demise, calling once more to mind Ishmael's dead-end trance on the mast-head. In its almost over-the-mark frenzy of language, the passage also recalls the terrible moment of authorial

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

capitulation in the "Dreams" chapter of Mardi. Now, selfhood's circling brood of devouring eagles is become, for Pip, its "horded heaps" where the deranged cabin-boy sees the "God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament of waters heaved the colossal orbs" (414). The passage is one of the most dramatic in all of Melville's writings suggesting the dissolution of personality.

Though the "ringed horizon" envisioned in this passage may be viewed in the context of a pattern of symbolic circles in Moby-Dick, and even, as suggested above, derive in some sense from Emerson's meditations in his essay "Circles," the archetypal interpretation may indeed prove more fruitful. Carl Jung, noting that images of the circle often arise in dreams of schizophrenic patients, was led to postulate the mandala as an archetypal symbol compensating for "the disorder and confusion of the psychic state" as well as an "attempt at self-healing."[3] The circle as a symbol of wholeness of self manifesting itself in various forms of the mandala became in fact, for Jung, central to his theories of archetypal reality and human individuation. Jung also speaks of the mandala in the Buddhists' conception as an aid to meditation and concentration, as an image bespeaking the centering of self and soul.[4]

In his autobiography, Jung writes of his discovery of mandala symbolism, which he linked to an ever-evolving but ultimately undefinable conception of the self:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> ...I began to understand that the goal of psychic development is the self. There is no linear evolution; there is only a circumambulation of the self. Uniform development exists, at most, only at the beginning; later, everything points toward the center. This insight gave me stability, and gradually my inner peace returned. I knew that in finding the mandala as an expression of the self I had attained what was for me the ultimate.[5]

A striking anticipation of Jung's thoughts on the mandala occurs in "The Grand Armada." Here, Ishmael, along with Starbuck and Queequeg (who must surely be counted as one of the "better angel" alter-egos in Melville's novel) is towed headlong into the center of a furiously circling herd of sperm whales. The scene within, as readers familiar with Melville know, is depicted in one of the most majestic and memorable chapters in all of Moby-Dick. At the very vortex of the stampeding herd the mariners discover a sleek: a smooth, glasslike expanse of ocean where newly-birthed and suckling whales are still attached to their dams by their umbilical cords, and where other young whales glide innocently by mildly looking up at them. "Yes," exclaims Ishmael, "we were now in that enchanted calm which they say lurks at the heart of every commotion....Some of the sublest secrets of the seas seemed divulged to us....We saw young Leviathan amours in the deep" (387-88). As a symbolic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

paradigm evoking calm beneficence, no passage in the novel speaks more resonantly to the acceptance of selfhood and all its inherent contradictions than the one that follows. And here again, as in similar moments earlier in the book, the figuration of the circle emerges within a context of imminent annihilation:

> And thus, though surrounded by circle upon circle of consternations and affrights, did these inscrutable creatures at the centre freely and fearlessly indulge in all peaceful concernments; yea, serenely revelled in dalliance and delight. But even so, amid the tornadoed Atlantic of my being, do I myself still for ever centrally disport in mute calm; and while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round me, deep down and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy. (388-89)

Taking the Jungian example even further, we might see the mandala as well in the symbol of the Spanish gold ounce nailed to the mainmast by Ahab, a reward for the crewman who first sights Moby-Dick. Once again the figurative, if not to say the archetypal, import of the round coin seems evident. Affixed at the very ship's "navel," minted in the very "navel" of the round world, Equador, and the focus of each crewman's subjective gaze in the "Doubloon" chapter, the doubloon stands forth as a veritable centering symbol of selfhood. Yet, as if anticipating Jung's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

belief that the ego is only an infinitesimal part of the wholeness of a selfhood that can rarely if ever be fully realized, each crewman sees in the coin only the reflection of his own monomania. All the discordant aspects or versions of selfhood aboard the Pequod are drawn to this circular emblem, only to be parodied to oneness, finally, in Pip's conjugational gibberish: "I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look" (434).

The mandala as an ordering symbol imaging forth a "concentric arrangement of the disordered multiplicity and irreconcilable elements" of selfhood might be seen again in "The Chase--Third Day," as Ishmael is borne out of the vortex of concentric circles marking the Pequod's destruction.[6] Here, once more, a form of the mandala seems to arise precisely at the moment when fragmentation and reintegration of selfhood come into play. If one indeed reads Moby-Dick in the Jungian light as a symbolic rendering of the individuation process, with Ishmael being "birthed," as it were, into a new selfhood at the denouement of the journey, then the archetypal meaning appears evident.

As Martin Bickman has pointed out, the symbolic creation or apprehension inherent in Jungian thought is "a way of reuiniting psyche and world," which is "essentially Romantic."[7] Whether one wishes to go so far as to interpret the processes of identity-loss in Moby-Dick strictly in the Jungian terms set forth here is not all that important. It is more noteworthy, as Bickman suggests, to be mindful of "the sources

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and the nature of the Romantic unity-division-reintegration pattern."[8] I wholly agree that if there are common antecedents to Melville and Jung, those can best be found in Romantic thought and expression. At other points in this study I have attempted to demonstrate that the core problem in Melville's will to muteness and identity-loss is that most dramatically symbolized in the Romantic project: the breakdown or dissolution of personality. I bring Jung's individuation theories and mandala symbolism into the discussion only to reinforce an understanding of that process.

If identity-loss is a concept central to the psychological interpretation of Moby-Dick, it can also greatly aid us in a formalistic understanding of the book. The imminence of Narcissus's plunge in "Loomings," the near-fall of Ishmael from the masthead, the near-drowning of Tashtego in the lashed whale's head in "Cistern and Buckets," and Pip's figurative drowning in "The Castaway," are the "linked analogies" of identity-loss within the multi-layered subtexts of Melville's novel. It is no accident, moreover, that when Ishmael's sense of identity and selfhood are most imperiled at the close of "The Mast-Head," this is also the point at which the novel changes its own form and effects a shift into chapters of dramatic convention. Beginning with "The Quarter-Deck," Ishmael's "voice" is submerged as passages replete with stage directions are given over, first to the pivotal confrontation between Ahab and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Starbuck, then in succeeding chapters to the soliliquies and interior monologues of Ahab, Starbuck, Stubb, and finally to the free reign of reveling voices in "Midnight, Forecastle." In that chapter, each individual sailor has a speaking part, and Pip, not uncoincidentally, is given the final word.

The breaking off the narrative prose line and the disappearance of the first-person voice of Ishmael is, formalistically speaking, the singularly most crucial moment in Moby-Dick. And the moment takes on special resonance when viewed in the contexts of ineffability and identity. We will elaborate more fully on the question of form later in this study. But for the present let us stress again that identity-loss, whether through the dissolve of meditation or the abyss of madness, is the central phenomenon underlying the novel's loss of its own narrative integrity and its temporarily warping itself out of shape to become something "other"--namely, a work of dramatic convention.

Is it that Ahab is simply too overpowering a character for the narrative that contains him? Did Melville, weaving Ahab from the wholecloth of drama and the stuff of myth, infusing him with the high-flown rhetoric and the dark inward sense of Shakespearean tragedy, knowingly cast him as a figure too large and overwhelming for the mere boundaries of a novel? One begins to sense that this is so as chapter titles, beginning with "Enter Ahab; to Him Stubb," take the form of, or find themselves accompanied by, stage directions. Ahab swears the crew

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to vengeance against Moby-Dick in "The Quarter-Deck," the first of a quintet of successive chapters giving themselves over to staging notes, asides, and speaking parts. As the crew along with Ishmael fade to the nothingness of tacit assent in the central scene of "The Quarter-Deck," Starbuck's becomes the lone voice of dissent. But even Starbuck is blanched to silence in the face of Ahab's overweening personality. Starbuck's rhetoric of suasion--"Vengeance on a dumb brute...that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab, seems blasphemous"--withers before Ahab's: "Stand up amid the general hurricane, thy one tost sapling cannot, Starbuck!.... Speak, but speak!--Aye, aye! thy silence, then, _that_ voices thee" (163-64).

Effusive and vociferous silences surround this pivotal moment of muteness in _Moby-Dick_, not only those of the awed crewmen implied in the textual description, but also those suggested to the reader in the way of stage directions and asides. Narrative commentary by this point in the novel has ceded itself to those silences best conveyed through the medium of drama. The direct appeal to audience in Ahab's aside, "Something shot from my dilated nostrils, he has inhaled it in his lungs. Starbuck now is mine; cannot oppose me without rebellion" (164), effectively excludes Starbuck and all the other crewmen while making the reader privy to his--Ahab's--truer and baser motives. Moreover, it effectively blows the lid off Ishmael's first-person commentary, which has at this point not only

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

been usurped, but transumed into a vehicle of omniscient narration. But also and presumably unheard by all is Starbuck's lowly murmured imprecation: "God keep me!--keep us all" (164).

The descriptive silence in the voiceover narration that follows is among the most Gothically resonant in the novel:

> But in his joy at the enchanted, tacit acquiescence of the mate, Ahab did not hear his foreboding invocation; nor yet the low laugh from the hold; nor yet the presaging vibrations of the winds in the cordage; nor yet the hollow flap of the sails against the masts, as for a moment their hearts sank in. For again Starbuck's downcast eyes lighted up with the stubbornness of life; the subterranean laugh died away; the winds blew on; the sails filled out; the ship heaved and rolled as before. (164-65)

As the Narcissus myth forms a major subtext of _Moby-Dick_, the _cogito ergo sum_ of Descartes evidences itself as an impelling philosophical question. For both Ishmael and Starbuck, and for all the other disparate voices on board the Pequod, the Cartesian injuction might well be changed to "I _speak_, therefore I am." And when speech is thwarted, silenced, or overshadowed, then also is selfhood. Starbuck's deprivation of voice in "The Quarter-Deck" becomes Ishmael's in the chapters following, beginning with "Sunset," where no narrative frame for Ahab's soliloquy is found,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

but rather the staging note: "Ahab, alone, by the cabin-window." Subsequent chapter-reveries are then given over respectively to Starbuck, Stubb, and then to all the crew in "Midnight, Forecastle." The carrying of narration is restored only by the self-naming speech-act of Ishmael at the beginning of the Chapter 41, "Moby-Dick": "I, Ishmael, was one of that crew..." (179). We are, as it were, back at the very beginning, where Ishmael had to proclaim the first-person and "name" himself to set the narrative in motion. But even in that proclaiming, we learn what an impalpable thing identity is, for Ishmael virtually confesses his own, if momentary, self-dissolution: "Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine" (179).

If Starbuck's speechlessness in the "Quarter-Deck" scene foreshadows the narrational silencing of Ishmael, then his soliloquy in "Dusk" can be said to anticipate Ishmael's recovery of voice in Chapter 41. We note too that the loss of voice is for Starbuck, as well as for Ishmael, directly attributable to loss or diminution of self in the face of Ahab. In fact, Starbuck's soliloquy reinforces the sense of the unspeakable that has marked his confrontation with Ahab. It, like Ahab's speech in "The Quarter-Deck," "Sunset" and elsewhere, is resonant with Shakespearean turns of eloquence, while at the same time significantly evoking silence and the void:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> My soul is more than matched; she's overmanned; and by a madman. Insufferable sting, that sanity should ground arms on such a field! But he drilled deep down, and blasted all my reason out of me! I think I see his impious end; but feel that I must help him to it. Will I, nill I, the ineffable thing has tied me to him; tows me with a cable I have no knife to cut.
>
> ***
>
> ...Hark! the infernal orgies! that revelry is forward! mark the unfaltering silence aft! Methinks it pictures life.... (169) [Emphasis mine]

The shifting of perceptions, the exclusionary hearing, the muting and altering of both sound and voice as the reader's focus is drawn from Ahab, to Starbuck, to Stubb, to the chorus of the voices in "Midnight, Forecastle," and finally back to Ishmael's, underscore the greater dynamic infusing Melville's novel: that of the identity principle, as if within the flux of a dream, inhabiting and corporealizing newer and ever changing forms. As critics from Coleridge to the modern day have observed, drama is the form most closely approximating dream. If it was Melville's intention to impart a fuller sense of interiority to his characters than would have been possible in prose narration, his instincts could not have been more on target. It is also significant that in resorting to dramatic convention, he also gave precedence to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

words as "speech" over words as inscription, thus evoking all the more resonantly their primal and aboriginal power. But it is equally and paradoxically true that drama is the form best suited to convey the pauses and interstices of thought so vital to "hearing" (whether in actual performance or imagination) words. Indeed, dramatic convention is oftentimes as crucially dependent on "silence" as it is on words, and sometimes more so.

Reading Melville's turn to dramatic convention in Moby-Dick in such a light makes the paradoxes of speech and non-speech in the novel all the more glaring. Melville's fascination with the ineffable, his impulse to transcend and reach beyond words, is also seen then as a pull to the very foundations of language. As Walter Ong points out in The Presence of the Word (1967), the word existed for most of human history as speech, or as "sound," long before the technological evolution of print. It was only upon its transmutation into writing, as Ong says, that the word truly took on the characteristic of silence.[9] Ong's further pronouncement that sound "binds interiors to one another as interiors" is important to the oral dimensions of drama; it makes us more aware of the silences between words, as well as the primal "sound-sense" of words themselves. Ong goes on to make important distinctions between the habits of auditory synthesis and the visual modes of perception that were encouraged by the introduction of print, and claims that "fragmentation" more properly belongs to vision.[10] Though space does not permit a fuller discussion

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

here, Ong's theories can aid us greatly, I believe, in examining the dissociation of word and self that we find in Melville, particularly in regard to the interiorizing aspects of language.

For the present, however, let us try to account more precisely for the narrational aphasia of Ishmael ecountered in these chapters. We are somewhat prepared for this loss of voice. Father Mapple's sermon is one earlier example of the extended usurpation of narrative, and may in fact be seen as a prefiguration of Ahab's "anti-sermon" in "The Quarter-Deck" chapter. Later in the book "The Town Ho's Story" and other interpolated narrations work to the same end. Add to this the many other digressions, on subjects ranging from "water and meditation" in "Loomings" to cetology, mast-head standing, whiteness, whaling tools and practices, and beyond. This overweight of sermonizing and digression continually deflects our attention from any voice that we can identifiably call Ishmael's. So we might be tempted to fly in the face of our earlier assertion and say that Ishmael is undone just as much by the surfeit of words as he is by any coalescing sense of muteness or ineffability.

But whatever the reason, Ishmael is lost amid the welter of words and other voices, just as surely as _Mardi_'s narrator is relegated to silence soon after he has taken on the guise of Taji. In fact, the Taji-Babbalanja polarity in _Mardi_ anticipates the eclipsing-speech dynamic in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Moby-Dick. To Babbalanja goes the preponderance of discourse in that earlier novel--discourse often bordering on madness and unreason, we might add--a veritable foreshadowing of Starbuck's, ultimately and more significantly Ishmael's, loss of voice in the face of Ahab's mad eloquence.

Ahab's suasion prevails largely through the power of his words (with a few good stage tricks like fire-tipped harpoons, his own mean visage, and burning mast-heads thrown in for extra measure). His force of oratory enables him to "silence" others and subsume them to his will. And it is in his frenzied "Quarter-Deck" speech: "All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks....If man will strike, strike through the mask!" (164), and in similar flights of rhetoric that we find the core of the philosophical questioning in Moby-Dick. Similarly, Ishmael's obsessive rhetoric at the end of "The Whiteness of the Whale" is qualitatively indistinct from Ahab's, as it is at many other points in the narrative. The figure-and-ground enigma of Ahab/Ishmael as aspects of Melville's own authorial identity ultimately resides at the core of the paradox involving language, moreover. And it seems that whenever identity is brought into question or the threat of annihilation looms, those are also the moments when prolixity, and not loss of speech, comes most readily to the fore. In "The Symphony," we hear Ahab once more railing against fate, asking, "Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm?" (545). And just as the questioning of identity is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ineluctably dependent on a voice to give that questioning shape, so is the frequent invoking of the ineffable tied to words. The problematic involving words, then, is also the very one involving selfhood. Identity in Moby-Dick is fluid, labile, indeterminate: those qualities also inhering in its language. But whereas Ishmael, despite his frequent verbosity, seems everywhere to voice his loss of faith in words, Ahab presses on with them with no similar awareness of their inadequacy. Where Ishmael succumbs to or accepts the failure of language, Ahab tries to surmount it by the heaping on of more and more words. He would even "incorporate" the ineffable: "I own thy speechless, placeless power," he cries to the burning mast-heads (507), once again aligning himself with forces and powers beyond human comprehension.

As we so often see in Moby-Dick, identity becomes problematical at those very moments when the word gains in ascendancy. The only way to reaffix in our minds who is speaking is either for Ishmael to reclaim narration and remind us that he is speaking, or for the narrative itself to establish separate and internal frames of narration. The problem is an especially vexing one in the "Doubloon" chapter, where Ahab and then Starbuck speak, each presumably observed in turn by Ishmael. Ahab sees, in the coin's images of mountains, flame and zodiac, affirmations of his own egotistical pride, while Starbuck finds only bad omens and portents. He is followed in turn by Stubb, who reads in those same images a jolly sermon on fate. But then Stubb "stays in" following his own soliloquy,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

observing the various "others" as they mark the coin in their thoughts. Unless Ishmael is still the observer of all observers, we have to conclude that Ishmael himself has somehow faded to ghostlike or phantomlike insubstantiality. And if this is so, would it not underscore once again the fluidity of selfhood, and the oneiric sense in Moby-Dick to which Melville so often seems to aspire?

"In the dream," writes Michel Foucault, "everything says 'I'...

> even the empty space, even objects distant and strange which populate the phantasmagoria. The dream is an existence carving itself out in barren space, shattering chaotically, exploding noisily, netting itself, a scarcely breathing animal, in the webs of death. It is the world at the dawn of its first explosion when the world is still existence itself and is not yet the universe of objectivity. To dream is not another way of experiencing another world, it is for the dreaming subject the radical way of experiencing its own world. This way of experiencing is so radical, because existence does not pronounce itself world. The dream is situated in that ultimate moment in which existence is still world; once beyond, at the dawn of wakefulness, already it is no longer its world.[11]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In Moby-Dick, everything inclines to what Foucault has termed "dreamlike ubiquity."[12] The center is indeed everywhere, and the pronouncing of self throughout is an endlessly perpetuating immersion in subjectivity.

In each of the competing discourses in Moby-Dick, the act of proclaiming, "I speak, therefore I am," becomes a futile attempt to step back from subjectivity, a failed or limited crossing over to objectivity. The ascendancy of speech through force of personality, as a form of empowerment or heroic act, is seen as a Promethean assertion of will. This is the agon of both identity and language, and of Ahab's selfhood set over against Ishmael's. Owing to the fact that Ahab, Ishmael, and all the separate versions of selfhood are Melville's own projections, it is the agon, ultimately, of the authorial self.

In order to place the identity-loss phenomenon in Moby-Dick more fittingly within the contexts of dissociation and narratology, I want to turn briefly to a novel which places Melville's work squarely in the modernist trajectory: William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying. It is one of a number of works we could cite, right up to the present day and including James Joyce's Finnegans Wake and Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses, wherein fragmenting identities and splintering alter-egos prevail. But I think Faulkner is most germane to our purpose, notably in regard to the linking of ineffability and identity.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Faulkner's indebtedness to Melville and his affinities with him have been duly noted by various critics.[13] I am not certain, however, that a connection in regard to symbolic silence between the two authors has been adequately explored. In both novelists' works the will to muteness, ineffability, and the futility of words is very pronounced. In both _As I Lay Dying_ and _Moby-Dick_ that impulse also correlates with the will to dismemberment and dissociation. Cash's amputated leg figuratively correlates to his "truncated" thoughts, as does Ahab's dismasted leg to his "speechless" quest. In Faulkner's novel, the idiot boy Vardaman's identification of his mother as a dissected fish speaks most centrally to the notion of dismemberment.

If we take dissociation of narrative as the informing principle of _As I Lay Dying_, then the Melvillean comparison becomes an especially telling one. Many voices and perspectives are represented in _As I Lay Dying_: Cora bespeaks religious faith and what appears to be naive optimism; Addie represents hard determinism and fatality; Jewel figures forth action in response to the world--his voice is only indirectly represented through the monologue of Darl. Vardaman, moreover, stands as a foil to Darl's culminating insanity. In the perspective of idiot he speaks and acts with the "sane madness of vital truth" that Melville so keenly saw as central to Shakespearean tragedy (_PT_ 244). Darl is given the preponderant and most articulate voice throughout--yet even that perspective in the novel devolves only to madness and incomprehensibilty.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A corrollary process seems to obtain in the array of personality traits given expression in Moby-Dick. We lose the "I" of the questing narrator some distance into the novel. We move away from Ishmael as our focus is drawn to Ahab and to all the countervailing mentalities of the Pequod's crew. The two "Knights and Squires" chapters and the "Doubloon" chapter set forth conveniently for the reader the array of perspectives. Over and against Ahab's monomaniac insanity are pitted the cautious superstition of Starbuck; the devil-may-care jollity of Stubb; the dull-witted materialism of Flask, and so on. With no singular perspective does Melville ally himself with any finality; each can be said in some sense to be inconclusive. And when the narrational self of Ishmael does resurface, when it is not subsumed or drowned in the counter-chorus of other selves, it does so more often than not only to voice its futility in regard to the power of words: "...I almost despair of putting it in a comprehensible form" ("The Whiteness of the Whale"). There is in Faulkner's As I Lay Dying, in contrast, not even a narrator-persona, a central "I," on which to hang perspective. What the various perspectives seem to come down to in that novel is a bleak one: that of the madness of Darl. The skewing of perspectives parallels that in Moby-Dick, perhaps most notably in Chapter 99, "The Doubloon," wherein each crew member, from Ahab on down, takes his turn soliloquizing before the coin impaled on the mainmast. Everything in that episode devolves, finally, to the conjugated mockery of the mad cabin boy Pip: "I look, you

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

look, he looks...." As in Faulkner's novel, all voices cancel one another out, all perspectives become lost in the dissolve of indeterminacy. But where Melville elsewhere in Moby-Dick gives us flights of affirmation to balance his nihilism, Faulkner nowhere does so in As I Lay Dying. Where Melville at times rejects even his own nihilism as an assertion of finality in Moby-Dick, Faulkner, in As I Lay Dying, seems irrevocably to rest in such an assertion.

Verbal failure evidences itself as a theme repeatedly in Moby-Dick, not only on the vocative level of narration, but increasingly as an aspect of the text itself. Melville comes closest to anticipating Faulkner in the "dramatic chapters" of Moby-Dick. Initially prominent voices, starting with Ishmael's, are displaced to the margins of our concern and superseded by other voices. Our focus shifts from the subjective to the objective, and back again, and authorial voice becomes difficult, if not impossible, for us to define with any certainty. As in As I Lay Dying, the dynamic of shifting perspective is extreme, and no authorial voice reigns--unless that objective presence can be seen as a composite of all the singular perspectives given voice in the novel.

Faulkner's skewing of voice and identity in As I Lay Dying and the novel's stress on the futility of words--replete with deliberate verbal gaps on the page--are extensions of the bold experimentality that we find in Melville. Non-identity and indeterminate language are the symbiotic strands of thought which coil so infusingly through their works, and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which link both, in turn, to the surrealistic style of Beckett. Viewed within a modernist trajectory of thought, Melville's preoccupation with the failure of discourse, via mute characters, symbolic silences, and narrative gaps, as well as his vocative paeans to silence in Mardi, Moby-Dick and Pierre, anticipate the literature of silence, or the genre that Ihab Hassan has called "aliterature." Hassan's comments in his study The Dismemberment of Orpheus (1982) further underscore the relation between dissociation and silence as it is seen in Melville:

> Silence requires the periodic subversion of forms. At times, the resulting anti-forms feign a formlessness that nothing made or percieved by man can ever possess....
>
> Silence creates anti-languages....These languages transform the presence of words into semantic absence and unloosen the grammar of consciousness. They accuse common speech....
>
> Silence de-realizes the world. It encourages the metamorphosis of appearance and reality, the perpetual fusion and confusion of identities, till nothing--or so it seems--remains.
>
> Silence turns consciousness upon itself, altering the modes of its awareness; or else condemns the mind to repetitions of the same solipsist drama of self and anti-self....[14]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The extreme ambivalence toward the word in Melville significantly mirrors his ambivalence to human existence. Having taken the theme of alienation farther than any of his Romantic precursors, Melville speaks vitally to our era and the dissociative forces besieging the modern personality. The multiplicity of character and splintering selves in his works impart an exigent conception of identity. The protagonists most dramatically embodying what D. H. Lawrence has called "the extreme transitions of the isolated, far-driven soul"--Taji, Pip, Bartleby, Hunilla of "The Encantadas"--are but remnant, fractured selves, in Melville's own figuration bits of wreckage broken off from the mass of humanity. Melville is not alone as a literary chronicler of breakdown and dissociation. But he certainly has to be recognized as a forerunner of the psychological age, a "literary discoverer" of the unconscious, as Henry A. Murray has claimed.[15]

The metamorphosis of identity and form is as fundamental to the breakdown of the imperial "I" in Moby-Dick as it is in Mardi and Pierre. Throughout these novels of self-splitting, maternal, intuitive and extrarational ways of knowing leaven and counterpoise empiricist modes of thought. Whereas words in Moby-Dick, for example, often impart a sense of ambiguity, so too does the frequent gender-blending: the alter-ego "marriage" of Ishmael and Queequeg in "The Counterpane"; Starbuck referring to his soul as "she" in "Dusk"; Queequeg as "midwife" delivering Tashtego from the whale's head in "Cistern and Buckets"; Ahab

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

proclaiming "the queenly personality lives in me, and feels her royal rights" in "The Candles"; the hermaphroditic aspect of the White Whale, and the genderizing of land and sea. Beyond gender-specificity, however, lies the deeper engagement with "anima-consciousness," and the manner in which Melville's writings subvert prevailing patriarchal attitudes. Indeed, the warring of the masculine and feminine imagos is central to Melville's protean vision of selfhood, and to his own infelt sense of fragmentation as an author.

Yet it is the very will to "de-realization," as Ihab Hassan has put it, that can be said to underlie Melville's reification of self through the power of his art, as well as his continuing evolution as a writer. The process, moreover, is just as vitally linked to the genre-shifting that we find in Moby-Dick and in the later course of Melville's career. If the speech-act is a defense-mechanism, a compensatory act against the void that is felt within and without, then the formalistic shift in Moby-Dick can be seen as foreshadowing the more radical departures in Melville's works to come: his resort for the first time to third-person narration in Pierre, his turn to short story writing, and most significantly, his abandonment of prose after 1857 and adapting himself to the more "contained" rigors of verse. The Melvillean project is seen in one light as a shoring up of selfhood through reliance on the word. But with his authorial self assaulted and diminished in the wake of poor reviews and declining readership, Melville continued to beat a double

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

retreat--both to, and from, words. Writing out of an acute imperative of failure after Moby-Dick and Pierre, he eschewed the grandiose prose that had infused those novels, and moved to the terser, more reticent ironies of the Piazza Tales and The Confidence-Man. What is so astounding about Melville's later career is his prodigious capacity for growth and renewal beyond the writing of his masterworks. The full sweep of his authorial development has yet to be measured, but the latter fruit of his voided fame, including the volumes of privately published poetry, as well as Clarel and Billy Budd, casts the earlier works into a more distancing and contextual light. In this respect, Moby-Dick, epochal as it is, becomes a form of prologue to the further quickening of Melville's powers as an author, even as his works seem marked by an increasing resignation in the face of words.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1]Bryan C. Short, Cast by Means of Figures: Herman Melville's Rhetorical Development (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1992) 146.

[2]Edward F. Edinger, Melville's Moby-Dick: A Jungian Commentary (New York: New Directions, 1978) 104 ff.

[3]C. G. Jung, Collected Works, Bollingen Series, vol. 9 (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959) par. 714.

[4]Ibid.

[5]---, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, ed. Aneila Jaffe (New York: Random House, 1961) 196-97.

[6]---, Collected Works par. 714.

[7]Martin Bickman, American Romantic Psychology: Emerson, Poe, Whitman,Dickinson, Melville (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988) 45.

[8]Ibid. 43.

[9]Walter J. Ong, S. J., The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1981) 114 ff.

[10]Ibid. 125-27.

[11]Michel Foucault, "Dream, Imagination and Existence: An Introduction to Ludwig Binswanger's 'Dream and Existence,'" Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry, XIX 1 (1984-85) 59.

[12]Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[13]Richard Chase discusses the similarity of symbols and themes in Faulkner's and Melville's works in an article entitled, "The Stone and the Crucifixion: Faulkner's Light in August," Kenyon Review, X (1948) 539-51. For a more comprehensive discussion of Faulkner's affinities with Melville, see Richard P. Adams, "The Apprenticeship of William Faulkner," Tulane Studies in English, XII (1962) 113-56.

[14]Ihab Hassan, The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature, 2nd ed. (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1982) 13.

[15]Henry A. Murray, "Introduction to Pierre" in Endeavors in Psychology: Selections from the Personology of Henry A. Murray, ed. Edwin S. Schneidman (New York: Harper and Row, 1981) 422-23.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Three

The Rhetoric of 'Spirit' and 'Soul' in Moby-Dick: A Hillmanian Approach

The archetypal theories of James Hillman afford a vivid context for examining the imagistic patterns in Moby-Dick and the attributes of mind underlying the novel's sometimes contradictory stances toward language. In Re-Visioning Psychology (1972), Hillman claims that it is "for the relation with the archetypal dominants themselves that one struggles with language."[1] Defining rhetoric as a "personified manner of speaking," Hillman goes on to say that in "the running encounter between the literal and the metaphorical" we find a special relation "between soul and word" and "between psyche and logos."[2] At yet another point, and more specific to our purpose, his delineation of "soul" and "spirit" is relevant to the divergent stances toward language embodied in Ishmael and Ahab. Building upon Jung's notion of the dual, or "contrasexual," nature of the psyche, Hillman frames his thoughts by aligning "spirit" with the masculine, and "soul" with the feminine, points of departure having more to do with style of thought than with gender, it should be emphasized.

In the "language of the imagination," says Hillman, images of the soul "show first of all more feminine connotations" and are personified in the anima, inhabiting the realms of dream, fantasy and meditation.[3] Hillman's thoughts seem to resonate with Ishmael, who is frequently given

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to reverie, and more closely aligned with the feminine than Ahab. Ishmael's identification with the feminine element of water in "Loomings" establishes this link--"meditation and water are wedded forever" (4)--as does his association with the symbolism of birth in "The Counterpane," "The Grand Armada" and "Epilogue." His gender-blending "marriage" of self and soul with the pagan harpooneer Queequeg also figures forth an archetypically feminine mode of consciousness: Queequeg, as Ishmael's alter-ego, serves, despite his more obviously masculine traits, as maternal protector ("The Counterpane" and "A Bosom Friend"); symbiotic twin ("The Monkey-Rope"), and midwife ("Cistern and Buckets"). It is Ishmael, who along with Queequeg and Starbuck, arrives at the place of the natal and feminine mysteries in "The Grand Armada," and not Ahab. We can also see a large measure of the Ahabian perspective in Hillman's notion of "spirit," which "always posits itself as superior, and operates particularly well in a fantasy of transcendence among ultimates and absolutes."[4] The world of spirit is different from that of soul:

> Its images blaze with light, there is fire, wind, sperm. Spirit is fast, and its quickens what it touches. Its direction is vertical and ascending; it is arrow straight, knife sharp, powder dry, and phallic. It is masculine, the active principle, making forms, order, and clear distinctions.[5]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Ahab's link to those elemental principles of spirit that Hillman describes is evident in the symbolically phallic "Candles" chapter, where we find Ahab railing against the blazing corpusants within a nexus of word and image evocative of "fire, wind, and sperm." Zoroastrian allusions aside, Ahab's annihilatory will to merge with the ascendant fire could almost signify an identification with spirit as Hillman defines it: "I own thy speechless, placeless power....Leap! leap up, and lick the sky! I leap with thee; I burn with thee; would fain be welded with thee...." (507). Spirit's qualities also seem to suffuse Ahab's thoughts of the White Whale, upon whom all of his rage is malignantly heaped. Where Ishmael aligns himself with the circular--"Circumambulate...of a dreamy Sabbath afternoon..." (4)--Ahab would "keep pushing, and...jammming [himself] on" (545). Ahab's descriptive and orientative modes are largely vertical--and "arrow straight": "The diver sun--slow dived from noon,-- goes down; my soul mounts up!....The path to my fixed purpose is laid on iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run" (168); "knife sharp": "'His lance! aye, the keenest and the surest that out of all our isle!'" (79); "powder dry": "He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam on down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot haeart's shell upon it" (184), and "phallic": "[Ahab] had dashed at the whale,...blindly seeking with a six-inch blade" to reach its "fathom-deep life" (184).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although Hillman's distinctions regarding soul and spirit are suggestive, we should take care in applying them to Ishmael and Ahab. To assign one or the other concept too precisely might be to fall into a one-sidedness or will to fixity of meaning, the very habit of thought against which Melville cautions. Rather, Hillman's worlds of soul and spirit may be used to illuminate Melville's manner of blending the attitudes of Ishmael and Ahab. Hillman sees spirit primarily as a means of going "beyond" soul to embrace something superior, as a way of gaining perspective on the "pathologizing" that he says soul "is heir to."[6] We might liken this pathologizing of soul to the kind of metaphysical impasse Ishmael repeatedly overcomes in Moby-Dick, as evidenced in his pulling back from near-fatal reverie in "The Mast-Head" and "The Try-Works." From the imminence of Narcissus's plunge in "Loomings" onward, Ishmael warns us against too close an identification with the claims of the soul. "How many, think ye, have likewise fallen into Plato's honey head, and sweetly perished there?" we are asked at the close of "Cistern and Buckets" (344). The danger of the fall, or what Jungian psychology might term an inflation with the archetypes, is always present. Viewed in this context, Ishmael's frequent recoil from transcendental thought is a paradigm of the defense that Hillman sees necessitated by spirit.

But were we to rigidify Hillman's notion of spirit and assign it completely to Ahab, we would be hard pressed to account for Ahab's succumbing to a pathology that spells his own destruction, especially as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

spirit is the mode in which Hillman sees a transcending of pathology. Ahab's destructive stance toward his own anima seems to hinder any perspective on the claims of what Hillman would call soul. In one of the most enigmatic passages in Moby-Dick, Ahab asserts, "The queenly personality lives in me, and feels her royal rights" (507). Near the core of Melville's concerns with selfhood and the word is the struggle for expression of the masculine and feminine imagos. David Leverenz, in fact, sees Ahab vying with his own confused and shattered masculinity, and moving "from the language of paranoid monomania to the language of hysterical desire."[7] Leverenz's view, while valid from a personalistic standpoint, might be a bit too reductively phrased, however. Seen in an archetypal light, Ahab's denied feminine is speaking through him with a vengeance, and this, more than anything marks his fate and sets him apart from Ishmael. As Hillman notes, when the anima is not acknowledged, there is little to mediate the personified images with personal intentions.[8] Hillman thus provides another means of understanding Ahab's monomania and his "acting-out" from a one-sided egocentricity. It is, above all, the "relation" in which soul stands to spirit, Hillman tells us, the negotiation of masculine and feminine, that is important.

Hillman claims that we can experience soul and spirit interacting, that while soul "invades with natural urges, memories, fantasies, and fears," spirit "would quickly extract a meaning." Soul is of the realm of "reflections within experience" and "circular reasonings," and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"labyrinths," where "retreats are as important as advances," involving us in "the pack and welter and flow of impressions." He links soul's images to the feminine, spirit to the masculine. Soul is the "patient" part of us, that which suffers and remembers:

> It is water to the spirit's fire, like a mermaid who beckons the heroic spirit into the depths and passions to extinguish its certainty. Soul is imagination, a cavernous treasury...a confusion and richness, both. Whereas spirit chooses the better part and seeks to make all one. Look up, says spirit, gain distance; there is something beyond and above, and what is above is always, and always superior.[9]

In Ishmael's own memories, fantasies, circular reasonings, and habits of reflection, we might find those qualities Hillman attributes to soul. We see both advances and retreats in regard to meaning in "The Whiteness of the Whale": "What the White Whale was to Ahab, has been hinted; what, at times, he was to me, as yet remains unsaid" (188). In "The Grand Armada" Ishmael is pulled into a watery labyrinth wherein, what Hillman would almost certainly recognize as the "pack and welter of phenomena and the flow of impressions," he finds his calm center of self and soul. On the other hand, in Ahab's will to fixity and subsuming the "all," in his signifying icons of the Doubloon--"egotistical mountain-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

tops and towers, and all other grand and lofty things"--we can identify some of those qualities that Hillman gives to spirit.

Hillman is primarily enunciating a "rhetoric," expressive of archetypal dominants within the psyche. The inherently "Promethean" qualities in Hillman's images of spirit carry with them associative potentialities for artifice as well as for annihilation. For Melville, the artistic shaper of words and forms, they are the very attributes of mind vital to his craft. Yet they seem to be the selfsame qualities adhering to Ahab, who literalizes and pathologizes his fantasy of transcendence to the point of doom. If Ahab at least partially embodies Promethean aspects of Melville's own will to authorial creation, we might be able to see those fiery and phallic aspects so integral to the symbolism of Moby-Dick in a new light. In this regard, the superior perspective Hillman assigns to spirit affords some telling analogies with Melville's own imaged thoughts of artistic creation as a procreative act. We should also note that the linking of phallicism and fire becomes the very shaping rhetoric in one of Melville's Tales of the Fifties, "I and My Chimney." In that story, the symbolic paradigm hints even more strongly at both the procreative aspects of authorship as well as the will to literary immolation.

Although Ishmael is linked more consistently than Ahab with the feminine modalities of thought, we often find him aligned with the superior vantage that Hillman calls spirit, or the masculine standpoint

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of consciousness. Ishmael seems more aware of those destructive potentials to which Ahab falls prey, and which also inscribe Melville's own allurement to the nonverbal and authorial annihilation. Ishmael's will to epistemological empowerment--making "clear distinctions" in the Hillmanian sense--is strongly linked with the phallic in "Cetology" and "The Mast-Head." But the sense of verbal futility in these chapters points to a rhetoric not so much of procreation as of authorial impotence and death: "For small erections may be finished by their first architects; grand ones, true ones, ever leave the copestone to posterity....This whole book is but a draught --nay, but the draught of a draught" (145). In "The Mast-Head," Ishmael's "thought-engendering altitude" induces a soul-reverie in which he finds himself hovering over "Descartian vortices"--this, at the end of a chapter given almost entirely to the embracement of knowledge about mast-head standing. With Hillman's thoughts in mind, we find in this chapter an arena wherein spirit and soul vie very strongly for contention. It does seem that the claims of soul as against those of spirit momentarily win out in "The Mast-Head." But these are only momentary contingencies, and Ishmael invariably pulls back to claim a more sobering, distancing, or clear-minded perspective. The identifying rhetoric of Ishmael aspires to regard everything with an "equal eye" (374), and in doing so often soars to great heights of imagination and thought. But these are spirit-soaring heights that Ishmael, like the Catskill eagle, can only

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

temporarily inhabit, and which he <u>knows</u> he can only temporarily inhabit. Ahab, on the other hand, would leap up with the corpusant flames, incorporating the "all" of existence, becoming one with the very agency his own destruction. In this regard, Ahab is like Bulkington, memorialized in the "six-inch" chapter called "The Lee Shore" (106-07), and whose death prefigures his own.

Ahab, in fact, seems acutely torn between the claims of spirit and soul in Chapter 44, "The Chart," where, sleeplessly fixating on the White Whale, he leaps from his hammock "as though escaping from a bed that was on fire" (202). In his own terms, Melville virtually anticipates Hillman's warnings about pathologizing the claims of soul or spirit. Ahab's monomania in the face of spiritual terrors is starkly portrayed, the destructive potentialities of soul split off from spirit rendered in vivid detail. Though Melville's categories differ somewhat from Hillman's, the call for a rapprochement between spirit and soul is qualitatively the same:

> ...this Ahab that had gone to his hammock, was not the agent that so caused him to burst from it in horror again. The latter was the eternal, living principle or soul in him; and in sleep, being for the time dissociated from the characterizing mind, which at other times employed it for its outer vehicle or agent, it spontaneously sought escape from the scorching contiguity of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> frantic thing, of which, for the time, it was no longer an integral. But as the mind does not exist unless leagued with the soul, therefore it must have been that, in Ahab's case, yielding up all his thoughts and fancies to his one supreme purpose; that purpose, by its own sheer inveteracy of will, forced itself against gods and devils into a kind of self-assumed, independent being of its own....Therefore, the tormented spirit that glared out of bodily eyes, when what seemed Ahab rushed from his room, was for the time but a vacated thing.... (202)

The separate visions of Ahab and Ishmael in regard to the scrutability of the world have vital connections with the stances toward language and the efficacy or inefficacy of words in Moby-Dick. And it is only through words and the identifying forms of rhetoric in Melville's novel that we can ultimately find our way to anything Hillman might define for us as soul or spirit. In fact, we could not have aligning concepts like soul or spirit without the words to give them meaning. Ahab's comments at the close of Chapter 70, "The Sphynx": "O Nature, and O soul of man! How far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies" (312) underscore this thought. His words also indicate a will to move beyond soul to embrace something other, that clarifying mode Hillman assigns to spirit, while at the same time inscribing the evanescence or futility of doing so.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hillman draws apart soul and spirit the better to view the phenomena of soul from the perspective of spirit. His distinctions, which find some of their corollaries in Nietzsche's Dionysian and Appolonian modes of artistic creation, can aptly illuminate the Melvillean project in Moby-Dick. But just as Nietzsche sees artistic thought as an eternally open-ended process, Hillman's archetypal psychology continually announces itself as a kind of deconstructive rhetoric. In this regard, his fit with Melville seems a natural one, in that Melville is everywhere found to be engaged in the deconstruction of image, identity and word. Hillman's "polytheistic" psychology, in fact, speaks vitally to the fracturing of the identity-principle that we encounter throughout Melville's major novels. The extremities of perspective given to Ishmael and Ahab, and to all the subordinate mentalities in Moby-Dick, find their affinities with Hillman's emphasis on the multiplicity of psyche. Like Melville, Hillman urges us on to an ever-renewing negotiation of modes and perspectives within the personifying activity of imagination. But that necessity of viewing soul from the vantage of spirit, Hillman says, is only the starting point of a larger and continuing process:

> Then, it seems, the soul must be disciplined, its desires harnessed, imagination emptied, dreams forgotten, involvements dried. For soul, says spirit, cannot know, neither truth, nor law, nor cause. The soul is fantasy, all fantasy.[10]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Had Melville arrived at this place of knowing soul in relation to spirit? Does the ever-receding "Spirit-Spout" that lures Ahab night after night through the "perfidious silences" (234) of sea and moonlight offer, in the Hillmanian sense, a constant admonishment to the claims of soul, a reminder of of soul's unreachableness? Ahab unrestingly plies the distances, refusing to accede to what Ishmael intuitively foreknows in "Loomings": "It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life, and this is the key to it all" (5). Viewed in the lens of Hillman's thought, Ahab seems to be taking the path of spirit, but the very fixity of his vision would prevent him from gaining any perspective on the claims of soul. Ishmael, on the other hand, recognizes the urgings of soul as temporal at best and appears to embrace the schisms that divide spirit and soul. From an inspiriting distance, Ishmael often expresses the ungraspableness of soul in metaphors of depth: "...all this to explain, would be to dive deeper than Ishmael can go" (187). On the other hand, Ahab is eternally riven between the imperatives of spirit and soul. In "The Spirit-Spout," The ship drives along,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> as if two antagonistic influences were struggling in her--one to mount direct to heaven, the other to drive yawningly to some horizontal goal. And had you watched Ahab's face that night, you would have thought that in him also two different things were warring....(233)

We should state again that Hillman's distinctions between spirit and soul might prove problematic if applied too literally vis a vis Ahab and Ishmael. It is doubtful whether Melville himself approached the concepts with any marked discrimination, although the word "soul" occurs more frequently than "spirit" in Moby-Dick by a ratio of about four to one.[11] At best, the notions can serve to illuminate styles of images and image-clusters that varyingly color the habits of mind and language adhering to either Ahab or Ishmael. Such a distinction has been noted by critics, Charles Olson among them. Olson, in fact, comes presciently close to delineating the rhetoric of spirit and soul as Hillman defines it, and as we have attempted to view it in relation to Ahab and Ishmael:

> ....The cadences and acclivities of Melville's prose change. Melville characterized Ahab's language as "nervous, lofty." In the soliloquies it is jagged like that of a Shakespeare hero whose speech like his heart often cracks in the agony of the fourth and fifth act.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> The long ease and sea swell of Ishmael's narrative prose contrasts this short, rent language of Ahab. The opposition of cadence is part of the counterpoint of the book. It adumbrates the part the two characters play, Ishmael the passive, Ahab the active....The contrast in prose repeats the theme of calm and tempest which runs through the novel.[12]

Whether to go beyond Olson and ascribe polarities in the terms that Hillman has set forth--as an orientative split between soul and spirit--might remain, for some, an open question. Part of Hillman's task, as he himself admits, is to revive "classical" notions of soul and bring them into modern discourse, a project that some adherents to academic idiom might find troubling. But in making his claims, Hillman repeatedly cautions against the fixing, or "literalizing," of soul's fantasies, and stresses the open-endedness of his thinking. He also laments the confusion that has arisen in the modern world regarding the concepts of spirit and soul, owing, in his mind, to biases inherent in Christian thinking. In the light of Melville's recurrent thematics of paganism, and the way of the outcast as a path to knowledge or "soul-making," Hillman's thoughts merit attention:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> ....The soul as the middle ground between body and spirit got squeezed out and with it went all the richness of what Christianity called paganism. Nowadays we can't tell soul from spirit: they both have become white cloudy immaterial notions opposed to the body and tangible matter. We are so immersed in the materialist viewpoint which Christianity itself brought about, that soul and spirit look just alike. A psychology that starts out from Christianity becomes spiritualized, a spirit psychology, a spirit theology. Soul enters only via symptoms, via outcast phenomena like the imagination of artists or alchemy or "primitives," or of course, disguised as psychopathology. That's what Jung meant when he said the Gods have become diseases: the only way back for them in a Christian world is via the outcast.[13]

Though briefly touched upon here, Hillman's concepts of soul and spirit can, I believe, draw us into a closer relation with Melville's mind and art. In the case of Moby-Dick, they can illuminate the symbolic contexts of language, and enable us to see Ishmael's frequent disavowal of rhetoric and the lures of imagistic thought, and Ahab's seduction by them, more distinctly. With a little imagination, and without becoming too literal about it ourselves, we can, I think, go beyond the fact of Ahab and Ishmael to see these as the very imperatives within Melville himself: soul as set over and against spirit, the one ever beckoning for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

embrace, the other always restlessly reaching. For those willing to pursue Hillman's thoughts even further, the enigmas of word and non-word, identity and non-identity in Melville, as well as questions of narratology, might also begin to take on new and important meanings. Hillman's archetypal psychology, indeed, reveals itself as form of visionary poetics with telling analogies to Melville's mind and art. In this light, Hillman's theories, with their focus on personified images as a means to interpretation, can provide us with clearer insights into the agon of authorial selfhood in Melville's works.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1]James Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) 261.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid. 68.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid. 68-69.

[6]Ibid. 69.

[7]David Leverenz, Manhood and the American Renaissance (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1989) 291.

[8]Hillman, Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985) 109.

[9]Re-Visioning Psychology 69.

[10]Ibid.

[11]See A Concordance to Melville's Moby-Dick, eds. Hennig Cohen and James Callahan (Ann Arbor: University Microfilm Int'l., 1978) vol. III, 1545-46, 1556-57.

[12]Charles Olson, Call Me Ishmael: A Study of Melville (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1947), 68-69.

[13]Hillman, with Laura Pozzo, ed., Interviews (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), 88.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Four

Introjection and Silence: The Fractured Ethos in *Pierre*

> Because oblivion surrounds the "literary space" on every side, the writer knows death on the brinks of silence; his demon urges him to annihilate all literary forms.
>
> --Ihab Hassan, *The Dismemberment of Orpheus*

> To defy power, which seems omnipotent;
> To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates
>
> --Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*

To the degree that Melville's major novels implicate themselves in the very problems involving their creation, we cannot help but view them as psychological documents, as projections of Melville's own deeply probing and personifying intellect. This is most strikingly the case in the highly reflexive *Pierre, or the Ambiguities*, a novel suffused, like the earlier *Redburn*, with psychobiographic import. As a symbolic rendering of Melville's struggle for expression in the face of his own will to self-annihilation, however, the book is much closer to *Mardi* and *Moby-Dick*. But whereas the narrating personae in those novels fragmented and dispersed into various alter-ego voices, that problem is negotiated here by Melville's resort for the first time in his career to third-person narration. As distinct from the earlier works, the drama of self-splitting in this novel is seen to be one inhering entirely

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

within the mind of its main protagonist, Melville's "author-hero" Pierre Glendinning.

Melville was still following a Mardian "blast resistless" in the writing of _Pierre_, and despite the linearity of its plot the novel tacks wildly in form and sensibility. Though often mirroring its own composition, _Pierre_ seems an attempt by Melville to avoid the solipsism that infused his earlier writings, and in many respects the book objectifies his career to date as author. But in another sense, _Pierre_ is the most solipsistic and self-referential work Melville ever wrote; even from the more distanced perspective of third-person narration the authorial encounter with selfhood is seen to be one of increasing fragmentation and dissociation. The psychic multiplicity, the misdirections in regard to style and genre, the array of mythopoeic identities holding sway in the mind of the novel's protagonist, are evidence of the torturous, self-rending processes Melville underwent in writing the book.

Melville's casting _Pierre_ in third-person thus seems a choice dictated by his need to escape the daimonic power of inner fixatedness. The paradigms of identity-loss, the sliding into omniscient narration, and the warping into dramatic form in the earlier works look forward to the project in _Pierre_, and signal a nascent wish on Melville's part to flee the burden of subjective thought. Pierre, as surrogate of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Melville's younger, neophyte-self, struggles against the depersonalizing forces that arise when one plunges headlong into the wellsprings of creative thought. In the mirroring of that struggle, the book effectively becomes a book about the writing of itself.

Both Mardi and Moby-Dick were rife with inward thought figuratively expressed in an arena of competing and conflicting voices. In the foregoing chapters of this study we have seen how that pull to multiplicity skewed narration and often resulted in a splintering of genre. The shift to omniscience in Pierre is important, but it does not so emphatically usher in a sea-change in Melville's sensibilities--because he had in a sense already arrived. The unfixability of voice in those earlier novels gives frequent evidence of Melville's need to go beyond the personal "I" to a more encompassing mode of expression. And in Pierre we see Melville putting to rest the identity-making project of his journeying novels and working through to the more revisionary aesthetics that inform the Piazza Tales and The Confidence-Man.

In the traducing of the egocentric stance in Moby-Dick we saw Melville, impelled by the same necessity and turning, as he often did in Mardi, toward the comedic or parodic. The "Doubloon" chapter is perhaps the best example of this, with its apostrophic play on the limitations of vision. In an even later chapter Ahab's order to the carpenter for a "complete man" with "about a quarter of an acre of fine brains" and a "sky-light on top of his head to illuminate inwards" as opposed to "eyes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to see outwards" can be seen as a briefer but no less significant figuration of the will to objectivity (M-D 470). On the face of things Pierre marks a further movement beyond egocentrism, but the parodic elements it employs are of the most embittering sort, anticipating, in the light of the modern perspective, a comedy of the surreal.

"Any fish can swim near the surface," Melville wrote to Evert Duyckinck in the winter of 1849, "but it takes a great whale to go down stairs five miles or more; & if he don't attain the bottom, why, all the lead in Galena can't fashion the plummet that will" (Co 121). And shortly after the soul-wrenching composition of Moby-Dick two years later, he set himself a course for vaster waters in search of "Krakens." But the writing of Pierre resulted, rather, in the forcing of cold, rocky strata far beneath where any sea beast or Krakens could go. Having shaken the restraints of first-person narration, Melville was freer than ever before to explore the main haunt and region of his song: the mind. And in his pursuit of authorial identity, he probed even more deeply than he had in Moby-Dick the dark recesses and hidden caverns of human thought and motivation. Indeed, for Melville, the writing of Pierre was almost certainly the deepest plummet of all.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Seen in the light of the struggle for selfhood, Pierre Glendinning's descent from the pastoral arcadia of Saddle Meadows to the walled inferno of an urban prison is a tragedy of disillusionment and despair. Knowledge of his father's siring of an illegitimate daughter shatters Pierre's faith in the world and drives him to enact a convoluted scheme to save the family name. He flees his ancestral home, leaving his widowed mother and his betrothed Lucy, and feigns marriage to his new-found half-sister Isabel, whose identity he conceals. In the unravelling of his double quest--to become in the sphere of redemptive action a Christ-like hero, and in the world of mind a heroic shaper of words--Pierre all but loses his identity. While inwardly proclaiming his allegiance to truth in the pursuit of his literary ambitions, in real life Pierre must not only conceal the truth, but lie and create fictions to preserve the integrity of the patriarchal world into which he was born. In the grim collidings of truth with the inner dictates of his heart, Pierre Glendinning ends up a "Fool of Truth," an exile, a murderer, and ultimately a suicide.

Yet what seems so bleakly irredemptive in the novel became for Melville the very stuff of his redemption as artist. To put it in alchemical terms, _Pierre_ is the necessary _nigredo_ of Melville's interior journey as author, his deepest encounter with the shadow-aspects of authorial selfhood. Henry A. Murray, in fact, sees _Pierre_ as the novel marking Melville as an early depth psychologist, and supports the view

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that the true "center" of Melville can be found here, and not in _Moby-Dick_.[1] If Murray's judgements are correct, and if _Pierre_ is also the novel where Melville brings identity and the word most crucially into question, then it should not surprise us to find that this is the work where the voided sense of self is most evident, and where we also find Melville's greatest testaments to silence. Indeed, the will to the nonverbal and depersonalization is more evident in _Pierre_ than in any other work by Melville. As in _Mardi_ and _Moby-Dick_ the will to silence correlates with the pull to skepticism and doubt. But in _Pierre_ Melville goes beyond those efforts, portraying a world where the haze of romantic faith has given way fully to shrouds of despair, the journey into mind spiraled irretrievably to a landlocked inscape of the _moi interieur_.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

As Melville strove to inscribe the potentialities of selfhood, he gave vent increasingly to the idea that self-realization and expression were delimited by the very paradoxes of the democratic society in which he lived. Critics concerned with the hermeneutics of represention in American culture have recognized this aspect of Melville's thinking and made it central to their commentaries on his writings. Indeed, a large measure of the will to muteness in Melville's works may be owing to what Leo Bersani terms a "crisis of meaning" in mid-nineteenth century America.[2] Bersani's observations that Moby-Dick registers "the oxymoronic impasse of democracy" and "a chaos of interpretive modes" apply just as forcefully, I think, to Pierre.[3] Sacvan Bercovitch sees Pierre more specifically proclaiming his own identity through an "incredible faith in words" and his faith in "a culture founded on rhetoric," but notes that the sense of authorial selfhood in Melville's seventh novel is "born out of the silence within" and is "designed to mask the felt absence of identity."[4] And in a related light, Michael Paul Rogin sees, in Melville's struggle for ascendance over the patriarchal authority of his culture in Pierre, a conflict in which the boundaries between protagonist and narrator become confused, wherein Melville "has lost faith in the writing self underneath its masks."[5]

Beyond seeking an accomodation with these very insightful and culture-specific commentaries, this discussion draws its impetus from larger and more encompassing perspectives. Richard Poirier, for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

example, puts Melville's Pierre squarely in the company of writings by Eliot, Joyce, Proust and Virginia Woolf, while claiming that the book represents something about culture "that is so far from being merely personal, much less regional, that it is not even a respecter of national boundaries."[6] Even so, Poirier voices his allusions to Melville in the context of what he specifically sees as an "Emersonian" imperative to modernism. While agreeing with Poirier's premises and indeed seeking affinity with them, this study shifts the locus of inquiry even further: toward a view of Melville's novel that sees it archetypally registering schisms and realignments in the thought of the Western World as a whole. In this light, identity-loss in Pierre reflects the falling off of faith in the heroic ideal of selfhood which Romanticism, at one and the same time, both celebrated and helped bring searchingly into question. Melville's rhetorical overreach in Pierre, impelled by the aspiration to a vision beyond utterable truth, is seen then, not only as a desire to break free of the imprisoning restraints of his own culture and times, but also as a deepfelt response to the mid-nineteenth century Zeitgeist which America was simultaneously reacting to, as well as helping to shape and define.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In the very opening pages of Pierre Melville seems to have taken the whole measure of the distance travelled from his glowing paeans to genius in "Hawthorne and his Mosses" and the ringing salutes to democratic dignity in the "Knights and Squires" chapters of Moby-Dick. But one recalls from the "Mosses" essay that those "germinous seeds" dropped by Hawthorne into Melville's soul were seeds of "the power of blackness," and that Melville was praising Hawthorne, beyond anything else, for the depth and profundity of his tragic vision (PT 243-44). As an outgrowth of Melville's earlier thoughts, Pierre offers an extremely bleak assessment of the possibilities of literary expression in mid-nineteenth century America. And in the writing of the novel Melville assumed the mantle of tragedian to depict the fall of a character whose central agon is the crushing of his hopes for literary fame. That Melville should infold that conflict within the very nucleus of the fall from moral grace that sustains the novel's plot is stark testamony to his vision of the symbiosis of tragedy and the authorial will. Indeed, Pierre becomes an even grimmer rendering of the artistic struggle if one reads the book as an allegory of the state of Herman Melville's own self and soul at the moment of the book's composition.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The silence auguring authorial despair surfaces early in _Pierre_. It creeps in deceptively at first in descriptions of the pastoral trance-like realm that is Saddle Meadows. It is a "green and golden" summer world, where

> Not a flower stirs; the trees forget to wave; the grass itself seems to have ceased to grow; and all Nature, as if suddenly become conscious of her own profound mystery, and feeling no refuge from it but silence, sinks into this wonderful and indescribable repose. (_P_ 3)

The quality of rapt description here hearkens back to the opening chapter of _Mardi_. But we recall how the tranquillity of repose and expansiveness of heart in those pages gave way quickly to the disorienting stasis of the calm. Similarly, there is something too patently false about this rural paradise, something too perfect, and about to rupture. The acute reader portends that the arcadian calm is going to be dispelled. The perception is reinforced by overly sentimental passages describing the encounter between Pierre and his "betrothed," Lucy Tartan, containing such mawkishly romantic cliches as "enkindled cheek," "odiferous flower," and a "gaze of inexpressible fondness" (3-4). The lovers' dialogue is also marked by overwrought apostrophes such as "thou belong'st to the regions of an infinite day" and "Bravissimo! oh, my only recruit!" (4). Melville seems wilfully to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

have written such passages in as puerile a style as possible, in what many of today's critics have come to recognize as a defiant jibe at prevailing nineteenth century literary tastes. David Reynolds has carried this notion even further, suggesting that Melville's resort to parodic elements of style and overly melodramatic plot in Pierre comprises part of a larger subversive project that probes at the moral ambiguities of his day.[7] But any such larger meanings were almost assuredly missed by readers of Pierre upon its publication, and certainly by those critics who castigated the book.[8] From our vantaged modern perspective, however, deeper intimations are glimpsed beneath the empurpling veneer. Mawkish though Melville's novel may be, it stands as one of the most acutely psychological and culturally damning novels in all of nineteenth-century literature.

Still, it tasks even the patience of some of Pierre's modern readers to see adequately into that deeper method, and we can safely assume that had Melville taken a more disciplined approach to his material the journey would have been a different one. My aim here is not to fault Melville, or even to offer criticisms of the scope and methods of the book, but rather to argue that much of what it incorporates, textually and symbolically, is Melville's will to authorial suicide.[9] As such, Pierre is a novel that registers significant questions about identity and the efficacy of words.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The repose that we find in the early descriptive passages of Pierre bespeaks a condition of stasis which is about to break. Yet it is unrecognized as such by the novel's protagonist, whose glazed vision affords him only the view of an unchastened, amicable world. On the surface of things, there is not the slightest whiff of any moral taint, or of a world about to totter out of kilter. The heir to landed wealth bequeathed by his Revolutionary War forefathers, Pierre Glendinning carries on an existence largely devoid of the exigencies of choice. His high-born station in life alleviates the necessity of toiling for a living, and the Fates have kindly enabled him to indulge his dreams of belles lettres pursuits. His betrothed Lucy is a somewhat younger version of the still youthful Mrs. Glendinning, who proudly sanctions their imminent marriage. Pierre passes his days contemplating "the illuminated scroll of his life" (7) and the gifts that his rural paradise has bestowed upon him.

Yet curious fits of passion burst forth from Pierre at unexpected moments. He yearns for a "sister" to share his feelings and thoughts. The Wordsworthian impulse that correlates with that wish is implicit in the allusions to the "English author of these times" who "first saw the rural light," as well as in descriptions evoking scenery of "uncommon loveliness" (5). Like the poet of The Prelude, Pierre's young mind had been shaped alike by nature as well as books. But unlike the speaker of that work, the young Pierre seems to have been more acutely aware of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

need to form himself amid other influences, and of the notion that his breeding would have been "unwisely contracted, had his youth been unremittingly passed in these rural scenes."

> At a very early period he had begun to accompany his father and mother--and afterwards his mother alone--in their annual visits to the city; where naturally mingling in a large and polished society, Pierre had insensibly formed himself in the airier graces of life, without enfeebling the vigor derived from a martial race, and fostered in the country's clarion air. (6)

The impulse toward the city, away from the unburnished charms of rural life, we learn, had been planted early; the lure of the "airier graces," together with the books Pierre had been reading "in the deep recesses of his father's fastidiously picked and decorous library," had awakened the "imaginative flames in his heart" and made him "madly demand more ardent fires" (6).

Pierre's aspirations to authorship are irredeemably tied to the ambiguous family relationships set forth in the early passages of the novel, wherein Melville may already be attempting to rend the veneer from the less than conscious desires that sublimate the Romantic ethos. Familial boundaries and norms are just a little too suggestively

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

transgressed, first, in the mother's usurping of the role of the father, and secondly, in Pierre's relationship with her, whom he addresses as "Sister Mary," and lives with in "lover-like adoration" (15, 16). The "haughty" (read masculinized) Mrs. Glendinning returns Pierre's affections in kind. By so closely linking brother-sister love and poetic inspiration, Melville puts himself in company with Byron, Mary Shelley and Emily Bronte, and obliquely registers a favorite apostrophic convention of Wordsworth: one can almost hear an echoing of the English poet's "My sister, my dear, dear sister..." from "Tintern Abbey." Then, in skewing that relationship in _Pierre_ and compounding it with the maternal one, Melville brings all the more daringly close to the surface a thought voiced by many expositors of the Romantic sensibility: that beneath the appeals to the _femme inspiratrice_ resides a lurking and ever present incest-wish. The novel captures here as well, and amplifies throughout, the strong Oedipal components that modern critics have seen inhering in the Romantic sublime. Poirier comes very close to the mark in this regard, noting that the "involutions" in _Pierre_ result from Melville's "conflicted feelings about the maternal-paternal nature of authorship, of bringing into the world something new which will also re-present him."[10] The notion of Oedipal struggle in relation to authorship is, of course, set forth most dramatically in the theories of Harold Bloom; indeed, later in Melville's novel Pierre's identification with a host of literary forebears ranging from Dante to Shakespeare to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Goethe anticipates the Bloomian relational chain of ephebe to precursor authors. Viewed in the light of these and similar critical paths, Melville appears to be laying bare in the early pages of his novel the vital core of his project: the subversion of the illusory impulses that prompt and impel literary expression.

But it is the figurative project in Pierre that is so insistently manifest in these early pages, and which begins to claim our attention. The phallic troping, reminiscent of Moby-Dick, and the symbolism of stone, are significantly in evidence right from the beginning of the novel, and find their affinities with Pierre's budding aspirations to authorial fame:

> For in the ruddiness, and flushness, of his youthful soul, he fondly hoped to have a monopoly of glory in capping the fame column, whose tall shaft had been erected by his nobel sires. (8)

The trope is extended into the third section of the opening chapter and metonymically linked there with figures of ruin and thwarted progeny, in a veritable reworking of thoughts given expression in the "Cetology" and "Mast-Head" chapters of Moby-Dick:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> In all this, how unadmonished was our Pierre by that foreboding and prophetic lesson taught, not less by Palmrya's quarries, than by Palmyra's ruins. Among those ruins is a crumbling, uncompleted shaft, and some leagues off, ages ago left in the quarry, is the crumbling corresponding capital, also incomplete. These Time seized and spoiled; these Time crushed in the egg; and the proud stone that would have stood among the clouds, Time left abased beneath the soil. Oh, what quenchless feud is this, that Time hath with the sons of Men! (8)

Once again, Melville has struck familiar ground in imaging forth his state of self and soul as an author. Only this time, the angle of vision is new. Instead of the first-person agon of "God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is a draught, --nay, but the draught of a draught. Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, Patience!" (M-D 145), here we have a narrator lamenting the same condition of fate from the vantage of a more distancing and chastened perspective. In effecting the move to omniscience, Melville thereby paradoxically gives us an older version of his younger narrating self.

The archeological trope in Pierre, recalling the symbolic project of Moby-Dick, is frequently linked with the image of the Egyptian pyramids.[11] And as the elemental symbolism in that novel worked itself out amid oppositions of water and fire, here the contest is imaged

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

largely via the polarities of sky and earth. In Pierre figuration gravitates inexorably toward what H. Bruce Franklin has called "the petrifaction of myth."[12] And like the blending of the Narcissus with the "water-gazers" theme in the early pages of Moby-Dick, in the above passage we find a prefiguration of the major mythos of Pierre. The "proud stone that would have stood among the clouds" and was left "abased beneath the soil" adumbrates Enceladus, the "sky-assaulting" giant buried by Zeus beneath Mount Etna, and the figure from Greek myth most closely identified with Pierre through a dream late in the novel (P 342 ff). The Enceladus myth is crucial as well to the introjected and "marbelized form" of Pierre's father, whose patriarchal authority weighs like an incubus upon all his thoughts, a notion given its fullest metonymic play in Pierre's encounter with the "Memnon Stone" (131 ff.). Stone is indeed as vital an element of figuration in Pierre as water is in Moby-Dick. The eponymous title, moreover, as well as the book's dedication to Mount Greylock, suggestively foreground the thematic and symbolic importance of stone in the narrative. The symbolism of stone is a key indice of the will to muteness and non-being in Pierre, as it is elsewhere in Melville, notably in "Bartleby, the Scrivener," "I and My Chimney" and Clarel, where it also resonates with archetypal suggestiveness.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Major figurative directions have thus been well marked out by the end of the opening book of _Pierre_. In succeeding pages Melville continues to strike the notes of ineffability and verbal futility, and does so within a nexus of very clearly integrated symbolic thought. But more importantly, and vastly significant to the newer paths his art will take, Melville also appears in these pages to be attempting to move "beyond" figuration, and approaching a teleological stand in line with Shelley's dictum that "the deep truth is imageless."

The conflation of familial identity foreshadowing Pierre's confusion of selfhood is brought into play again in Books II and III. In Pierre's haunting presentiment of a woman's face upon which he can affix no identity, and in the slow merging of its features into a vision of his father's, we find a superbly wrought amplification of the transgressed family roles that come to dominate his fate. The inexorable identification of Isabel as his own half-sister, aside from its obvious importance to plot, points to larger and deeply significant aspects of Pierre's "composite" selfhood. As in _Mardi_, and much more implicitly in _Moby-Dick_, the anima-encounter is prelusive to an experience of inner multiplicity. The split-feminine archetype embodied in Lucy and Isabel reiterates the Yillah-Hautia configuration of Melville's third novel, albeit with certain qualifications. The masculinizing of Mrs. Glendinning, and the feminizing of Pierre's father in descriptions of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"chair portrait," showing the elder Glendinning as a foppish young man, hearken back to the gender-blending of both Redburn and Moby-Dick. But Pierre, unlike those earlier works, situates the encounter squarely within the paradigm of the family, making scrutiny of the novel's psychological complexities even more imperative.

In a replication of the drama symbolically depicted in Mardi, a protagonist at war with the fathers shatters the ritualistic norms of a world and sets out on a mission to rescue and protect the feminine object of his desire. As in the earlier work, the feminine imago arises initially in its light and virginal aspects, only to be displaced by the dark and seductive anima. But this time the hero does not wholly flee the dark feminine figure, as Taji did Hautia. And despite all of Pierre's pure and "unexampled love" toward Isabel later in the book, she becomes the real focus of his desire. Why should he only "play" at incest with the counterfeit object of his yearnings, his betrothed Lucy, when he can have something a little closer to home? With Isabel, Pierre can more nearly replicate the original blissful and transgressive "brother-sister" relation he enjoyed with his mother, and do so, moreover, under the "guise" of a marriage. For Pierre, Isabel would seem to function as the dark introject of Mrs. Glendinning, embodying all the rejected "shadow" impulses Pierre's mother denies, a notion adumbrated in the latter's private thoughts early in the narrative:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> A noble boy, and docile. A fine, proud, loving, docile, vigorous boy. Pray God, he never becomes otherwise to me. His little wife, that is to be, will not estrange him from me; for she is too docile,--beautiful, and reverential, and most docile.... How glad am I that Pierre loves her so, and not some dark-eyed haughtiness, with whom I could never live in peace; but who would be ever setting her young married state before my elderly widowed one, and claiming all the homage of my dear boy--the fine, proud, loving, docile, vigorous boy! (P 19-20)

Henry Murray has helped modern readers to see Pierre as a significant portrayal of the "autonomous inward operation of the aroused soul-image, or anima, as Jung has called it."[13] That Murray also sees the anima coming into play in Pierre largely out of "puritanical repression" and a "disparagement of instinct" in the name of patriarchal morality is evidence, again, of the psychological complexities that pervade the narrative.[14] Melville's prescience in anticipating the anima configuration formulated by modern depth psychology is set forth strikingly in succeeding pages of the novel. According to this view, Pierre acts out of responsibility to his father from the standpoint of anima, by giving over power to the feminine imago to let it act through him. At the point of his deepest crisis of selfhood, Pierre

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

recapitulates the Ahabian acknowledgment of "the queenly personality" within. His defiance, like Ahab's, seems to arise at the urging of the introjected and repressed aspects of the feminine imago. Yet, paradoxically, it is the force of the shadowed "animus" aspects of Mrs. Glendinning's character which more than anything rule Pierre's fate and account for the extreme ambiguity of his motives and his bizarre actions in the novel. Pierre, in effect, acts out of allegiance to the dark introject of his mother, who in turn is the unconscious carrier of the unspeakable desires killed off in the "animus" figure of his dead father.

Pierre ostensibly acts to preserve the honor and reputation of his father. But in his defiant flight from the house of the fathers ruled by the mother, he tacitly and irrevocably declares war on it. Isabel's quest, morevover, is the shadow-quest of Pierre's. Her search for the absent father is an outward representation of the anima-constellation as Melville anticipates it in the mind and soul of Pierre. Isabel's search for paternal identity is, essentially, Pierre's.

Murray's introduction to the Hendricks House edition of *Pierre* (1949) remains the most penetrating literary analysis of the anima complex in relation to Melville. Murray was specifically identifying Isabel as "the personification of Pierre's unconscious" when he limned his very incisive definition of anima in those pages:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> One reason for the anima's attracting power is that she embodies the repressed and the as-yet-unformulated components of the man's personality: the child in him who felt unloved, the passivity and the death wishes which were foresworn, the grief and the self-pity which have been bottled up, the feminine dispositions which have been denied, and, in addition, scores of nameless intuitions and impulses, the open expression of which has been barred by culture.[15]

It is Murray's recognition that the anima is the repository of the "nameless intuitions and impulses" denied by culture that arises out of his reading of Isabel as anima: "The anima experience, Pierre discovers, is a tremendous, unsharable secret, a mystery which isolates a man until its significance has been at least partially revealed to him."[16]

James Hillman reminds us of the integral role the father-imago plays in the anima encounter. In view of the conflated and confused boundaries that underlie Pierre's relationships with Lucy, Isabel and Mrs. Glendinning, Hillman's thoughts can shed additional light:

> We all know that fathers create daughters; but daughters create fathers too. The enactment of the maiden-daughter in all her redemptive charm, shy availability, and masochistic wiliness draws down the fathering spirit. But its appearance and her

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> victimization are her creation. Even the idea that she is all a result of the father (or the absent and bad father) is part of the father-fantasy of the anima archetype. And so, she must be 'so attached' to father because anima is reflection of an attachment. She creates the figurative father and the belief in its responsibility which serves to confirm the archetypal metaphor of Daughter that owes its source, not to the father, but to the anima inherent in a woman's psyche too.[17]

Pierre, like Melville's other novels of encounter with selfhood, significantly "draws down the fathering spirit." Implicit in the initial anima encounter in *Mardi* is the yielding to the feminine at the moment of the break with, or the killing off of, the symbolic father. Taji slays Aleema in the rescue of the desired and hidden feminine object Yillah, and is pursued in turn by the fathering spirit in the form of Aleema's priests, as well as by Hautia's flower-bearing nymphs. Hautia, as an aspect of the repressed feminine, also carries the animus (active) qualities of the absent father, thus preserving, in Hillman's words, "the archetypal metaphor of Daughter that owes its source, not to the father, but to the anima inherent in a woman's psyche too."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Owing to the archetypal warfare in his soul, Pierre's world and identity have already begun to crumble, even in the early pages of the novel. The face of an unknown woman obtrudes in his dreams as his marriage to Lucy draws near (it is in fact that of Isabel, who had swooned on hearing his name as he escorted his mother to a local sewing circle); a childhood memory of his dying father calling out for a "daughter" reawakens in him; Pierre recalls as well his Aunt Dorothea's intimations of a relationship between his father and a young Frenchwoman prior to his marriage. Also weighing heavily in Pierre's thoughts, the more so as he puzzles over it, is the youthful "chair portrait" of his father shown him by his aunt. What most haunts Pierre about this dandefied, less than manly painting of the elder Glendinning--a study fiercely disowned by his mother--is his father's enigmatic and "ambiguous" smile. for Pierre that smile coheres with a host of "preceding ambiguities" and other "mysteries ripped open as if with a keen sword," auguring forth in his mind "thickening phantoms of an infinite gloom" (85).

Soon afterward Pierre recieves a tear-streaked letter from Isabel putting forth the claim that she is in reality his abandoned half-sister, and summoning him to a secret meeting. Prior to the encounter Pierre recalls a breakfast discussion between his mother and the neighboring Reverend Falsgrave about the fate of Delly Ulver, a local servantgirl bearing an illegitimate child. Pierre still rankles over

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

his mother's stiff opprobrium, and the Reverend's temporizing morality in regard to the girl's plight. Intriguingly, Falsgrave's surplice had slipped twice during the meal, revealing a cameo brooch depicting "the allegorical union of serpent and dove" (102), a Gnostic symbol suggesting the interdependence of good and evil.[18] Pierre's recollection of the scene is notable because it casts into relief moral ambiguities of the kind he himself will shortly face.

Unspeakable presentiments accompany Pierre as he nears the farmhouse that harbors Isabel (109-112). The passages here are memorable in that they bring to mind Poe's Gothic descriptions of the House of Usher and its mirroring in the still waters of the surrounding tarn. Although it is the full flush and greenery of midsummer to Poe's "dull, dark, and soundless" autumn, it might as well be, for Pierre, that bleaker and more desolate season. And Melville's descriptions, we should also note, are much more consciously steeped in the diction of the ineffable than his predecessor's:

> ....In that wet and misty eve the scattered, shivering pasture elms seemed standing in a world inhospitable, yet rooted by <u>inscrutable</u> sense of duty to their place. Beyond, the lake lay in one sheet of <u>blankness and dumbness</u>, unstirred by breeze or breath; fast bound there it lay, with not life enough to reflect the smallest shrub of twig. Yet in that lake was seen the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> duplicate, stirless sky above. Only in sunshine did that lake catch gay, green images; and these but displaced <u>the imaged muteness of the unfeatured heavens</u>. (109) [Emphasis mine]

Pierre's feelings, as he approaches the farmhouse, "transcend all verbal renderings" (111), and the "face" hauntingly continues to image itself forth in his mind. The house, upon his knocking, is "steeped in silence," Isabel appearing in the doorway as "no word is spoken" (112). Pierre gazes transfixedly upon the "death-like beauty" of Isabel's face, and when she does speak, he is enthralled by the "musicalness" of her voice" (112, 113). "Not mere sounds of common words, but inmost tones of my heart's deepest melodies should now be audible to thee" (113), she says to him, and then proceeds to tell her story. Pierre sits "mute," listening to Isabel as "the low melodies of her far interior voice" echo in the room (118).

Isabel, like Lady Madeline of the Poe tale, emerges as a figure of repressed or hidden desire. Her music is the music of incest and death. And like the Mardian maiden Yillah, she seems "unbegotten." Isabel's memories are steeped in the aura of the ineffable, her past suggestive of an ur-state of non-verbal being or pre-existence. Her words, as she recalls her earliest dwelling-place (somewhere in France she thinks), suggest a qualitatively Gnostic negation of language of the kind that we increasingly find in the novel from this point forward: "No name; no

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

scrawled or written things; no book, was in the house; no one memorial speaking of its former occupants. It was dumb as death" (115).

The impermanence of language implied in Isabel's narrative fuses significantly with the ephemeral as it relates to any form of memorializing the dead past. As irrevocably as the Usher house collapsed into its moat, all vestiges of her life-history have vanished:

> No grave-stone, or mound, or any little hillock around the house, betrayed any past burials of man or child. And thus, with no trace then to me of its past history, thus it hath now entirely departed and perished from my slightest knowledge as to where that house stood, or in what region it so stood. (115)

One of the significant ironies of the novel is that, while Pierre feels all too agonizingly the weight of his ancestral past, Isabel carries the very lack of a proclaimed genealogy as her own particular burden. And as a mirror of Pierre's divided selfhood, she is at one and the same time a reminder of his yearning to flee the restraints of language, history and identity, and of his utter powerlessness to do so at nearly every turn.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The vague procession of "shapes" in Isabel's memory bring to her mind another dwelling, an asylum-like house, whose strange and savage-like occupants "were dragged below by dumb-like men into deep places" from which she heard dismal groans and clankings and saw coffins being borne in silence (119). To Isabel, the inhabitants were "strangely demented" and "wandering of mind." They would shuffle about talking "vacant talk to each other." One, she tells Pierre,

> would say to another--'Feel of it--here, put thy hand in the break.' Another would mutter--'Broken, broken, broken--' and would mutter nothing but that one word broken. But most of them were dumb, and could not, or would not speak, or had forgotten how to speak. (120)

Isabel acknowledges to Pierre that he must have surmised what kind of a house this was; but she cautions him not to name it or speak the word to her: "The word has never passed my lips....The word is wholly unendurable to me" (121).

Isabel's further evocation of her blank and mysterious past recalls her initial sense of oneness with animate and inanimate nature, and then the dawning of her own realization of selfhood. She tells Pierre the manner in which she came to self-realization through the repetitive hearing of certain talismanic words: "beautiful," spoken of herself by

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

those in her presence; "father," whispered to her by the "gentleman" with the familiar face who now and then visited her, and "Dead," the word repeated after he stopped coming--all this, according to Isabel, in "the confused large house I never name" (123-24).

Upon breaking off her story, Isabel brings forth a guitar she claims can translate into melody "all the wonders that are unimaginable and unspeakable" (125). Pierre listens as the room fills with its "unintelligible but delicious sounds" (126). Feeling that something is "still unsaid" by Isabel that she will reveal at a later time, Pierre then silently rises, kisses her hand, and, "without another syllable," takes leave of her (127).

Pierre's initiation into mute mysteries deepens in Book VII. At breakfast on the morning following his meeting with Isabel, Pierre curtly denies in the face of his mother's icy reticence that he and Lucy have had a lovers' quarrel. He then runs deep into the woods to a curious balancing rock he calls the Memnon, or "Terror," Stone, and challenges its "Mute Massiveness" to fall upon him as he lies beneath it (134). Pierre's encounter with the Memnon Stone is the most pivotally symbolic moment in the book, integral to his unfolding destiny. As a ritual invoking the daimonic powers of selfhood, it is every bit as important as those analogous scenes in the "Quarter-Deck" and "Candles" chapters of Moby-Dick, where Ahab defyingly imprecates the forces of nature and fate.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Memnon Stone thus necessarily stands forth as the novel's most central figuration.

The fact that Pierre's encounter with the Terror Stone immediately follows his confrontation with both his mother and Isabel seems no accident on Melville's part--especially if Isabel is seen as the figure shadowing forth the repressed aspects of selfhood that Mrs. Glendinning conceals or denies. The novelistic placement of Pierre's experience with the Terror Stone is testament, I think, to how deeply Melville intuited the archtypal encounter with the feminine. And even if he didn't fully realize the implications of what he was writing, we can safely assume that Melville was at least nascently aware of the prevalent links between stone symbolism and femininity in myth and scripture. Indeed, with respect to the matriarchal-patriarchal struggle inscribed in Pierre, Melville's sense of symbolic moment could not have been more apt.

Critics have spoken of Melville's obvious punning on the name "Pierre" and the identification of Christ as "lapis," or stone. But the archtypal meanings have yet to be brought fully to light. And if the symbolic project in Pierre has been viewed at all as an attack on culture, it has not been adequately seen as an encounter with the feminine. The foregrounding of stone symbolism in the novel implicitly points to the schisms between masculine and feminine within the collective mentality of the culture Melville was attempting to portray. Indeed, feminist critics have only very recently begun to give

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

notice to a Melville who seems, in Pierre and elsewhere, to be marshalling his artistic resources for a frontal assault on patriarchy.

The archetypal links between stone and the Church, and Melville's use of the symbolism in Pierre, are therefore of vital interest. Carl Jung specifically notes that the symbol of the stone, despite its analogy with Christ, cannot be reconciled "with the purely spiritual assumptions of Christiantity." While acknowledging that stone is the "essence" of everything solid and earthly, Jung claims that stone also represents "feminine Matter," and that this concept "intrudes into the sphere of 'spirit' and its symbolism."[19] With respect to the links between stone symbolism and the feminine archetype in Pierre, Jung's thoughts are especially compelling.

In a related light, Jungian commentator Edward Edinger has noted the destructive potentials of the "Great Mother" archetype in Melville's writings. In Ahab's vengeful encounter with Moby Dick, Edinger sees a replication of the Perseus-Medusa struggle, with Medusa representing the horror of material existence which cannot be endured if gazed upon directly. Ahab had seen Medusa directly in his previous encounter with Moby Dick and, according to Edinger, the experience "had turned him to stone." Ahab's resentment and obsession are symptoms of his "emotional paralysis and petrifaction."[20]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pierre's fate symbolically unfolds in similar ways. As Ahab had pitted himself "all mutilated" against the White Whale's "hump" and the sum of humanity's malice embodied in it, so Pierre prostrates himself beneath the Stone in an act that is at once vengeful and self-destructive. His rock is the Whale petrified. It is an object that cathects his deepest feelings of rage, while luring him at one and the same time to a castration that totters on the divide between literal and symbolic. Indeed, the Memnon Stone episode in _Pierre_ calls to mind meanings inherent in ancient sacrifices to the Great Mother spoken of by Erich Neumann. By offering himself to the Stone, Pierre seems to be acting out of what Neumann sees as the Great Mother's demand for the dissolution, or sacrifice, of ego consciousness. Neumann's thoughts encourage a view of Pierre as mythically experiencing a connection between his own psychology and the deeper layers of historical consciousness carried within him. The Stone, with respect to its phallicism and identification with Memnon, clearly stands forth as a masculine image. But Neumann reminds us that the encounter with the Great Mother is double-edged, implicitly carrying aspects of the confrontation with both the Terrible Father _and_ Mother.[21] He sees the Great Mother, in fact, as a carrier of "phallic energy."[22]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is really not surprising, then, that at the most crucial moment of encounter with the dark and chthonic powers of the feminine, Pierre should also confront this sexually ambiguous symbol. For as Neumann explains, drawing on the thought of J. J. Bachofen, "the phallic-chthonic earth and sea divinities are...simply satellites of the Great Mother....

> The young hero's growing masculinity now experiences the destructive side of the Great Mother as something masculine. It is her murderous satellites, with whom are connected the elements of iron and stone, who carry out the sacrifice of the adolescent son. In mythology this side manifests itself as a dark homicidal male force...but later it manifests itself as [the Great Mother's] masculine warrior consort or as the priest who performs the castration.[23]

In the light of the classic anima/animus struggle that Melville portrays in Mardi, Moby-Dick and Pierre, Neumann's thoughts give added weight, and point to forces that transcend the limitations of personal history or identity. That mythic dimension of the encounter with the transpersonal, as archetypal critics have termed it, is ever present in Melville. Neumann's analysis of the confrontation with the Great Mother fits very suggestively with the patterns of symbolic action in Melville's identity-making novels, especially with respect to the almost omnipresent

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

threat to manhood that we find in these works. Aleema, the father-figure priest slain by Taji, along with Ahab and the crew of the Pequod, can be seen in this perspective as counters in the ultimate struggle between matriarchal and patriarchal consciousness. The ritualistic war between the sons and fathers, evident as a theme from Redburn all the way through to Billy Budd, thereby takes on further meaning when viewed in the psychohistorical context of the encounter with the feminine.

The destructive energies tearing at the heart of Pierre, then, are the very ones rending the collective mentality of Melville's culture. The overwrought and melodramatic portrayal of Pierre's encounter with the Terror Stone can be taken as a novelistic failing if read too literally. But as an aspect of a penetrating critique of the Zeitgeist that Melville carries over from Moby-Dick, it succeeds remarkably. Indeed, in one of the more scathingly parodic chapters of Moby-Dick, Melville traduces the wresting of religious power from the feminine, and in doing so mentions the worship of stone phallus-idols during the reign of Queen Maacha of Judea ("The Cassock," Chapter 95). He then introduces "the mincer," the ship's butcher as it were, intent upon his "Bible-leaves" of blubber while wearing the severed foreskin of the whale's penis: "What a candidate for an archbishoprick, what a lad for a Pope were this mincer!" (M-D 420). Readers who see past Melville's phallic punning and ribald suggestiveness will find in this short chapter a cuttingly subversive critique of Western culture, and one that anticipates in striking ways

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the later thoughts of both Bachofen and Neumann. Symbolic commentary in _Pierre_ is similarly marshalled by Melville for the purpose of a satiric attack upon the cumulative weight of centuries of patriarchal authority and power. Pierre Glendinning, with his sense of ancestral manhood fractured, thus stands amid a legion of Melville's questers whose life drama signifies the larger and irrevocable schisms in the history of the Western ego.[24]

Because Melville's will to muteness is so vitally linked to the archetypal encounter with the feminine, I want to maintain the focus on anima yet a while longer. We recall that both Yillah and Hautia were figures invested with silence in _Mardi_. Yillah's mysterious link to a nonverbal or preverbal past, hinted at in passages forming part of the texture of thematic muteness in that novel, as well as the Gothic pauses attending Hautia's fleeting but persistent presence, are merely the foreshadowings of anima-silence in _Pierre_. If _Moby-Dick_ is seen in the light of an archetypal encounter with the feminine, then the link between anima and muteness is also patently evident. In the short tales "I and My Chimney" and "The Tartarus of Maids" the confrontation is rendered in barer detail. Indeed, we can trace the link to Melville's earliest writings, predating even the wordless relationship of Tommo and Fayaway in _Typee_. Perhaps it is easy to overlook Melville's "Fragments from a Writing Desk" (1839) as merely the fledgling efforts of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a youthful aspirant given over, somewhat in the manner of the young Pierre, to unmediated Gothicism and sentimentality. It is noteworthy, however, that both of these short pieces seem to have been written in a state of "anima-possession." The first is an epistolary effusion on feminine beauty, penned in the throes of Romantic hyperbole and overwrought cliche. The second and more revelatory fragment has the writer being accosted by a silent figure bearing a note signed "Inamorata," and summoning him to a villa. There he finds a gorgeous white-robed woman reclining on an ottoman amid a silk-and-damask chamber reminiscent of the Arabian Nights. He kneels before her, passionately uttering words of love while catching her in his arms, "and imprinting one, long, long kiss upon her hot and glowing lips"--only to receive no response. The scene, though extremely mawkish to the modern mind, is important because it is the first significant encounter with muteness in all of Melville's writings.

> ...She was silent; gracious God!...her lips moved--my senses ached with the intensity with which I listened,--all was still,--they uttered no sound; I flung her from me...and with a wild cry of agony I burst from the apartment!--She was dumb! Great God, she was dumb! DUMB AND DEAF! (PT 204)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The dumb and deaf femme inspiratrice encountered at the very gates of Melville's authorial career ought not to be hastily discounted. For she stands as a crucial archetype in Melville's works, signalling the immersion into the unconscious aspects of the creative will. And like equivocal figures in dreams, we see her, along with Melville's other silent personae, auguring an extreme ambivalence or paralysis in the face of words.

The dueling aspects of the masculine and feminine imagos in Pierre beckon us to examine more closely the relation between word and identity as it relates to Melville's quest for authorial selfhood. In a fairly recent study Neal Tolchin has brought that relation to light by focussing on the psychology of "bereavement" as a major aspect of Melville's will to creativity. And he has convincingly linked non-identity, gender-blending, and the instability of words to the notion of "displaced grief" in Melville's major novels.[25] Tolchin is right to identify the core of Melville's bereavement as owing to the early loss of his father, and in interesting ways his study suggests that Maria Melville became the unconscious repository for much of the grief internalized by her son. Psychoanalytic theory tells us that anger is a major component in the emotional constellation of mourning. And unvoiced rage in the face of the dead or absconded father is more than a constant in Melville's writings.[26] Redburn, for instance, confesses that when he thinks of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"delightful days" previous to his father's bankruptcy and ensuing death, "something rises up in my throat and almost strangles me" (R 36). In a virtual replication of this moment of speechlessness from the earlier book, Melville's initial description of Isabel has her dressed in black, her chest palpitating "as though some choked, violent thing were risen up there within the teeming region of her heart" (P 46). It is Tolchin who, in explicating this very passage, reminds us that Isabel personifies Pierre's "revived grief" for his dead father.[27]

While in no way detracting from Tolchin's emphasis on the personal, it needs saying that this approach is only one among an array of interpretations that can help us lay bare the psychological complexities in Pierre. I have tried to show in the preceding pages how a view of the impersonal anima can equally apply to Isabel as a carrier of Pierre's feelings toward his dead father. But in privileging the archetypal over the personalistic approach, how do we avoid being pinned down to yet another "theory," and one that may be no more or less valid than the other?

James Hillman's thoughts on the fluidity of the anima archetype can urge us toward a keener appreciation of the personifying realities in Melville's novel while showing the way beyond just such a critical impasse. Hillman looks to anima phenomenlogy itself as a means of bridging perspectives and confronting the literalisms of an interpretive stance.[28] He would in fact "de-literalize" anima, claiming that "anima

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

integration in the model of the hermaphrodite does not mean acquiring characteristics of the other gender." Rather, he says,

> it means a double consciousness, mercurial, true and untrue, action and inaction, sight and blindness, living the impossible oxymoron....To take the freakish image of the hermaphrodite and literalize it into sexual genders and then moralize it into a bi-sexual goal for behavior is a move as mistaken as considering the phallus to be the biological penis or the great mother to be one's own mother of one's childhood. The battle over literalism is never won; it simply reappears in new guises--thereby forcing us to be psychological.[29]

Hillman's cautioning against the literal capsulizes the authorial agon in Melville. Pierre's struggle for identity amid the clamor of his introjects mirrors that of the writing self of Melville as he confronts and discards his own projections. It should not surprise us, then, that the "mute" anima can be seen, not only as the phenomenon underlying Melville's oxymoronic sensibility, but also as the figure announcing his struggle to flee, at nearly every turn, the constraints of language and imagistic thought. The merging of the feminine and masculine imagos as an aspect of anima in Pierre is thus not only irretrievably associated with muteness but also with the impermanence of language. The conflation

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of feminized and phallicized nature in the descriptive passages of the novel; the evanescence of Isabel's face into the portrait of Pierre's father and, in turn, into the mysterious and haunting "gaze" of Plotinus Plinlimmon; the incestuous relation of sky and earth imaged forth in Pierre's Enceladus vision--are major facets of androgynous silence in _Pierre_ and are invariably linked to indeterminacy and the transcendence of words.

With the advent of Isabel and her story in Books VI and VIII, and Pierre's encounter with the Memnon Stone in Book VII, it can truly be said that Melville has settled into his _metier_: the inditement of a literature that interrogates itself in the presence of silence. From this point on, _Pierre, or the Ambiguities_ becomes, after Carlyle's _Sartor Resartus_, the most enunciative treatment of the ineffable in all of nineteenth-century literature. The novel now also becomes increasingly self-referential, voided word and voided selfhood emerging more clearly as aspects of the same fundamental question.

Sartor Resartus is a pervasive influence in Melville's major writings, as critics have pointed out. And apart from that novel's effects upon Melville's writing style in _Pierre_, other parallels can be seen. As in _Pierre_, identity-loss and dissociation are integral themes in _Sartor Resartus_, and notably so in the "biographical" sections of Teufelsdrockh's narrative. Moreover, the encounter with the feminine

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

preludes, as it does in Pierre, both an experience of multiplicity and the book's immersion into philosophical darkness and silence. Although the circumstances are different--Pierre's obsession with Isabel is not altogether the Werther-like love-delirium that Teufelsdrockh suffers for Blumine--the novelistic placement of the encounter points to affinities which should not be overlooked. For example, Sartor's Chapter 5, "Romance," immediately precedes the narrator's fall into an abyss of psychological perplexity and despair in Chapter 6, "The Sorrows of Teufelsdrockh," which is followed in turn by the famous triptych of chapters: "The Everlasting No," "The Center of Indifference" and "The Everlasting Yea." Melville evidently found a model in Carlyle for his own hero's passing through a crisis of selfhood and faith, and apart from use of language, the borrowings are explicit, notably with respect to mythic and philosophical themes. Carlyle's disquisitions on the proximity of madness and genius; Teufelsdrockh's vergings towards the "highsouled Brunette" Blumine; Blumine's links with "the inarticulate mystic speech of Music," and her identification with the myth of Aurora and the Memnon Statue, all find their parallels in those chapters of Pierre where Melville portrays his hero's deepest encounter with selfhood. For Teufelsdrockh, as well as for Pierre, the feminine imago all her alluring ambiguity is the mediatrix of that process. Later in Pierre, the Carlylean resonances are even more starkly evident, notably with respect to the theme of silence. At the core of Carlyle's concern

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

with the ineffable, moreover, is a loss of faith in religious dogma, the fracturing of a Calvinist ethos that made possible an inward engagement with the symbol-making archetypes of selfhood. It is safe to say that for Melville the pattern is virtually the same.

The persistence of symbolic thought in Pierre is therefore attributable to the very loss of faith Melville is attempting to inscribe. For like Carlyle, Melville creates out of an agon of dissillusionment while evincing an innate yet paradoxical faith in the symbol-making process as a means of negotiating that disillusionment. In Book III of Sartor Resartus, Carlyle celebrates the "wondrous agency of Symbols" as a means to suggest "concealment yet revelation," but still manages to cast dubious light on what he is saying by having it come through the voice of Teufelsdrockh. Indeed, his lofty thoughts on the union of "Speech" and "Silence" take on a discernible shade of irony. Similarly, in Pierre, Melville vents his animus upon any creed, dogma, article of faith, or symbolic proposition within his reach, while still echoing a yearning for transcendent truth. And as Carlyle continually steps back into his frame narrative to distance himself from his persona, Melville for the most part maintains his third-person stance in Pierre. Yet the task of setting apart authorial and fictive voice proves more elusive for the reader of Pierre, owing again to the self-reflexiveness of the novel and Melville's habit of remarking upon his own writerly failures while in the very throes of experiencing them.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In the manner of Teufelsdrockh throwing off the "Soul-habits" of a dead past, Pierre asserts the open independence of self in the face of lifeless memorials. Even "Love's museum is vain and foolish as the Catacombs, where grinning apes and abject lizards are embalmed, as, forsooth, significant of some imagined charm" (P 197). The inspiration for such Carlylean thought is found in passages throughout Sartor Resartus, among them the following from Chapter 8, "The Centre of Indifference":

> "Visible and tangible products of the Past, again, I reckon up to the extent of three: Cities, with their Cabinets and Arsenals; then tilled Fields...; and thirdly-----Books. In which third truly, the last-invented, lies a worth far surpassing that of the two others. Wondrous indeed is the virtue of a true Book. Not like a City of dead stones, yearly crumbling, yearly needing repair; more like a tilled Field, but then a spiritual Field....O thou who art able to write a Book, which once in the two centuries or oftener there is a man gifted to do....thou too hast built what will outlast all marble and metal...."[30]

Pierre's very struggle for an authorial identity is embodied in these words of Carlyle. Working against Pierre's faith in words are the memorials of a dead past to which he can no longer lay claim. It is only

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

by surmounting the martial and agrarian history of his forefathers that he can in any way fulfill an ideal of heroic selfhood. However, because he is born into a world of foreclosed paths to heroism, Pierre must enact his quest entirely within the sphere of mind. In this respect, he may also be identified with Carlyle's notion of "The Hero as Poet" in On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History, a work seen as influential in the shaping of Melville's response to Dante and Shakespeare.[31] It is in this book, moreover, that Carlyle poses a question residing at the core of Melville's concerns with identity and ineffability in Pierre: "The essense of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself 'I,'--ah, what words have we for such things?... This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that Unnamed?"[32]

As if to underscore the Carlylean enigma, melancholy, gloom, and the "nothingness" of meditation press in upon Pierre as "the Inferno of Dante, and the Hamlet of Shakespeare" come mockingly into his thoughts. He identifies with the "muse of fire" and the "horrible allegorical meanings" in Dante, while "initiating glimpses into the hopeless gloom" of Hamlet's "interior meanings" accost his faltering will to action (169). As we read these passages, it becomes even more evident that Pierre's struggle is inseparable from the one Melville is undergoing in trying to write the book. Both the heroic and the authorial self are deconstructed as Pierre realizes "the utter nothing of his acts" (170)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and his "ineffable folly" (171), the self-accusations and "confoundings" in his soul mirroring the deeper failure that we ultimately sense is Melville's. Sanity grounds arms on the field of dessicated selfhood as Pierre dashes himself "in blind fury and swift madness against the wall" and falls "dabbling in the vomit of his own loathed identity" (171).

Melville thus connects the tragic vision to his own sense of failed authorship in ways that suggest an exigent condition of selfhood. The growing sense of restriction in the novel bespeaks, moreover, the verbal imprisonment of an author hard-pressed to escape his own formulations, and who only manages to do so, if at all, through a process of abdication. The pervasive sense we get in reading Pierre is of an author wilfully defiant and frustrated in his quest for identity. In this respect, Melville's surrogate-self Pierre seems another Ahab. Whereas the mainsails suddenly deflated, "as for a moment their hearts sank in," when Ahab spoke in "The Quarter-Deck" (M-D 164-65), here we read that the "cheeks" of Pierre's "soul" had "collapsed in on him" (P 171). The Ahabian imperative of thrusting through the "wall" also finds its place in this passage, along with diction gleaned from "The Spirit-Spout," where the ship is described as tearing on through the "swift madness and gladness of the demoniac waves" (M-D 235). [Emphasis mine] But where Ahab's rage turns outward upon the hated image of the White Whale, Pierre's is not so easily cathected; his emotive energies turn more menacingly inward to become the catalysts of his destruction. Nor can

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Melville as author so easily sustain the portrayal of his agon through figuration, for in Pierre he seems to have come to a "perilous outpost" at the limits of symbolic thought, where thought itself must of necessity begin a retreat back in upon itself, where the authorial self is left with very little choice other than to be "annihilated."

The identity-loss that figures death comes insistently to the fore in Book IX, "More Light, and the Gloom of That Light - More Gloom, and the Light of That Gloom," the chiasmus of the title marking the novel's shift into heightened reflexivity. As the book begins to turn in upon itself, so does the authorial self of Melville begin to merge increasingly with that of his protagonist. The "world of mind" trope is resurrected from Mardi, and just as in the "Dreams" chapter of that earlier work, narrative voice becomes difficult to identify. Pierre, in his quest for philosophical truth, arrives at "Hyperborean regions" in which he "entirely loses the directing compass of his mind," and where "the needle indifferently respects all points of the horizon alike" (P 165). Pierre's dilemma of being tossed between the poles of Truth and Error, and his loss of moral bearings, recapitulate the plight of the writing self as Melville grasps for handholds on thought. The lapse of identity is so acute that the multiplicity of unconscious will threatens to dethrone the narrating ego. The novel, in fact, undergoes a momentary pull to first-person narration at this point. And as with Ishmael's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

recoil atop the mast-head, Melville's own authorial identity "comes back in horror." The "amazing shock of practical truth" (166) that Melville attributes to Pierre is really an indice of his own authorial selfhood rescued from the abyss of disintegration. All truth is solipsistic, the narrating self seems to realize, and it is only the "miraculous vanity" of man which persuades him to say,

> I have come to the Ultimate Speculative knowledge; hereafter, at this present point I will abide. Sudden onsets of a new truth will assail him, and overturn him as the Tartars did China; for there is no China Wall that man can build in his soul, which shall permanently stay the irruptions of those barbarous hordes which Truth ever nourishes in the loins of her frozen, yet teeming North; so that the Empire of Human Knowledge can never be lasting in any one dynasty, since Truth still gives new Emperors to the earth. (167)

The passage is highly emblematic of Melville's thought and points, not only to the elusiveness of formulation, but to the submerged sexual drama coursing through his writings. The oxymoronic inversions, moreover, underscore the deep-rooted ambivalence of selfhood that Melville continually projects into the mind and character of Pierre. Those "irruptions" which even the most unassailable wall cannot stay are

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the progeny of a feminine and "frozen, yet teeming North." From without the wall they threaten both to fecund and overturn the order of the soul which has built its empire of knowledge within. Truth is equated with infidelism as dynasties of knowledge are perpetually assaulted by "barbarous hordes" and repressed energies potentiated in stasis which, once released, beget new orders of thought in an endless process that can never arrive at completion.

Melville's inverted sexual metaphors here, and elsewhere in the novel, undercut in radical ways a dualism residing at the core of the Romantic formulation of self. The agon of thwarted eros in Pierre is consequently not that of the anima hypostasized as a notion of female "otherness," but rather the search for an androgynous wholeness within. It is that ideal of feminized manliness embodied only in those characters who dwell outside the norms of a sexually riven culture--Jack Chase, Queequeg, and Billy Budd come foremost to mind--and contemplated by Ishmael in his more rhapsodic moments in Moby-Dick. For the most part, however, it proves a phantom ideal, and it is an equanimity denied within the strictured moral world that Melville depicts in Pierre. For as Joseph Allen Boone aptly observes, a major theme in Melville's work concerns "the sexual polarity that can render wedlock a life-denying prison and selfhood a state of inner fragmentation"[33]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The tragedy of Pierre, then (or anima's "tremendous, unsharable secret" to borrow Henry Murray's phrase), is the realization of a fractioned selfhood. Elsewhere in the novel the imagined memory of sexual wholeness is questioned in the light of authorship where "the visible world of experience" is "that procreative thing which impregnates the muses; self-reciprocally efficient hermaphrodites being but a fable" (259). Wholeness of self and the will to originality in authorship, the narrator despairingly concludes, are incompatible aims. Male and female partitiveness underlies as well the schism between body and soul: "Keep, then, thy body effeminate for labor, and thy soul laboriously robust; or else thy soul effeminate for labor, and thy body laboriously robust. Elect! the two will not lastingly abide in one yoke" (261). But the words of the narrator fly in the face of the widespread gender-blending in Melville's writings and ironically give faith to Margaret Fuller's claim that male and female are the two sides of a "radical dualism... perpetually passing into one another," as well as her assertion that there is "no wholly masculine man, and no purely feminine woman."[34] That Melville, independently of Fuller, seemed to be working toward an androgynous vision of selfhood is evidenced by his continued preoccupation with the theme in his later writings. The poems "Art" and "After the Pleasure Party," for example, give dramatic evidence of Melville's lifelong sense of self-division and the thwarting of expression that is a theme in so many of his works.[35] The masculine and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

feminine imagos are seen in this light as the motivating dualisms urging inscription and calling the authorial self into being--even as that self stands witness to its own dissolution.

Having brought his identity-making project to a state of near-exhaustion midway through Pierre, Melville attempts a lessening of the symbolic reach that has characterized his writing up to this point. Yet he can never fully eschew symbolic thought, because where words become inadequate, symbolism, in all its multiplicity of meanings, is the only recourse to ineffable truth. It is for this reason that Melville, try though he may to voice the unvoicable via the path of disquisition, can only splay himself on the rack of authorial defeat in the writing of Pierre. For the more he attempts to indite the aporias of thought in the book's writing, all the more do figurations of nothingness arise to accuse him of the futility of doing so. The world, and selfhood, are seen more and more to consist of "superinduced superfluities," the narrator concluding, "appallingly vast as vacant is the soul of a man!" (285) One thinks Melville would have realized the lesson in the "Whiteness of the Whale" chapter of Moby-Dick, where a frustrated Ishmael all but hung out his soul's "craven flag" of surrender in mid-narrative (M-D 194). But in Pierre, word and image continue their symbiotic and often flagellistic dance, and the point at which one yields sway to the other is difficult to gauge.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yet even as his novel slides headlong to the contingency of word-failure that plagued Ishmael in "The Whiteness of the Whale," Melville begins laying the groundwork for a renewed authorial presence. In the face of nervous exhaustion, financial pressures, and unsympathetic reviews of Moby-Dick that already appear as he completes the writing of Pierre, Melville does in fact "survive the wreck"--though not without some difficulty in breasting the vortex. As his novel winds to its denouement, it seems in peril of sinking under its own preponderance. Melodramatic plotting, as well as incongruities of style and language, continue to tax the narrative. And soon even narrative is dispensed with for long stretches as the novel becomes a platform for Melville's acerbic forays on the vanity of authorship, the marketplace of literary fashion, and the illusoriness of transcendental philosophies. It is the stuff of a lashed sensibility, ingrained with wit and self-parody to be sure, but altogether too selectively sardonic for an audience that was blind to its import. Books XVII: "Young America in Literature," XVIII: "Pierre as a Juvenile Author," and XXI: "Pierre Immaturely Attempts a Mature Book," and the sections centering on Plotinus Plinlimmon and the Church of the Apostles, are the fruit of a prophecy Melville had voiced in 1849 when he said it was his "earnest desire to write those sort of books which are said to 'fail'" (Co 139). And adjudged by the arbiters of literary taste of Melville's day, they were indeed among the parts of the book that doomed it to an early obscurity (in all probability because their

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

criticisms were so cuttingly on the mark). For modern readers, however, the pages contain a wealth of material affording insights into Melville's state of mind in the midst of the book's composition and the exfoliating sense of selfhood that so signally defines his growth as a writer. Abstracted to another level, they round out the attack on the Zeitgeist that Melville marshalls in other sections of the novel.

One finds within the skein of parody in these pages the wifull defense of authorial prerogative. "I write precisely as I please," the narrator asserts in yet another of the novel's lapses into first-person (244). And it is the will to self-actualization while confronting the lures of the printed page that Melville objectifies in recounting Pierre's call to authorship. Yet that objectivity turns in upon itself as Melville commits to paper effusive prose of the very sort that bespeaks the seduction of words for his young protagonist:

> Not that as yet his young and immature soul had been accosted by the Wonderful Mutes, and through the vast halls of Silent Truth, had been ushered into the full, secret, eternally inviolable Sanhedrim, where the Poetic Magi discuss, in glorious gibberish, the Alpha and Omega of the Universe. But among the beautiful imaginings of the second and third degree of Poets, he freely and comprehendingly ranged. (244-45)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Once again, we are as if back with the Mardian questers and their satiric diatribes on the hierarchies of knowledge, or amid the tranced word-cadences of Moby-Dick's "Castaway" chapter where, "among the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw....God's foot upon the treadle of the loom" (M-D 414). The visions of hierophantic truth augured in the "Pantheistic master-spell" (P 151) of such passages anticipate Pierre's will to authorship and his desire to range among the elect of poetic genius deriving their inspiration from the Godhead which is the fount of all imaginative endeavor.

But the allurements of literary fame are brought satirically into focus as Pierre realizes that what the world sees as "genius" in letters is often only a matter of taste dictated by coteries of obsequious, puerile-minded critics. In traducing the drawing-room literature of his day, Melville has Pierre recall the critics who had praised his earlier writing for its "euphonious construction of sentences" and "pervading symmetry" of style, while voicing their unqualified admiration for "the highly judicious smoothness and genteelness of the sentiments and fancies expressed" (245). Fawning praise had also come to the young author of "The Tropical Summer: a Sonnett" and other works of "popular literary enthusiasm" in a letter from the firm of "Wonder & Wen" (read the Brothers Duyckinck, Melville's editors), lauding him for possessing "the finest broadcloth of genius" and offering to array his "amazing productions" in a volume of durable "Russia leather" (246-47).[36]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Carlylean wit and the extended metaphor of "tailoring" are the ingredients of Melville's self-parody, which is also a send-up of the marketplace of literary values. But foreshadowing the more tautly-drawn allegory of "Bartleby, the Scrivener," the import of sardonic digression in succeeding pages indicates that Melville's hero would rather martyrize himself to obscurity than pay the "penalty of celebrity" (255). The pretensions of literary taste thereby become the targets of Melville's scrutiny even as he rends the masks of authorship which are the efflux of stages in his own writerly growth. It is not for nothing that "Vivia," Pierre's "author-hero" and Melville's twice-removed persona, urges himself toward the kind of vigor *in absentia* in American letters that these parodies indict. The attack on prevailing tastes becomes, then, part of the very method of Melville's working through to a maturer aesthetic even as he sheds the vestitures of outworn identity. Indeed, Melville seems to be writing his autobiography as Pierre defends the prerogatives of genius in a world where identity merges in a "soft, social Pantheism," where no one dare draw "the sword of his own individuality" (250). Pierre now recognizes his former effusions as "forgeries" (253); eschewing portraiture by the promoters of literary fashion, and the lures of a fame cheaply that might be cheaply won, he turns away in revulsion from what he sees as his own "despicable vanity" (256).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Whereas some readers might find the distance between plot and satiric commentary in these pages of Pierre unsettling, Melville's placement of materials within the novel suggests that the two elements are integrally connected. For Pierre's ambition to write and his compulsion to rescue the outcast Isabel are both owing to the same process as he hearkens to "the unsuppressable and unmistakable cry of the godhead through her soul" (174). Moreover, Melville's authorial self-interrogation intensifies precisely at the point in the narrative when Pierre and Isabel flee into exile. The motive to rescue the outcast female and the will to authorship can both be seen in this light as a response to the claims of anima. For as Henry Murray reminds us, an important feature of anima, "after she has been snatched from her 'world-wide abandonment'...is her desire to be represented, defended, and championed in the world."[37] In the latter pages of Pierre, we see an increasingly defensive posture with respect to words. Pierre's manifestly conflicted feelings toward authorship become in this respect the outward signs of Melville's deeper engagement with the feminine modalities of the creative will. Stated another way, the act of writing represented for Melville a process that Maud Bodkin has found in the imaginative sensibility and likened to the dreamer's effort "to bring to life, or make accessible, the anima, or undeveloped feminine aspect" of personality.[38]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pierre champions the cause of words even in the face of their felt futility: "I will gospelize the world anew, and reveal deeper secrets than the Apocalypse. I will write it, I will write it," he vows, heedless of any notion that his thoughts are destined for deaf ears (273). But the elements of anima underlying Pierre's call to authorship are also those casting him in the mold of what Murray terms the "Ishmaelism of the artist."[39] We recall that in the biblical story Ishmael is banished along with his mother Hagar, the slave-woman, another prototype of the outcast female. It might not be reaching too far, then, to see the Ishmael-Hagar paradigm as a model of the anima constellation in Melville's novel, especially in the light of its function as a carrier of the split parental-imago. The fact that Pierre is an Ishmael "with no maternal Hagar to accompany and comfort him" (89) does not contradict the anima hypothesis, but rather reinforces it in the light of Jung's assertion that anima engagement always involves a "loss" of the maternal element.[40] Moreover, it makes Pierre a symbolic kin of Ishmael in _Moby-Dick_ and supports the view of his being impelled to some of the same inner vicissitudes of that tale. Yet where Ishmael continually gravitates to the maternal only to find himself "_another orphan_" (_M-D_ 573), Pierre eschews that nurturance throughout. In this regard he seems closer to Ahab than to Ishmael, even as Melville inscribes his own banishment to an Ishmaelean desert of opprobrium and exile.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Because Melville's response to the claims of anima is so evidently an aspect of the denied feminine in his culture, we can gain a clearer picture of his frustrated efforts to garner a market for his writings. We needn't only bring Poe or Hawthorne to mind to see how powerfully the figure of the outcast female resonates in nineteenth-century fiction. As David Reynolds and other critics have pointed out, Melville's Pierre closely follows the pattern of melodramatic action of shadowy pulp novels such as George Lippard's The Quaker City (1845), and parallels or anticipates the theme of the fallen woman in E. D. E. N. Southworth's The Discarded Daughter (1852), Fanny Fern's Rose Clark (1856), and Ann S. Stephens' Bellehood and Bondage (1873).[41] Again, in creating a character like Isabel in Pierre, we might say that Melville is appealing to a culture-specific demand while also significantly identifying with the feminine components of selfhood.

The moral and ethical schisms in Pierre are owing to the preluding dichotomies of the fragmented self, a major aspect of which is the repressed feminine side of personality. And in responding to the anima archetype, Melville is engaging, like Hawthorne, in a searing indictment of father-culture. Indeed, one of the strongest admonitions accosting Pierre throughout the novel is Reverend Falsgrave's that "the sins of the father shall be visited upon the children to the third generation" (100). And as in the tales of deconstructing patriarchy that we find in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" and Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, we

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

find a pronounced subtext of identification with the dispossessed female. In Pierre we have represented, more starkly perhaps than in any other work of its time, the schism of the pallid and the dark feminine: the former fulfilling her archetypal role of of subservience to a masculinized ethos, the latter embodying the libidinal energy that threatens patriarchy. The pressing into service of feminine power for the service of a mechanized culture is brought scathingly into light by Melville in "A Tartarus of Maids," one-half of a brilliant diptych on writerly sublimation that remarkably foreshadows Henry Adams's warnings about the denial of the feminine as a cultural force in "The Virgin and the Dynamo." The theme of sexual repression in Pierre also seems owing in this light to the fact that, as Emory Elliot has put it, "whatever did not contribute directly to the commercial enterprises of the new nation was identified as frivolous, or 'feminine,' an inferior kind of activity for idle moments or idle people."[42] Melville's struggle with the external forces of a market-driven culture, then, is also one against the prevailing ethos and the institutionalized thwarting of wholeness of self. To have successfully portrayed such an agon, veiled in symbolism though it often is, Melville had to have strongly identified with the feminine side of his personality. As I have attempted to demonstrate in preceding pages of this study, there is ample evidence within Melville's writings to support this notion.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

To state the case more precisely, what the culture sanctioned as aesthetically correct is that which was deemed culturally and politically safe. Hence, the "two books" that Pierre is composing: the "bungled one" (304) offered up to the world, and the deeper one that Pierre (Melville) in his heart of hearts knows he must write if he is to convey a redemptive vision of truth to a world "soaking in lies." Melville's novel thereby takes on a subversive cast as religion, market-driven ideology, and writerly pretense are satirized in the chapters dealing with the Church of the Apostles and Plotinus Plinlimmon. At the heart of the book's ambiguities is the irresolution of truth and the insoluable dualism that runs through Plinlimmon's torn pamphlet, the folded scrap of which finds its way into the pocket-lining of Pierre's coat. "Chronometricals and Horologicals" thus become, in the Carlylean mode, the very investitures of Pierre's thought, reinforcing the fact of his own moral dilemma, and recalling once more the temporizing ethics of the Reverend Falsgrave.

Pierre's mentality is satirically brought into question in these pages. Whereas Carlyle had depicted Teufelsdrockh as "flame-clad, scaling the upper Heaven, and verging towards Insanity," there are many moments when Pierre seems wandering from his perch of mortal reason.[43] The place at which he arrives, moreover, the Church of the Apostles, is more asylum than temple of communion, its inhabitants reproaching convention with their "efflorescent coats and crack-crowned hats all

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

podding in the sun" (269). Melville's parodic treatment here, with Pierre in the company of societal outcasts and crackpots, questions the veracity of truth-seeking in the world. It also plays off the dictum in Moby-Dick that "man's insanity is heaven's sense" (M-D 414), a thought more verbosely stated in Pierre: "And thus, though the earthly wisdom of man be heavenly folly to God; so also, conversely, is the heavenly wisdom of God an earthly folly to man" (P 212).

The notions of insanity, mute mystery, and dead letters adhere particularly to Plinlimmon, who appears in the narrative as yet another in Melville's legion of silent avatars. "Whence he came, no one could tell," and he "never was known to open a book. There were no books in his chamber" (290). An "inscrutable atmosphere eddied and eddied roundabout this Plotinus Plinlimmon" (291). Plinlimmon's actions bespeak those of a cracked prophet when he returns a gift of bound volumes from a foreign scholar with a curt note reading "Missent," and requesting "some choice Curacoa" in their stead (291). A darker and "non-benevolent" version of Carlyle's Teufelsdrockh, he is a disturbing presence, his "mystic-mild face" dissolving to a "malicious leer" as Pierre observes him in his windowed spire (293). In his own way he is as subversively linked to Pierre's fate as Fedallah to Ahab's. Indeed, Plinlimmon's appearance is foreshadowed by that of "a mysterious professor of the flute...perched in one of the upper stories of tower" in a scene replicating Fedallah's nocturnal mast-head vigils in Moby-Dick.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pierre observes this figure "of silent, moonlight nights" warbling his notes over the roofs of warehouses below (270).

The enigmas of Plinlimmon and his philosophy stand as reminders of the dichotomies of thought that vex Pierre to the very end of the narrative. But even more significant than the ambiguity of the Plinlimmon pamphlet is the very fact of its truncation. Plinlimmon's "Moreover, if--" accosts Pierre's own sense of completeness, and recalls not only the vision of "broken" humanity imparted earlier in Isabel's narrative, but the "EI" of the pamphlet's title, the Greek word for "if." It echoes as well a phrase in _Moby-Dick_: "manhood's pondering repose of If" (_M-D_ 492), and invokes the sense of incompletion that led Melville to confess despairingly to Hawthorne: "I feel that the Godhead is broken up, like the bread at the supper, and that we are the pieces.... Lord, when shall we be done growing. As long as we have anything more to do, we have done nothing" (_Co_ 212-13).

Out of this deepfelt sense of lack and the futility of words, the paeans to silence in _Pierre_ seem to have been written: "All profound things, and emotions are preceded and attended by Silence.... Silence is the general consecration of the universe.... Silence is the only voice of our God..." (204). The question of how to get "a Voice out of silence" (208), emblematic of a desire for the transcendence of speech or language, is at the heart of Pierre's quest for selfhood. While at the Church of the Apostles, Pierre is inspired by the "wonderful

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

suggestiveness" of Isabel's "mystic guitar," but feels that her music is "eternally incapable of being translated into words" (282). "Renouncing all his foregone self" (283), he feels all the more the weight of an inherited authorial identity. "He would climb Parnassus with a pile of folios on his back," while also urging himself towards the writing of "something transcendentally great" (283-84). Yet he is all too aware of the inadequacy of words, and concludes that all great books "are but the mutilated shadowings-forth of invisible and eternally unbodied images in the soul" (284).

Still later in the narrative and "revolving in the troubled orbit of his book" (298), Pierre finds his creative impulses blocked. He cannot reconcile a "spiritually-minded and archetypal faith" with his "clogged terrestrial humanities" (299). Moreover, the formerly airy graces of youthful calling have now turned in his mind to "literary flatulencies" (299). Eschewing the "Apple-Parings Dialectics" and the delusive "Kantian Categories" (300) of his fellow apostles, Pierre shuts himself into a writerly solitude of "paper, pens, and infernally black ink, four leprously dingy white walls, no carpet, a cup of water, and a dry biscuit or two" (302). But as if to underscore the reflexive entrapment of the novel he himself is writing, Melville has Pierre plagiarizing from his "apparent" author-hero's experiences. Thus it is _Vivia_, not Pierre, who soliloquizes: "'A deep-down unutterable mournfulness is in me. I drop all humorous or indifferent disguises, and all philosophical

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pretensions'" (302). Several more "slips" of Pierre's writing are gathered from the floor, each in the voice of Vivia, each reflecting the very state of Pierre as he sits in his "'dismal jail'" of a room, each making Pierre more acutely conscious "of much that is so anomalously hard and bitter in his lot, of much that is black and terrific in his soul" (303).

Pierre is described in the following pages as attempting to write in the heart of an "unutterable" silence, accompanied only by the "lonely scratch of his pen" and the silent but attentive ear of Isabel in the next room. Thus imprisoned, the dark woman of his destiny close at hand, it is uncertain whether Pierre is bringing forth creation, or destruction: "In the heart of such silence, surely something is at work.... Builds Pierre the noble world of a new book? or does the Pale Haggardness unbuild the lungs and life in him?--Unutterable, that a man should be thus!" (304) Like Ahab, Pierre is a self-ravening Prometheus: a vampiric compulsion is upon him as "devouring profundities" open up in him and "consume all his vigor" (305). The implicit threat of dismemberment owing to such a burden of selfhood recalls Pierre's thoughts of the "mutilated shadowings-forth" of words, and adumbrates his self-reflecting dream of Enceladus in the novel's final pages. Thus, as the surface plot winds to its denouement, the interior drama of Pierre becomes even more starkly manifest. It is the agon of thwarted expression that finally rules Pierre's fate, the homynyms "muteness" and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"mutilation" finding their thematic nexus and coursing subliminally through the novel's pages. The drama of ineffability, then, is really that of the buried and fractioned self. The armless trunk of Enceladus in Pierre's final vision recalls dismasted Ahab, "so far gone... in the dark side of the earth" (M-D 544), bespeaking his chthonic thrall, ultimately, to the powers of blackness and the devouring feminine.

Pierre's failure to write is necessarily seen in this light as a result of the engagement with the ambivalent anima, a view that Henry Murray supports.[44] Interestingly enough, this approach finds corroboration in a more recent article by Edward Strickland on Coleridge's unfinished poem Christabel.[45] Strickland sees the character Geraldine in that work as a Muse-figure whose "self-contradictions" mirror "the ambiguities of the unconscious exploration by Coleridge," arguing that she "represents the negative aspect of the ambivalent Muse," and "demonic possession rather than celestial exhaltation of the imagination." Strickland, in fact, sees Geraldine in her role of ambivalent anima as the very "cause" of Coleridge's inability to complete the poem.[46] As an embodiment of the ambivalent anima, Geraldine, like Isabel, is both demon and angel, seductress and madonna. These are qualities, moreover, that also varyingly color the split-anima figuration of Isabel and Lucy throughout Melville's novel. The case that I am making with respect to Pierre parallels the one that Strickland has put

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

forth for thwarted creation in Coleridge. It also, like his, encourages a reading which places the anima phenomenon within "the dialectics of vision rather than sexual neurosis."[47]

This notion is further underscored by Pierre's reaction as he views the portrait of the "most touching, but most awful of feminine heads--The Cenci of Guido" in Book XXVI, a symbolic "other" of the ambivalent "armchair portrait" of his father earlier in the novel. In Guido Reni's painting are limned the very inversions of dark and seraphic womanhood figured forth in Isabel and Lucy, causing Pierre to have thoughts of "incest and parricide" (351). The painting, like so many other markers of ambiguity within the novel, is a mirror of Pierre's inner self. The anima thereby stands forth as the mother of all introjection in the novel, urging both creativity and dissolution. So when Pierre murders his cousin Glendinning Stanly he is responding, not so much out of personal motives as mythic ones. He is acting, in effect, at the behest of the dark anima, projecting his rage onto the doubled self who has usurped his place in the world. A cosmogeny of introjected voices urges Pierre to defiance, impelling him, finally, to a war against the fathers.

The ambivalent anima is a subversive presence right through to the final scene of the novel where the maternal mix oxymoronically becomes a draught of gall. One wonders what Sophia Hawthorne, to whom Melville had proferred the writing of his book as "a rural bowl of milk" (_Co_ 219), must have thought as she read of Pierre, in his final earthly act,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

snatching the vial of poison from Isabel's breast and saying, "...in thy breasts, life for infants lodgeth not, but death-milk for thee and me!" This, while holding the dead form of Isabel in his arms and hard upon the death of Lucy, "shrunk up like a scroll" and lying "noiselessly" at his feet (360). H. Bruce Franklin, in fact, notes the symbolic connection between the "marbelized" pallor of Lucy and Isabel's "death-milk," and makes the clarifying observation that "Isabel's milk dissolves Pierre's identity, leaving only his stony body in stony hell."[48]

But it is Lucy who in an earlier chapter had approached Pierre offering to help him write his book, and she, not Isabel, who is consistently linked with "whiteness" throughout the novel. As a carrier of humanizing influence and the sympathies of the heart, Lucy reenters the narrative as Pierre's "good angel," playing a Starbuck of sorts to Isabel's Fedallah. But in rejecting Lucy's help, Pierre is unable to bridge the denial of his need for maternal nurturance and for the bonds of human sympathy which will, in turn, make him more human. The news of Mrs. Glendinning's death in Book XXI also sounds the death-knell of maternal influence and signals the denial of redemption through feminine influence. Moreover, Pierre, like Ahab, identifies his absolutism of self in imagery of fire, archetypally and traditionally a masculine symbol. The ambiguity of inner motivation is further underscored when Lucy's pallid whiteness, earlier associated with the "marbelized form" of Pierre's dead father, is linked to thoughts of authorial immolation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pierre exclaims to Lucy: "I fight a duel in which all seconds are forbid (349)....Dead embers of departed fires lie by thee, thou pale girl; with dead embers thou seekest to relume the flame of extinguished love!" (358) Indeed, earlier, Pierre had committed his father's portrait and packages of family letters to the flames in an act at once renunciative and defiant:

> "Thus, and thus, and thus! on thy manes I fling fresh spoils; pour out all my memory in one libation!--so, so, so--lower, lower, lower; now all is done, and all is ashes! Henceforth, cast-out Pierre hath no paternity, and no past; and since the Future is one blank to all; therefore, twice-disinherited Pierre stands untrammeledly his ever-present self!--free to do his own self-will and present fancy to whatever end!" (198-99)

Lucy's shrinking up "like a scroll" in the final scene is all the more convincing, then, if we read her as a partial embodiment of the denied feminine which also acts, like Isabel, as a carrier of the introjected father. Fratricide and matricide are both implicit as Lucy, standing in as the introjected writing self of Pierre, folds, like the wan and wasted Bartleby, into a fetal posture and dies. This, preluding Pierre's own lapse into the death-embrace of Isabel, her long hair arboring him "in ebon vines" (362).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is a bitter ending to a scathing and overwrought melodrama. Yet even in this overworking of elements, Melville seems to be quaffing the necessary bile of his own soul-journey as a writer. Pierre's break with Mrs. Glendinning and the world she represents is the "Mother of all Dispossession" within the novel, reflecting Melville's own identity-lapses as he moves in the direction of a renewed authorial selfhood. The by-blows and stabs of fate endured by Pierre--usurped by his cousin and rival Glendinning Stanly, deprived of his inheritance, having to fend off the venomous barbs of critics who question his sanity--mirror the internal shocks to Melville's writerly self and register his sense of loss as he struggles against the urgings of his introjects and an imagined authorial death. Thoughts of failed authorship and dead letters press in upon his protagonist as a yearned-for wholeness of identity shatters in the face of irreconcilable impulses from within. Yet, for all this, Melville gives strong evidence of working through to what Brian Short has recognized as "a new rhetorical freedom" in the writing of _Pierre_.[49] The novel is the record of a maturating sensibility, its author-hero passing through alembic fires of despair and disillusion as Melville strips away the "superinduced superfluities" that mask identity and occlude a vision of truth. The "world-husk" of selfhood that renders the soul a vacuity is thus seen to be a concept predicated on artifice. And in this world of identity-as-efflux the ambiguous anima stands as the phenomenon prelusive of all dualities of thought.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Melville's very rending of his authorial masks in Pierre sustains the credo that "style is the outward sign of the burning grace within."[50] The narrator's imperative for Pierre to "go and thoroughly study architecture" (257) is thereby all the more suggestive in the light of Melville's rhetorical development in the wake of the book's writing. It is the hard-won adherence to "form" that allows Melville to move from the identity-making symbolism of his earlier novels to the precisioned irony of his short tales and The Confidence-Man, and beyond that, to his nearly thirty-years' labor within the exactitudes of verse; for it is during his long prose hiatus that Melville works toward the culmination of an aesthetic so keenly realized in the "forms, measured forms" of Billy Budd. Pierre is not so much a monument to novelistic defeat for Melville as it is the prologue to a heightened writerly presence. It is the work where, as Bryan Short suggests, we find Melville "excavating the mummy of an authoritative identity" and stripping his rhetorical project "to the bone."[51] Within this context, Melville's novel is best understood as a revelation of the authorial mind in the process of confronting its own fictions. In effecting such a turn inward, it moves us closer to the condition of poetry, and to an "aesthetic of silence" that is of the essence of poetry.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1]Henry A. Murray, "Introduction to Pierre" in Endeavors in Psychology: Selections from the Personology of Henry A. Murray, ed. Edwin S. Shneidman (New York: Harper and Row, 1987) 417.

[2]Leo Bersani, The Culture of Redemption (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990) 150.

[3]Ibid. 149, 151.

[4]Sacvan Bercovitch, The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America (London: Routledge, 1993) 289, 283.

[5]Michael Paul Rogin, Subversive Geneology: The Political Art of Herman Melville (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983) 179.

[6]Richard Poirier, The Renewal of Literature: Emersonian Reflections (New York: Random House, 1987) 97.

[7]David S. Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989) 159-61, 292-94.

[8]Among the more opprobrious comments on Melville's novel upon its publication were the following: "Pierre, or the Ambiguities is, perhaps, the craziest fiction extant.... [The book] might be supposed to emanate from a lunatic hospital rather than from the quiet retreats of Berkshire" (Charles Gordon Greene, unsigned review, Boston Post, 4 August 1852); "One long, brain-muddling, soul-bewildering ambiguity" (unsigned review, New York Herald, 18 Sept. 1852); a "turgid, pretentious and...useless

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

book" with "a repulsive, unnatural and indecent plot, a style disfigured by every paltry affectation of the worst German school, and ideas unparalleled for earnest absurdity....precisely what a raving lunatic who had read Jean Paul Richter in translation might be supposed to spout under the influence of a particularly moonlight night.... [Melville's] fancy is diseased, his morality vitiated, his style nonsensical and ungrammatical, and his characters as far removed from our sympathies as they are from nature" (George Washington Peck, unsigned review, American Whig Review, Nov. 1852). Watson G. Branch, ed., Melville: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974) 294-95, 308, 316, 318, 321.

[9]R. W. B. Lewis is among a number of critics who have called attention to Melville's authorial fatalism in Pierre, claiming that if ever there were a case of "symbolic suicide" in literature, it is Melville's in the "indiscriminate destruction" in the concluding pages the novel. The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955) 149. Henry Murray concurs, stating that "Melville's will to self-annihilation" represents a "grave and complex" problem in Pierre. Endeavors in Psychology 416.

[10]Poirier, 142-43.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[11]No figure in Melville speaks more dramatically to the sense of voided selfhood than that of the "empty sarcophagus" evoked in Book XXI of Pierre, "Pierre Attempts a Mature Book":

> By vast pains we mine into the pyramid; by horrible gropings we come to the central room; with joy we espy the sarcophagus; but we lift the lid--and no body is there!--appallingly vast as vacant is the soul of a man!" (285)

(Even so, the reader will take note here of Melville's inexorable pull to the first-person mode in his narrator's use of the more implicative "we.")

[12]H. Bruce Franklin, The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1963) 99-125.

[13]Murray, Endeavors in Psychology 436.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid. 442.

[16]Ibid. 443.

[17]James Hillman, Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985) 65.

[18]In the light of the ambiguity of moral purpose implied by Melville in the symbolism of serpent and dove in this scene with the Reverend Falsgrave, Carl Jung's thoughts might be of interest. Jung includes this

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and related symbolism in his discussions of the "personification of the opposites." Such archetypal situations, he claims, underlie the incest motif and are at the back of "the primitive notion that the father is reborn in the son, and of the heirosgamos of mother and son in its pagan and Christian form; it signifies the highest and the lowest, the brightest and the darkest, the best and the most detestable. It represents the pattern of renewal and rebirth, the endless creation and disappearance of symbolic figures." C. G. Jung, Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy, Bollingen Series XX, The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, vol. 14, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970) 150.

[19]Ibid. 450.

[20]Edward Edinger, Melville's Moby-Dick: A Jungian Commentary (New York: New Directions, 1975) 94.

[21]Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, Bollingen Series XLII, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970) 170 ff.

[22]Ibid. 133.

[23]Ibid. 179.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[24]Robert K. Martin has specifically addressed the question of male identity in relation to Biblical history in Melville's writings, and suggests that Melville recognized in many of the Old Testament stories the suppression of idolatry "in a conflict between a matriarchal religion in which the phallus was worshipped as a source of pleasure and generation and a patriarchal religion that was supplanting the older customs and replacing the benign phallus with the wrath of Jehovah." Martin's study is particularly illuminating for its insights into the parodic elements of phallicism in Moby-Dick. Hero, Captain, and Stranger: Male Friendship, Social Critique, and Literary Form in the Sea Novels of Herman Melville (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1986) 93.

[25]Neal L. Tolchin, Mourning, Gender, and Creativity in the Art of Herman Melville (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988) 80 ff.

[26]Murray also associates grief and rage as a major components of Melville's psychology, both in his "Introduction to Pierre," and his essay "Dead to the World: The Passions of Herman Melville." Endeavors in Psychology 413 ff.; 504 ff.

[27]Tolchin 148.

[28]With respect to pluralism, Hillman cites William James for his recognition "that psychological enquiry leads necessarily to a variety of subjectively based, self-sufficient, and valid premises." Re-Visioning Psychology 227.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[29]Hillman, Anima 125.

[30]Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, eds. Kerry McSweeney and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987) 132.

[31]Jonathan Arac, Commissioned Spirits: The Shaping of Social Motion in Dickens, Carlyle, Melville, and Hawthorne (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989) 151; F. O. Matthiessen American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1941) 384-85, 426.

[32]Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History, ed. Carl Niemeyer (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1966) 10.

[33]Joseph Allen Boone, Tradition Counter Tradition: Love and the Form of Fiction (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987) 241-42.

[34]Margaret Fuller, Margaret Fuller: Essays on American Life and Letters, ed. Joel Myerson (New Haven: College and Univ. Press, 1978) 161.

[35]In the light of this theme, the following stanza from Melville's "After the Pleasure Party" is especially noteworthy:

Could I remake me! or set free
This sexless bound in sex, then plunge
Deeper than Sappho, in a lunge
Piercing Pan's paramount mystery!
For, Nature, in no shallow surge
Against thee either sex may urge,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Why hast thou made us but in halves--

Co-relatives? This makes us slaves.

If these co-relatives never meet

Self-hood itself seems incomplete.

And such the dicing of blind fate

Few matching halves here meet and mate.

What Cosmic jest or Anarch blunder

The human integral clove asunder

And shied the fractions through life's gate? (SP 134)

[36]Hershel Parker, while conceding that Melville took satirical revenge on his own critics in these passages, also questions the commonly held view that what Pierre's critics write is likely the opposite of what real reviewers had said of Melville's earlier novels. In comparing the early reviewers' phrases with those of Pierre's critics, Parker finds many similarities. "Where Pierre Went Wrong," Studies in the Novel VIII (Spring 1976) 14-16.

[37]"Every true anima has a potential value; she is a new hypothesis, a forgotten truth, a 'stone which the builders refused' that may be destined to 'become the headstone of the corner.' Thus the anima is she-who-must-be-served." Murray, 441-42.

[38]Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies in Imagination (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1934) 204.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[39]Murray 426.

[40]Hillman, Anima 75.

[41]Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance 361-67; Bercovitch, The Rites of Assent 253, 296, 400n.

[42]Emory Elliot, "Art, Religion, and the Problem of Authority in Pierre" in Ideology and Classic American Literature, eds. Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986) 338.

[43]Carlyle, Sartor Resartus 111.

[44]Murray 443-44. In a related essay dealing with anima and creativity, Murray writes of the spiritual phase of development when "man and woman participate in the formation of a dyad," which is "exemplified...on all levels." It is "an embracement and reunion of the opposites: man and nature, male and female, conscious and unconscious, superego and id, reason and passion, rational and irrational, science and art...West and East...," all moving, he says, toward "synthesis" and "the fortunate change of creativity." "Vicissitudes of Creativity," in Endeavors in Psychology 329. But Murray's "ambivalence" in the face of the dyad is illuminatingly set forth in a recent biography by Forrest Robinson, who writes that Murray, like Melville's Pierre, failed in his quest for such a unified vision. He sees in Murray's relationship with his mistress, Christiana Morgan, a "mood of failure" hindering Murray's ability to complete a projected biography of Melville. Murray's protests about his failure as a writer, says Robinson,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

had their hidden source in his mute disenchantment with Christiana and the dyad. It was the Proposition, the vital soul and center of his thought, that he could not complete. Here was the secret failure from which much of his frustration derived.

***

Harry had from the first long dive into Moby-Dick made his life out of Melville's.... But life in the Melville mold had its drawbacks, not least among them the fact that the writer's problems with mother, wife, and anima--in which Harry was astonished to recognize his own--had their issue in denials and silence.

Forrest G. Robinson, Love's Story Told: A Life of Henry A. Murray (Harvard: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992) 311-12.

[45]Edward Strickland, "Metamorphoses of the Muse in Romantic Poesis: Christabel," English Language History 44 (1977) 641-658.

[46]Ibid. 649.

[47]Ibid. 652.

[48]Franklin, The Wake of the Gods 103.

[49]Short 124.

[50]Arthur Machen, Hieroglyphics [1902] (London, Unicorn, 1960) 40.

[51]Short 122-23.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Five

"I Look, You Look, He Looks; We Look, Ye Look, They Look": Melville, Hillman, and the 'Splintered' Imago

> To recognize the plurality that attaches to the Imagination is neither to devaluate it nor to negate it, but on the contrary to establish it.
>
> --Henri Corbin

> May God us keep
> From Single vison & Newtons sleep
>
> --William Blake

There are always pitfalls in applying psychologistic thought to works of literature. One in a sense either reduces literature to psychology, or psychology to literature, and risks doing a disservice to both. Yet the allure persists, in part perhaps because it was Freud himself who claimed to have invented psychoanalysis "because it had no literature."[1] More recently psychoanalysis can be said to have truly achieved, along with the advent of Derridean and Lacanian theory, the status of a literary discourse, the result being that readers are often involved in acts of interpretation that seem to mirror the very dynamics of the works they are studying. To this end, those commentaries deemed the most "literature-like" are also the ones holding the most appeal.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Though all but passed over by academic criticism, James Hillman's archetypal psychology is perhaps the most assentingly literary body of such work to emerge in recent years. How, for example, can one resist the literariness of a psychology whose author and chief spokesman claims a "poetic basis" for his theories and grounds them squarely in the "imagination" and the Keatsian notion of "soul-making"? In the words of Ralph Maud, one of the few commentators to have applied Hillman's theories to text, how can literary criticism ignore "a hand held out so collegially"?[2] Hillman, a post-Jungian who lays great emphasis on the "multiplicity" of the psyche, makes a claim for what he calls "the polytheistic structure of a post-modern consciousness."[3] His theories are most elaborately set forth in works such as The Myth of Analysis (1972), Re-Visioning Psychology (1975), Healing Fiction (1983), Archetypal Psychology: A Brief Account (1983), and Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion (1985).

In the following pages I want to extend the inroads made in previous sections of this study, and view certain aspects of Melville's mind and art more closely in a Hillmanian light. Melville's appeal for psychological commentary has long been recognized. Henry Murray, in fact, lauds Melville as a literary discoverer of "the mythological unconscious" and sees in his writings the means to a rapproachment between literature and depth psychology.[4] But while Hillman's archetypal

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

psychology seems tailor-made for furthering that means, Ralph Maud is among the few critics to have actually taken such an approach. Maud, in fact, sees Melville as "a remarkably good case for study," and looks at his works in the light of Hillman's notions of "depth," "image" and "archetype."[5] He insightfully suggests polytheistic perspective as a means to differentiate genre (an area wherein Hillman's ideas seem particularly useful), but makes that aspect only marginal with respect to the skewing of identities that we find in Melville. It is precisely here, I believe, that Hillman can be most helpful, in that his archetypal "imaginal" theories speak boldly to the protean sense of selfhood infusing Melville's identity-making novels.

More recently Martin Bickman has provided a valuable and comprehensive overview of depth-psychology criticism of Melville's works, and suggested that Hillman himself take up the challenge of Melville.[6] Elsewhere Bickman convincingly links Hillman's thinking on "falsifying ego consciousness" to Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," but doesn't apply that perspective to Melville.[7] I am drawing on Hillman's theories here, not only in response to Bickman, but also to affirm Hillman's own recognition of the need for the "primary images of soul-making" to find "adequate ideational vessels."[8] Still, I am not putting forward here strictly a Hillmanian "template" for Melville, but rather a standpoint from which to better gauge Melville's own approach to the question of selfhood.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hillman's archetypal psychology speaks to the transitions in Western culture and upheavals in the collective psyche, concerns which are also the province of myth and epic literature. It builds upon the notion of archetypes as structures of consciousness and looks outward, in the manner of Jung's theories, to a cultural matrix encompassing the history of Western thought. Yet Hillman's psychology departs radically from Jung's in both its emphasis and aims. Hillman, in fact, calls for the need to move psychology "beyond clinical inquiry within the consulting room" and situate it "within the culture of Western imagination."[9] While amplifying certain aspects of Jungian thought and disavowing others, Hillman's psychology shifts its emphasis away from any concept of the unconscious, collective or otherwise. Where Jung stresses "individuation" as a path to wholeness of self, Hillman unabashedly speaks of "soul-making," defining it as a process of deepening imaginal reflection. Hillman borrows from Neoplatonic, Renaissance and Romantic thought, streams of discourse running counter to what he sees as a "monotheistic bias" in Western thought, and says that his polytheistic psychology is not out to revive a dead faith "by talking about archetypes as if they were Gods."[10] It is rather, he claims, a "style" of thinking, a perspectivizing mode for taking into account the "ambiguity of diversity" of life and for creating "a firm order out of many viewpoints."[11]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Greece persists as an inscape," says Hillman, extending Jung's mythologizing to make his own claim that the gods and goddesses of antiquity continue to live through our psychic structures." In archetypal psychology, according to Hillman,

> Gods are _imagined_. They are approached through psychological methods of personifying, pathologizing, and psychologizing. They are formulated ambiguously, as metaphors for modes of experience and as numinous borderline persons. They are cosmic perspectives in which the soul participates.[12]

Turning our attention to Melville's major novels, we see that they take us dramatically into "cosmic perspectives" of the kind in which Hillman sees the soul participating. To an extraordinary degree, the pulverization of the "I" in _Mardi_ and _Moby-Dick_ anticipates Hillman's vision of a splintered, or polytheistic, structure of consciousness. Taji's quest for Yillah reveals to him, amid the many-islanded Mardi, a fecundity of possible worlds and world-views, just as Ishmael's whaling odyssey exposes him to a world of clashing antipodes, motives, and visions of truth. _Pierre_, Melville's deepest response to a changing _Zeitgeist_, also sets forth the polytheistic attitude. But it does so entirely within the mind and character of its "author-hero," whose many infelt identities vie for recognition as aspects of the self.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Mardi and Moby-Dick continually subvert monistic thought by portraying multiplicity in all things earthly, diabolical, and divine. In these works the deific principle is often spoken of in terms of plurality. Ishmael's wonderment at seeing the peaked flukes of whales: "such a grand embodiment of adoration of the gods was never beheld, even in Persia, the home of the fire worshippers" (317), finds its antithetical resonance in Ahab's imprecation: "Oh, devilish tantalization of the gods!" following his encounter with the crazed cabin-boy Pip (399). Indeed, Ahab is continually riven by a plurality of demonic forces while projecting his monomania onto Moby-Dick: "The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung" (184). Polytheism and multiplicity are very pronounced themes in Mardi, with Taji taking his own though dissembling place among a host of deimgods. Although Melville parodies the very notion of polytheism by giving us a counterfeit demigod-narrator, thereby placing the other demigods in a questionable light, he seems to be trying to show the limitations of separate and individual "monotheisms." Elsewhere, and repeatedly, Melville manifestly voices his trust in a universe whose regnant principle or feature is multiplicity.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In _Mardi_ Taji's narrational identity splits off into those of his fellow mariners--Babbalanja, Media, Mohi and Yoomy--following the disappearance of Yillah. Anticipating a process that is much more apparent in _Pierre_, the splintering of self is a direct result of the encounter with the feminine, a dynamic explored in previous sections of this study. Indeed, the will to multiplicity is so strong in both works that authorial identity is imperiled by its own dissolution. It is precisely at these moments of breakdown, as in the "Dreams" chapter of _Mardi_, that Melville feels his "own mad brood of eagles" devouring him and all but hauls out his craven flag of authorial surrender. The narrating self is beset with its own multiplicity: "And like a frigate, I am full with a thousand souls.... My memory is a life beyond birth...my library of the Vatican, its alcoves all endless perspectives...(_M_ 367-68). That infelt multiplicity becomes a vision of hallucinatory plenitude in the "Castaway" chapter of _Moby-Dick_, as Pip's "ringed horizon" of self expands "miserably" around him. Melville describes the black cabin-boy's soul being

> carried down alive to wondrous depths, where strange shapes of the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes; and the miser-merman Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps; and among the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> firmament of waters heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God's foot upon the treadle of the loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called him mad. (M-D 414).

In Pierre, where selfhood's fragmentation is most fully inscribed, we read, "The gods love the soul of a man; often they will frankly accost it" (P 299), the fate of Melville's author-hero being subject to "invisible angel-hoods" (156); "either the gracious or malicious gift of the great gods" (175), or accosting legions of "the Wonderful Mutes" (244). Pierre's imagined fulness distends his identity and bursts his self to overruning. He, in fact, personifies the "wreck" of the authorial self that Melville had foreseen in Mardi. Such moments of psychic disintegration are often portrayed by Melville, and just as often they are awash in a multiplicity of images and thoughts that seem about to fly out of control.

I think it is safe to say that Hillman would read these passages, not so much for their evidence of incipient breakdown in Melville, but on the contrary for their wealth of personifying images. Hillman would have us stay within the phenomena, encountering the images as if they were themselves realities, aspects of a world animated by soul-making. Hillman would probably concede that the states depicted by Melville may at first be experienced as pathological, "akin to the experience of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

multiple personality" as "things fall apart and the one becomes many." But removing them from the realm of pathology, he says, involves us

> in a revolution of consciousness--from monotheistic to polytheistic. It will feel like a breakdown and regression. We are now in the place of old Kronos who swallowed all his children, or the old Fathers of the Church who "took prisoner every thought for Christ." The rock crumbles; there is rebellion from within and below.[13]

Hillman claims that polytheistic consciousness might be mistaken for "schizoid fragmentation," characterized by the ambivalence "of a center that cannot hold." But in looking "for a God in the disease," that multiplicity is seen to belong to a "mythical pattern." For "schizoid polycentricity," he says, is a "style" of consciousness and not only a disease. Hillman would unname the clinical categories and seek in their place the presence of Hermes-Mercury, or another Trickster God.[14]

Elsewhere, Hillman amplifies Jung's claim that the anima stage in numinous encounters "is correlated with polytheism, the self with monotheism." He traces the various guises of the anima archetype, emphasizing her role as a "mediatrix of the soul."[15] In the light of the Christian-Pagan conflict that so infusively colors Melville's novels, Hillman's thoughts are suggestive. He claims that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> within our engagement with anima lies the historical conflict in the Western soul about the soul.... Anima as uni-personality takes her stand within the main line of the Christian view of soul.... In this fantasy of soul, Christian and Pagan constellate and compensate each other. The fantasy of barbarian hinterlands, Wotan, Dionysus, and the "poly-daemonic" unconscious that has not been Christianized--all contrast with the fantasy of the individualized "uni-personality" of the soul who is the guide of individuation toward unified wholeness....
>
> To say it another way: a unified, unconscious anima constellates its opposite, polygamous consciousness, in the masculine ego.[16]

Hillman's deconstruction of pathology is well suited to a view of Melville's rhetorical art, which thrives, as Hillman would see it, "in plural meanings, in cryptic double-talk, in escaping definitions, in not taking heroic committed stances, in ambisexuality, in psychically detached and separated body parts."[17] What Hillman says applies particularly to Moby-Dick, for it is in such experiences that "we might look for Dionysus and his community, where self-division, dismemberment, and a flowing multiplicity belong to a mythical pattern."[18] Moreover, Hillman could almost be describing the Ishmaelean dispersal of self in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Melville's novel, when he states that "consciousness is not heroic and fixed to one point, but seeps as if through mystical participation in a processional of personalities, interfused, enthusiastic, suggestible, labile."[19]

Identity-loss in the throes of reverie is a recurrent theme in Melville's works, leading Ahab to ask, "Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm?" (M-D, 445) The agon of heroic selfhood thus becomes irrevocably bound up with the problem of fixed fate versus free will, an extended dialogue in Moby-Dick. In addition, the affinity between disease and consciousness--Ahab's mysterious "Cape Horn fit"; Elijah's "confluent smallpox"; the plague-wasted Jeroboam; the putrefied whale in "Ambergris"--all impart an archetypal presence in the novel akin to what Hillman would term "looking for a God in the disease." Ambisexuality is often evinced in Melville's works in an undercurrent of homoeroticism or androgynous manhood. And where Hillman praises that style of consciousness thriving in "plural meanings" and "cryptic double-talk," we have only to open Melville at almost any point to see that language in practice. It is a style that infuses all of Melville's symbolizing efforts, characterizing as well the mystic utterances of Babbalanja, the inspired gibberish of Pip, and the ponderous, interiorizing language of Pierre. Everywhere in Melville, passages approach that oxymoronic level of "ambiguous, half-hinting, half-revealing, shrouded" speech (M-D 93) so befitting a discourse of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

elusivity. Taji's dissembling as a demigod in Mardi and the Cosmopolitan Man's duplicity in The Confidence-Man are of a piece in this charade where imposture is ever the symbiotic twin of indeterminate language. Finally, dismemberment or psychic detachment of body parts is seen most centrally in regard to Ahab, but also as an aspect of lesser figures such as Captain Boomer of the Samuel Enderby, and the native mariner Samoa in Mardi. The category also describes Pierre Glendinning's "mutilated" and fractured sense of selfhood, which, as we noted in the previous chapter, is central to Melville's struggle for authorial identity.

But Hillman would avoid putting literal meaning on any of these identifying forms of rhetoric and instead look for an archetypal presence at work. He would stress the "relation" of these categories to identity-making. Recall again the ascendency of Ahab's monomania in the "Quarter-Deck" and "Candles" chapters of Moby-Dick, and the shift to dramatic form and shattering of the identity-principle that follow. "If man will strike, strike through the mask!" rails Ahab (164); "I will dismember my dismemberer" (168); "in the midst of the personified impersonal, a personality stands here" (507). Such Dionysian moments bespeak the exigency of selfhood that seems everywhere present in Melville. They also presage Hillman's thoughts on the impalpability of self, witnessed in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> the perpetual dismemberment of being and not being a self, being that is always in many parts, like a dream with a full cast. We all have identity crises because a single identity is a delusion of a monotheistic mind.... Authenticity is *in* the illusion, playing it, seeing through it from within as we play it, like an actor who sees through his mask and can only see it this way.[20]

Hillman claims that we cannot come to terms with the imaginal until we are able to surmount our own egocentricity, what he calls the "capital *I* appearing in the monotheism of consciousness...with its tolerance for but one historical, unique divine personification."[21] Hillman's words can be seen as applying particularly to the monomania of Ahab. But they also cast light upon some of the deeper intimations of *Pierre*--for Pierre is a "type" of Christ, and the rock is crumbling. The center of personality cannot hold, and Pierre, as the personified surrogate of Melville's authorial self, fragments into an identification with a host of mythic selves. The necessity of surmounting the "capital *I*" is therefore inherent as well in Melville's shift to third-person narration in *Pierre*, in that the book seems to have been written as a defense against too close an identification with the archetypes of selfhood. The sense of an identity mirrored in the schisms of the *Zeitgeist* was almost certainly on Melville's mind as well when he wrote Hawthorne that our "*Being*" is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> the knot with which we choke ourselves. As soon as you say _Me_, a _God_, a _Nature_, so soon you jump off from your stool and hang from the beam. Yes, that word is the hangman. Take God out of the dictionary, and you would have Him in the street. (_Co_ 186)

Hillman, like Melville, would have us perpetually escape definitions, and most significantly when it comes to the question of selfhood. How do we recognize the soul's speech "amid the babble of inner voices," asks Hillman. "How do we know whether we are in the presence of a god, an angel, an archangel, a daimon, an archon, or a human soul?

> All souls have voice; all these souls speak. The speech of these many souls gives cause for the many psychologies and their differing languages. The multiplicity of psychologies, the fact that there are so many different "psychological points of view," among which we cannot decide "who is right," reflects the multiplicity of souls and the states of these souls. All are necessary; none is sufficient. There can never be a single all-encompassing psychology encompassing all the psyche until there can be that utopia where the psyche--a complex of every opposite--becomes one, whole, and simple.[22]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Melville seems to have been engaged in what Hillman would characterize as a reclamation of polytheistic consciousness from the limitations of a monotheistic age. In dramatic ways, he anticipates Hillman in his recognition of "the plurivocal speech of the soul."[23] Hillman, moroever, could be noting not only the state of the modern soul, but that of modern discourse, when he says that "ultimately the question of rhetoric in psychology is that of 'who is talking to whom.'"[24] Hillman's archetypal psychology, seen in its most fitting context as a visionary poetics, might therefore aptly complement those frameworks in which "polysemy," "heteroglossia," and "intersubjectivity" have found their place as identifying concepts in literary criticism. Bakhtin's dialogics, Lacan's vision of a "decentered self," and the aspectival realms of Derridean thought are also among those larger perspectives which might help illuminate the pluralism in Melville's writings.

We can probably attribute the emphasis on "multiplicity" and related topics in literary studies to the "balkanization" of academic discourse in recent years. Alexander Nehamas is one critic who has noted this contingency, and sees it issuing from the more general fragmentation affecting our culture. Nehamas has addressed the difficulty of imposing a single coherent meaning on a literary work, tracing the development of what he calls "critical pluralism."[25] Nehamas's claim that literary texts "can be given many equally acceptable, even though incompatible interpretations" might indicate, to some, cause for alarm.[26] Yet the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

assertion seems very much on a par with Hillman's acceptance of the variability of psychological perspectives. Hillman might be said to be defining the condition of the soul in a postmodern world, Nehamas, in a parallel fashion, the state of the agon in contemporary criticism.

The question looms: Did Melville also nascently state the condition of postmodern discourse, with its diversity of critical paths? In view of the forward-looking aspects of Melville's thought, such a question might not be too far out of line. Indeed, Melville had already lampooned the topic of indeterminate perspectives in the "Doubloon" chapter of *Moby-Dick*. Every interpretation of the coin's images involves a particular viewpoint, from Ahab's all-consuming egoism, to Starbuck's portending thoughts of doom, to Stubb's jokey astrologizing, and so on, down to the fractured idiocy of Pip. But Stubb provides the key when he takes out his Almanack and compares the Doubloon to a book. "The fact is," he says, "you books must know your places. You'll do to give us the bare words and facts, but we come in to supply the thoughts" (433), thus voicing a "proto-parody," as it were, of reader-response criticism. Pip puts the nail on this thought when he likens the gold coin to the ship's navel and remarks that the others "are all on fire to unscrew it. But, unscrew your navel, and what's the consequence?" (435) We needn't voice the scatological retort to the seaman's adage here, except to say that Melville would probably express his bemusement at the almost desperate competition among today's critics for a handhold on posterity.[27]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Melville probably did not foresee how vitally he would anticipate our era. But critics of all stripes have increasingly seen in Melville's key themes elements that foreshadow the concerns of postmodernism. Contemporary criticism offers a myriad of perspectives from which to view the heterogeneity of self, genre, and language that we find in Melville. But among the bewildering array of critical paths that avail themselves, Hillman's archetypal psychology affords a unique vantage in its insistence on a poetic basis of mind. This is an aspect of Hillman's thinking that I hope was successfully shown in relation to the rhetoric of "spirit and soul" in chapter three, as well as here, where I have elevated his theories to a kind of "deconstructive angelology." In both chapters, and throughout in this study, I have foregrounded the multiplicity of self to show how Melville's writings embody a forward-looking phenomenology of the kind that Hillman describes. Indeed, it may have been that very polytheistic cast of thought that led D. H. Lawrence to call Melville "a futurist before futurism found paint." And while Lawrence was citing a movement specific to his own times, it is in that spirit that Melville continues to speak to us. It is in a similar light that Melville joins Nietzsche, and in which I also believe he foreshadows Hillman, by announcing the future in polytheism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1]Quoted by Neil Hertz in The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985) 97.

[2]Ralph Maud, "Archetypal Depth Criticism and Melville," College English, 45 (7) 1983, 695.

[3]James Hillman, Archetypal Psychology: A Brief Account (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985) 54.

[4]Henry A. Murray, "Introduction to Pierre," in Endeavors in Psychology: Selections fom the Personology of Henry A. Murray, ed. Edwin S. Schneidman (New York: Harper and Row, 1981) 422-23.

[5]Maud, 699-700.

[6]Martin Bickman, American Romantic Psychology (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988) 171-74.

[7]Ibid. 101 ff.

[8]Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology 229.

[9]Andrew Samuels, Jung and the Post-Jungians (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1985) 241 ff.

[10]Revisioning Psychology 170.

[11]Ibid. 171.

[12]Archetypal Psychology 35.

[13]Re-Visioning Psychology 35.

[14]Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[15]C. G. Jung, Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX (Princeton Univ. Press, 1959) 268.

[16]Hillman, Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985), p. 159.

[17]Re-Visioning Psychology 35.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Hillman, "The Fiction of a Case History: A Round," in Religion as Story, ed. James B. Wiggins (New York: Harper and Row, 1975) 160-61.

[21]Re-Visioning Psychology 41.

[22]The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1972) 167.

[23]Paul Kugler, The Alchemy of Discourse: An Archetypal Approach to Language (Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1982) 98.

[24]Re-Visioning Psychology 216.

[25]Alexander Nehamas, "The Postulated Author: Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal," Critical Inquiry, Autumn (1981) 133.

[26]Ibid.

[27]With equally desperate apologies to Melville for the pun. (Uninitiated readers are referred to the conclusion of the "Cetology" chapter in Moby-Dick.)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Six

The 'Gnostic' Melville:

Demiurgic Art and the Problem of Selfhood

Herman Melville says "No! in thunder" to imprisoning norms and in that nay-saying gives us a literature that transcends words and even declares war on itself.[1] Something of the Gnostic sense inheres in Melville's revisionary aesthetics: a distrust of creation and a perception that all reality tricks itself out in illusions and disguises, as well as an implicit notion that selfhood can be realized through a process of "gnosis" or coming to knowledge of the spark of the Godhead within. This is the larger and underlying enterprise of Melville's major novels, Mardi, Moby-Dick and Pierre, the three works which most dramatically inscribe his unfolding as a literary artist. As revelations of the quest for selfhood, these novels depict the reclamation of symbolic thought from the confining Calvinist ethos and its appropriation into a new dispensation of internally realized communion with images. Pierre, the culminating novel in Melville's trilogy of selfhood, archetypally reflects the schisms of the Christian Zeitgeist and the ensuing breakdown of faith in self and world of its major protagonist. In that it is the most inwardly revealing of the three novels, it also presages Melville's immersion in what can only be called an increasingly Gnostic vision of humanity.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Feeding Melville's sense of a fragmenting Western ethos were the disintegrative forces inherent in the ancient creeds he drew on for models of thought: Manicheanism, Zoroastrianism and Gnosticism. Of almost equal importance in Melville's leanings toward dualism and his abreaction to Calvinism were Hindu myths, Polynesian lore and other forms of Oriental belief. But Gnosticism, outside of its exclusive treatment by William Dillingham, Thomas Vargish, William Braswell, and a handful of other critics, still calls for further study, both as an important influence and as a major informing principle in Melville's works.[2] It is the purpose of this chapter to cast a larger framework around what can only be called Melville's increasingly "Gnostic" stance toward the world and creation, and, in the light of Gnostic thought, his highly ambiguous formulations concerning both identity and word.

In Gnosticism's inversions of precepts carried by the weight of centuries of Christian dogma, Melville found appropriate vessels into which his loss of faith could pour itself and find expression. Ishmael, Ahab, Bartleby, Israel Potter, Hunilla of "The Encantadas," the "lamb-like mute" of <u>The Confidence-Man</u>, and so many other "Isolatoes" of the Melvillean <u>ouevre</u>, seem to embody a Gnostic sense of life as a condition of exile and estrangement from the source of things, while also figuring forth a nascent knowledge of or connection with the world of truth. Ishmael's "doubts" and "intuitions," which make him at times "neither

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

believer nor infidel" (M-D 374), bespeak a condition of gnosis, especially in the secular sense Harold Bloom has defined as a "timeless knowing" available to thinkers not persuaded by orthodoxy or mindless pseudo-transcendentalisms while knowing themselves as "questers for God."[3]

Though varying in certain details, the Gnostic myths known to Melville were in basic agreement about the nature of the universe. Gnosticism posited a cosmos born into corruption by a usurping Demiurge and a host of lesser powers ignorant of their own limitations and the ultimate nature of reality. Its doctrines encouraged a defiant or warlike stance toward the fallen aspects of the visible world, while at the same time preserving the myth of an unknowable Father beyond the realm of conception or thought. The fall into fragmentation and darkness was central to Gnostic cosmogeny, and for Gnosticism's adherents, knowledge of that fallenness was the means to oneness with the spark of the Godhead within.

We know from specific allusions in his works that Gnosticism had a privileged place in Melville's imagination, and that its mysteries attracted and fascinated him throughout his writing career. Melville, in fact, seems to reiterate, both in his lived sense of authorial selfhood, and in the various guises through which that selfhood finds expression, the very drama of Gnostic creation. Indeed, he almost certainly had the notion of a demiurgic fall in mind when he wrote to Nathaniel Hawthorne:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"I feel that the Godhead is broken up, like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces" (Co 212).

Melville's aesthetics of inwardness, realized most acutely in the figures of Ishmael and Ahab in Moby-Dick, bridge the chasm from Wordsworthian acceptance to Gnostic rebellion: Countering Ishmael's "I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy" (M-D 389), is Ahab's maddened cry: "I now know that thy right worship is defiance" (507). Indeed, the novel's shifting of perspective, from Ishmael to Ahab, and then to a splintering of voices wherein chapters of dramatic form prevail, offers a paradigm of the Gnostic degenerative fall. Ishmael's narrative self is all but eclipsed following his near-topple from the mast-head, and by Ahab's subsequent emergence onto the scene (139ff). Ahab figures in this light as a self-asserting Demiurge: "Who's over me? Truth hath no confines," he rails to the crew in "The Quarter-Deck" (164). Narration is nowhere in evidence in succeeding chapters as, initially, Ahab's voice arises in the form of a soliloquoy, and is then followed in turn by those of Starbuck, Stubb, and all the rest of the crew. With respect to Ishmael's fragmenting narrative authority, the novel warps itself out of form to become something "other," namely a drama more suited to the reign of discreet and individual identities. But the giving over to a free interplay of the crewmen's voices at this stage of the narrative belies the grimmer reality of their subjugation. The Dionysiac chapter "Midnight, Forecastle," in fact, sets forth a Gnostic implosion to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

darkness and captivity wherein the crew is subsumed to Ahab's alienated will. Only Starbuck is aware of the true nature of his, and the crew's, state. His interior monologue in "Dusk" bespeaks the gnosis through which he sees himself tied to Ahab by "the ineffable thing," and with a cable he has no knife to cut (169). Indeed, even after the recovery of narrative voice in the "Moby Dick" and "Whiteness of the Whale" chapters that follow, Ishmael's vision has darkened as well, if but momentarily, to an Ahabian and Gnostic conception of the world. He remarks that "the invisible spheres were formed in fright," and that all visible hues of earthly life "are but subtle deceits" (195). Ishmael's truth-seeking, overshadowed by Ahab's usurping quest, increasingly points to a deific principle that is inherently flawed, fractured, or given to less than godly motives and ideals.

In his apostrophe to the burning mast-heads in the "Candles" chapter, Ahab asserts the primacy of his selfhood in the midst of "the personified impersonal" and enunciates a startlingly Gnostic vision of creation. With respect to Ishmael's earlier thoughts on tracing the genealogies of mortal misery to "the sourceless primogenitures of the gods" (464), Ahab's address to the corpusant fires takes on added Gnostic resonance. "A personality stands here," cries Ahab, "....the queenly personality lives in me, and feels her royal rights" (507), a possible allusion to Sophia, the fallen spirit of wisdom in the Gnostic mythos.[4] Valentinian Gnosticism sees Sophia as the last of a series of Aeons

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

emanating from an unknown and alien Father who, through Error, has engendered oblivion, terror and anguish in the pre-existent void that becomes the cosmos. Out of Sophia's grief and passion in aspiring to approach the Godhead, the Demiurge is born, who in turn creates the world. At one and the same time Ahab sees the white balls of flame as emblems of a demiurgic will and voices a desire to become one with them. For the "incommunicable riddle" of their genealogy is his also:

> Thou knowest not how came ye, hence callest thyself unbegotten, certainly knowest not thy beginning, hence callest thyself unbegun. I know that of me, which thou knowest not of thyself, oh, thou omnipotent. There is some unsuffusing thing beyond thee, thou clear spirit, to whom all thy eternity is but time, and all thy creativeness mechanical. (508)

In his "Candles" speech, Ahab seems the embodiment of the very mysteries he seeks to fathom. His words, moreover, uncannily echo those of the fallen souls in Gnostic scripture recorded by Iraneus in his Adversus haereses, a tract against Gnosticism written in the second century C. E. As Iraneus relates it, the fallen souls were required to address the Demiurge in the following manner:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> I am a precious vessel, worthier than the feminine creature who made you. Your mother knows not her origin, but I know myself; I know whence I come, and I call upon the incorruptible Sophia who is in the Father, who is also the Mother of your mother and who has neither father nor husband. That which has made you, knowing not who was its mother and believing itself alone to exist, this is a power both male and female, and it is the Mother of this that I invoke![5]

The Gnostic drama of "self-splitting" is analogous as well to the displacement of narration informing the earlier _Mardi_, the novel laying the groundwork for _Moby-Dick_. The narrator's assumed identity of the Mardian demigod Taji suggests a demiurgic inflation in the extreme, and anticipates the splintering of his narrating voice into those of a host of quasi-mythic personae later in the novel. The Mardian pattern closely replicates a Gnostic fall from oneness into multiplicity, and provides a model for the dispersing visions of selfhood in _Moby-Dick_ and _Pierre_. Earlier in this study we viewed this self-splitting in the light of Melville's fragmenting authorial identity, and in the previous chapter in relation to polytheism. _Mardi_, however, enunciates the fact of lapsed or forgotten selfhood in the most evidently Gnostic terms. Babbalanja, in fact, draws a marked distinction between pantheism and gnosis when he counters Mohi's naive faith in a plurality of gods:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> "if this be so, Braid-Beard," said Babbalanja, "our inmost thoughts are overheard; but not by eaves-droppers. However, my lord, these gods to whom he alludes, merely belong to the semi-intelligibles, the divided unities in unity, this side of the First Adyta." (340)

Babbalanja's words are only half-intelligible to his listeners. Even so, he seems to be hinting at a universe ruled by less than supreme powers, what the various Gnostic teachings referred to as Archons, or Aeons. His cryptic thoughts point to an emanationism that is qualitatively Gnostic, and to a hiddenness of knowledge that cannot be appropriated in words.

The narrational indirections in _Mardi_, _Moby-Dick_ and _Pierre_ replicate just such a Gnostic falling off from, and recovery of, knowledge. Loss of self and the realization of the futility of words become, in this respect, the necessary angels of Melville's authorial gnosis. As we noted in previous chapters, the fact of identity-loss in all three of these novels is contingent upon the encounter with the feminine. In many Gnostic myths the emergence of the feminine Aeon often signals a further emanatory process, or a fall into androgynous creation. Common to Gnostic thought, moreover, is the notion of the primordial or invisible Father, whose Thought becomes the Mother, who in turn falls into matter in various disguises and has to be rescued.[6] These aspects

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

also suggest analogies to the absconded-father theme that we frequently find in Melville, as well as to the sexual ambiguity that pervades his writings. But most importantly, they underscore dramatically the ways in which Melville reveals to us the impalpability of words.

The immersion into the deep symbolic art of Mardi occurs following the narrator's slaying of the father-figure priest Aleema, and his rescue of the captive Yillah in Chapter 40. The pure white maiden, with no memory of her genealogy, may be said to symbolize in the Gnostic sense aspects of fallen Father-thought, especially in regard to her association with light. But Yillah soon disappears and is displaced by the dark-haired priestess Hautia who, along with her three flower-bearing nymphs, shadows Taji as he searches the Mardian isles in pursuit of his missing feminine counterpart. Viewed in the light of the descent into the self--"It is the world of mind, wherein the wanderer may gaze round, with more of wonder than Balboa's band roving through the golden Aztec glades" (M 557)--Taji might be said to acting, like Ahab, out of the imperative of the "queenly personality" within, or the "Sophia" aspects of his being. The guilt over his slaying of Aleema that plagues Taji throughout his search, and the splintering of his narrational voice into the fourfold dialogues of Mardian demigod, philosopher, historian and poet, suggest a privileging of father-consciousness symbolizing the deeper gnosis impelling Melville to write the book: the yearning for reconciliation with the Father, or with the Godhead of his own selfhood.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yet for all its suggestiveness as a shaping influence, Melville's only direct reference to Gnosticism in Mardi comes in the form of parody. And while some might see this as evidence of Melville's disavowal of Gnostic thought, to view it wholly in that light is to overlook a very important set of facts. Until the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codexes in 1947, the Western World's access to Gnostic teachings was limited to only a scattering of Coptic manuscripts and other surviving texts. Most of the available information on the Gnostics had been passed on in the writings of Christian authors who sought to repudiate or ridicule their beliefs. Origen, Tertullian and Irenaeus were among the defenders of canonical teaching in the early Christian centuries whose tracts not only scorned, but often satirized, aspects of Gnostic mythology. These writers often resorted to an inspired sarcasm, and took the Gnostics to task for their elaborate cosmologies.

As nearly as we can tell from his reading in Pierre Bayle and other sources, Melville did come across many of these writings.[7] And it is in this spirit that Babbalanja upbraids the poet Yoomy for a lack of ultimate and "inexhaustible meaning" in one of his verses, for a dearth of "things occult, ineffable, and sublime":

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> "I mistrust thee, minstrel! that thou hast not yet been impregnated by the arcane mysteries; that thou dost not sufficiently ponder on the Adyta, the Monads, and the Hyparxes; the Dianoias, the Unical Hypostases, the Gnostic powers of the Physical Essence, and the Supermundane and Pleromatic Triads; to say nothing of the Abstract Noumenons."
>
> ***
>
> "Ah!" sighed Babbalanja, turning, "how little they ween of the Rudimental Quincunxes, and the Hecatic Spherula!" (561)

Mardi is rife with satirical diatribes against hierarchical knowledge, often targeting the very language of such systems of thought. This is the case in chapter 171, where the island-sage Doxodox is described as having penetrated, "from the zoned, to the unzoned principles," to a knowledge of the "ungenerated essences" (562-63). Of all Mardians, Doxodox is said to comprehend "those arcane combinations, whereby to drag to day the most deftly hidden things." Again, it is the philosopher Babbalanja who seeks instruction in the sage's impenetrable dialectics of "Tetrads; Pentads; Hexads; Heptads; Ogdoads," "Quadammodtotatives," and "Dicibles" (562).

These kinds of abstrusities are brought scathingly to light by Irenaeus in a parody of Valentinian Gnosticism in his Adversus haereses.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Among the passages that may have served as model for Melville's traducing of Gnostic thought in Mardi is the following:

> There is a certain royal pro-principle, pro-intelligible, pro-denuded of substance, a pro-rotundity. With this principle dwells a Virtue that I call Cucurbitacy. With this Cucurbitacy is a virtue which, for its part, I call Absolutely-empty, which make but one, have emanated without emanating a fruit visible on all sides, edible and savory, a fruit which language names Gourd. With this Gourd there is a virtue of the same power as itself which I also call Melon. These virtues: Curcurbitacy and Absolutely-empty, Gourd and Melon, have emanated the whole multitude of the raving melons of Valentine....[8]

Those looking for yet uncovered sources of Melville's iconoclasm might do well to seek them in the writings of the heresiologists. Indeed it is here that we may find some of the formative material that, along with Neoplatonism, helped to shape his anti-transcendentalist thinking. But while Melville often employs Gnostic imagery for satiric ends in Mardi--"the husk-inhusked meat in a nut; the innermost spark in a ruby; the juice-nested seed in a golden-rinded orange; the red royal stone in an effeminate peach; the insphered sphere of spheres" (240)--there is such an infusion of Gnostic thought in the book as to undercut the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ostensible aims of parody. The will to plenitude, multiplicity and introspection; the self-splitting; the archetypal engagement with the feminine; the paeans to ineffability; ultimately the defiant spirit in which the novel seems to have been written: all favor a view of Melville's strong identification with the spirit, if not the essence, of Gnostic thought. In this light Melville, though bending his satire to more conscious and subversive ends, puts himself somewhat in the company of the Church fathers who, while railing against the Gnostics, became the most import expositors of a cosmology at odds with the prevailing ethos.

Melville carries this hidden project through in the writing of Moby-Dick and Pierre, and beyond into the darker metaphysical themes of his later works. Behind all of his writings lurks that sense of incompletion of selfhood which so strongly bespeaks a falling off from oneness or an infelt memory of primal wholeness. Pierre Glendinning's dark and self-generating gnosis in Pierre recapitulates the Mardian pattern: it is through his encounter with the feminine, reflected in the split soul-images of Lucy and Isabel, that Pierre's rescue mission becomes, in its inmost sense, a search for communion which also places him in conflict with the absconded father. And if we can accept Godhead as being synonymous with self, as Melville often encourages us to do, then we may be able to see in Pierre another replication of the Gnostic fall of the Godhead from within.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In passages very suggestive of Gnostic thought, we read that Pierre felt deeply lurking within himself "a divine unidentifiableness, that owned no earthly kith or kin" (P 89); that his allegiance to Isabel is owing to "the unsuppressable and unmistakable cry of the godhead through her soul, commanding [him] to fly to her, and do his highest and most glorious duty in the world" (174), and that he is impelled to a vision of the world consisting more and more of "superinduced superficies" (285): a world that is in the truest Gnostic sense but a "husk," a dead and thrown-off thing, a corpse. But even in this gnosis of darkness of death, there is liberation. It is the hard-won liberation of defiance from what Valentinus called the "fruit of error":

> ....There now, do you see the soul. In its germ on all sides it is closely folded by the world, as the husk folds the tenderest fruit; then it is born from the world-husk, but still outwardly clings to it; --still clamors for the support of its mother the world, and its father the Deity. But it shall yet learn to stand independent, though not without many a bitter wail, and many a bitter fall. (296)[9]

Aside from its parodic elements here, and much more ostensibly in Mardi, the trope is a familiar one to readers of Melville, recalling his soulful confession to Hawthorne in a letter of 1851 that he had come "to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the inmost leaf of the bulb, and that shortly the flower must fall to the mould" (Co 193). The figure of the seed bearing the fruit which deadens into the world is common to Gnostic scripture, and one that fittingly applies to the Melvillean theme of life as a superannuated sojourn.[10]

The soul's journey in Pierre is thus depicted as a deadening descent into imprisonment within matter. Symbolic markers in this fall into materiality are Pierre's encounter with the Memnon, or "Terror," Stone (P 131-36); his descent into the brick-and-mortar labyrinth of the city beginning in Book XVI, and his dream, in the novel's concluding pages, of Enceladus, the mythical giant half-buried in the earth by a wrathful Zeus (342-47). The preponderance of stone symbolism in Pierre and its blending with mythical motifs of bondage; the novel's eponymous title (the French word pierre translates to "stone"), and the book's dedication to Mount Greylock, strongly impart a momentum toward captivity within matter that is so central a feature of Gnostic myth. Indeed, Pierre's mortal end occurs within the hard, obdurate and stony confinement of his prison cell.

The brute indifference of material fate in the face of self-assertion is a characteristically Gnostic theme, and one that Melville returned to in "Fragments of a Lost Gnostic Poem of the Twelfth Century," a two-stanza composition that can almost serve as an epigraph for Pierre. The family is seen in these lines as a paradigm of the will to selfhood, and in turn as the manifestation of a world constituted and sanctioned by

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a ruling patriarchal ethos. It is an ethos with which the Gnostic vision found itself everywhere in contention and holding up to the light of scrutiny.

> Found a family, build a state,
> The pledged event is still the same:
> Matter in end will never abate
> His ancient, brutal claim.
>
> Indolence is heaven's ally here,
> And energy the child of hell:
> The Good Man pouring from his pitcher clear,
> But brims the poisoned well. (SP 145)

It is the second stanza, especially, which captures the moral ambiguity and ironies of ethical choice confronting Pierre; for it was the Gnostics' inversion of moral precept, chiefly, which brought the scorn of the Church fathers upon them during the early Christian centuries and which led to their eventual demise. And for Melville, writing in the nineteenth century, that very subversive stance inherent in the Gnostic vision almost certainly had to have been a source of encouragement for him in his own war with the fathers and with the prevailing moral order of his times.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

If Mardi, and a Voyage Thither most closely suggests analogies with Gnostic emmanation myth, then Pierre must be said to be that work of Melville's--with the exception of Clarel--which most starkly dramatizes, in the Gnostic scheme of things, the condition of exilic wandering. It is the book wherein the weight of the fall and the vastness of the separation between spirit and matter are most starkly realized. Yet the "saving knowledge" that came out of the writing of Pierre became for Melville the prima materia of his redemption as artist. As stated earlier in this study, Pierre is the alchemical nigredo of Melville's journey as author, his deepest encounter with the shadow-aspects of selfhood. Moreover, Pierre's invocation to the "Mute Massiveness" of the Memnon Stone (P 134); his outcry to the unanswering "stony roofs, and seven-fold stony skies" (360), and the book's effusive meditations on silence--"Silence is the general consecration of the universe....Silence is the only Voice of our God" (204)--find their analogues in Gnosticism's celebration of the Ineffable. In fact, it is Melville's attempt to enunciate the unspeakable, more than anything, which makes Pierre, or the Ambiguities his greatest paean to silence, and which brings the novel, once more, significantly into line with Gnostic cosmology.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The writing of _Pierre_ was a crucial stage in the gnosis that only seemed to intensify for Melville throughout his writing life. Continuing Gnostic resonances and allusions in later works, notably in _Clarel_, _Timoleon_ and _Billy Budd_, suggest this to be the case. In its attempt to articulate silence, _Pierre_ is the book wherein Melville most agonizingly pits himself against his world, his selfhood, and the very agencies of his own creative will. Words and language become in this regard the very dross that binds him in the pursuit of eternal verities that must remain forever voiceless. The drama of an alien god caught up in the illusoriness of his own creation is key, I think, to the view of Melville as a defiant artisan of words. If selfhood and existence are seen in the Gnostic sense as being illusory, then any gained or achieved sense of identity must predicate itself on elements that are largely impalpable and fictive. This notion of the illusory, which informed many of the Gnostic sects prevalent in Alexandrian Egypt in the first and second centuries C. E., seems to have vast implications for Melville's lifelong fascination with the ineffable, symbolic silence and the futility of words. It also figures suggestively in Melville's movement, beyond the largely symbolic project that marked his earlier novels, to the darker metaphysics of the _Piazza Tales_, _The Confidence-Man_ and _Clarel_, and to the infusion in those works of an increasingly self-reflexive irony.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

All of these considerations give us a Melville who looms much larger than the mere "cabbalistic grubber in obscure philosophies" that R. W. B. Lewis once called him.[11] This is so because Melville's works are so much an inscription of his soul-history, a means to inner confrontation and struggle with the angel of his selfhood, the record of a life journey that another critic, Merlin Bowen, has so aptly named "The Long Encounter."[12] By placing Melville within the contexts of Gnostic thought, I have tried to round out the larger discussion of ineffability and identity in the pages of this study. It is probably fitting, therefore, to end on a pondering note of "Moreover: if--" (*P* 215), in that this dissertation seems only the prologue to further explorations of selfhood and word beyond *Mardi*, *Moby-Dick* and *Pierre*. Still, I hope that what I have outlined, not only here but throughout this study, paves the way for a closer relation to Melville's deepfelt sense of gnosis, and the vision of truth he strove to enunciate within the confines of a fallen, demiurgic world.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1]"There is the grand truth about Nathaniel Hawthorne. He says NO! in thunder; but the Devil cannot make him says *yes*." I have used the phrase in the above context because it seems obvious that Melville, in praising the integrity of Hawthorne's genius, was also speaking to that selfsame quality within himself. Melville to Hawthorne, [16 April?] 1851 (*Co* 186).

[2]William B. Dillingham, *Melville's Later Novels* (Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1982); William Braswell, *Melville's Religious Thought: An Essay in Interpretation* (Durham: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1943) 18, 44, 52, 62, 63, 121; Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Melville's Reading: Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Columbia, S. C.: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1982) 51, 70; Sealts, *Herman Melville's Reading in Ancient Philosophy* (Yale Univ. Doctoral Dissertation, 1942, Order 69-16,939) 145, 145-47; Thomas Vargish, "Gnostic *Mythos* in *Moby-Dick*," *PMLA* LXXXI (June 1966) 272-277.

[3]Harold Bloom, *Agon: Towards a Theory of Revisionism* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982) 4.

[4]Vargish 274.

[5]Jean Doresse, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics: An Introduction to the Gnostic Coptic Manuscripts Discovered at Chenoboskion* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1986) 30.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[6]Ibid. 61-62.

[7]Sealts 51-52, 70.

[8]Doresse 32.

[9]"In Valentinus' text, the dominant factor in the origin of the world is no longer Illusion but Error, an Error emanating from the unknown and alien Father and in its turn engendering Oblivion, Anguish and Terror in the immense void of the universe in gestation. It is from Them that we originate, we carry Them within us, and that is why Valentinus calls this world, which is the fruit of Error, Oblivion, Anguish, and Terror, the world of Deficiency." Jacques Lacarriere, The Gnostics, trans. Nina Rootes (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1989) 67.

[10]Doresse 234; Also see Kurt Rudolph, Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism, trans. Robert McLachlan Wilson (New York: Harper and Row, 1987) 109.

[11]R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1955) 130.

[12]Merlin Bowen, The Long Encounter: Self and Experience in the Writings of Herman Melville (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bibliography

Abel, Darrell. "Who Keeps His Quiet State." Extracts, Melville Society, no. 20, June 1974.

Adams, Michael Vannoy. "Deconstructive Philosophy and Imaginal Psychology: Comparative Perspectives on Jacques Derrida and James Hillman." In Jungian Literary Criticism. Ed. Richard P. Sugg. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1992.

Adler, Joyce Sparer. War in Melville's Imagination. New York: New York Univ. Press, 1981.

---. "The Imagination and Melville's Endless Probe for Relation." American Transcendental Quarterly 19 (1973) 37-42.

Arac, Jonathan. Commissioned Spirits: The Shaping of Social Motion in Dickens, Carlyle, Melville, and Hawthorne. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989.

Babcock, C. M. "The Vocabulary of Moby-Dick." American Studies, 28 (May 1952) 99-101.

Bachelard, Gaston. On Poetic Imagination and Reverie: Selections from Gaston Bachelard. Trans. Colette Gaudin. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1987.

---. The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos. Trans. Daniel Russell. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Baird, James. Ishmael: A Study of the Symbolic Mode in Primitivism. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1956.

Baym, Nina. "Melville's Quarrel with Fiction." PMLA 94 (1979) 909-23.

Beaver, Harold. "Mardi: A Sum of Inconsistencies." In Herman Melville: Reassessments. Ed. A Robert Lee. London: Vision Press, 1984, 28-40.

Bell, Millicent. "Pierre Bayle and Moby-Dick." PMLA LXVI (September 1951) 626-48.

Belloc, Hillaire. The Silence of the Sea, and Other Essays. London: Cassell and Company, 1941.

Bercovitch, Sacvan. The Rites of Assent: Transformations in the Symbolic Construction of America. New York: Routledge, 1993.

---, and Myra Jehlen, eds. Ideology and Classic American Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986.

Bersani, Leo. The Culture of Redemption. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990.

---. A Future for Astyanax. Boston: Little Brown, 1976.

Bickman, Martin. American Romantic Psychology: Emerson, Poe, Whitman, Dickinson, Melville. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988.

Bodkin, Maud. Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1934.

Boone, Joseph Allen. Tradition Counter Tradition: Love and the Form of Fiction. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bowen, Merlin. The Long Encounter: Self and Experience in the Writings of Herman Melville. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960.

Branch, G. Watson, ed. Melville: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974.

Braswell, William. Melville's Religious Thought: An Essay in Interpretation. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1943.

---. "A Note on 'The Anatomy of Melville's Fame.'" American Literature 5 (January 1934) 360.

Brodhead, Richard H. Hawthorne, Melville, and the Novel. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973.

Brodtkorb, Paul Jr. Ishmael's White World: A Phenomenological Reading of Moby-Dick. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1965.

Brown, Norman O. Love's Body. New York: Random House, 1966.

Bryant, John. Melville Dissertations, 1924-1980. The Melville Society. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983.

Budick, Sanford, and Wolfgang Iser, eds. Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989.

Campbell, Marie. "A Quiet Crusade: Melville's Tales of the Fifties." American Transcendental Quarterly 7 (Summer 1970) 8-12.

Carlyle, Thomas. Sartor Resartus. Eds. Kerry McSweeney and Peter Sabor. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Casey, Edward S. Spirit and Soul: Essays in Philosophical Psychology. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1991.

Cassirer, Ernst. Language and Myth. Trans. Susanne K. Langer. New York: Harper, 1946.

Chai, Leon. The Romantic Foundations of the American Renaissance Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1987.

Chase, Richard. The American Novel and its Tradition. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1957.

Cohen, Hennig, ed. Selected Poems of Herman Melville. New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 1991.

---. Forward to That Lonely Game: Melville, **Mardi**, and the Almanac. Maxine Moore. Columbia Mo.: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1975, ix-xxv.

Cowan, Bainard. Exiled Waters: Moby-Dick and the Crisis of Allegory. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1982.

Curl, Vega. Pasteboard Masks: Fact as Spiritual Symbol in the Novels of Hawthorne and Melville. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1931.

Dauber, Kenneth. The Idea of Authorship in America: Democratic Poetics from Franklin to Melville. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

D'Avanzo, Mario. "Ahab, the Grecian Pantheon and Shelley's Prometheus Unbound." Books at Brown 24 (1971) 19-44.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Davis, Merrell R. Melville's Mardi: A Chartless Voyage. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1952.

De Quincey, Thomas. Confessions of an English Opium Eater. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1971.

Derrida, Jacques. Margins of Philosophy. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982.

Dillingham, William B. Melville's Later Novels. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1982.

---. An Artist in the Rigging: The Early Works of Herman Melville. Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1972.

Doresse, Jean. The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics: An Introduction to the Gnostic Coptic Manuscripts Discovered at Chenoboskion. Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions Int'l., 1986.

Dryden, Edgar A. Melville's Thematics of Form: The Great Art of Telling the Truth. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1968.

Edinger, Edward F. Melville's Moby-Dick: A Jungian Commentary. New York: New Directions, 1978.

Elliot, Emory. "Art, Religion, and the Problem of Authority in Pierre." In Ideology and Classic American Literature. Eds. Sacvan Bercovitch and Myra Jehlen. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986, 337-51.

Feidelson, Charles, Jr. Symbolism and American Literature. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1953.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fiedler, Leslie A. Love and Death in the American Novel. New York: Stein and Day, 1960.

Fiess, Edward. "Melville as a Reader and Student of Byron." American Literature XXIV (1952) 186-194.

Finkelstein, Dorothee Metlitsky. Melville's Orienda. New York: Octagon Books, 1971.

Forsythe, Robert. Introduction to Melville's Pierre. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930, xxviii-xxxvii.

Foucault, Michel. "Dream, Imagination and Existence: An Introduction to Ludwig Binswanger's 'Dream and Existence.'" Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry XIX 1 (1984-85) 31-78.

Franklin, H. Bruce. The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1963.

Fuller, Margaret. Margaret Fuller: Essays on American Life and Letters. Ed. Joel Myerson. New Haven: College and Univ. Press, 1978.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays. Ed. Robert Bernasconi. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986.

Greenberg, Robert M. Splintered Worlds: Fragmentation and the Ideal of Diversity in the Works of Emerson, Melville, Whitman, and Dickinson. Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 1993.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Grenberg, Bruce L. Some Other World to Find: Quest and Negation in the Works of Herman Melville. Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Chigago Press, 1989.

---. Thomas Carlyle and Herman Melville: Parallels, Obliques, and Perpendiculars. Doctoral dissertation. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1963. 351 pp. Order 64-1851.

Guetti, James. The Limits of Metaphor: A Study of Melville, Conrad, and Faulkner. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967.

Harris, Wilson. The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983.

Hassan, Ihab. The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature. 2nd ed. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1982.

Hawkins, Peter S., and Anne Howland Schotter, eds. Ineffability: Naming the Unnamable from Dante to Beckett. New York: AMS Press, 1984.

Herbert, Thomas Walter, Jr. "Calvinism and Cosmic Evil in Moby-Dick." PMLA 84 (October 1969) 1613-1619.

Herford, Walter. "The Efficacy of the Word, the Futility of Words: Whitman's 'Reconciliation' and Melville's 'Magnanimity Baffled.'" Walt Whitman Review 27 (1981) 150-55.

Hertz, Neil. The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hillman, James. A Blue Fire: Selected Writings by James Hillman. New York: Harper, 1989.

---. Suicide and the Soul. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988.

---. Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985.

---. Inter Views: Conversations with Laura Pozzo on Psychotherapy, Biography, Love, Soul, Dreams, Work, Imagination, and the State of Culture. New York: Harper, 1983.

---. Healing Fiction. Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Press, 1983.

---. Archetypal Psychology: A Brief Account. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1983.

---. Re-Visioning Psychology. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

---. The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Hillway, Tyrus. "Taji's Quest for Certainty." American Literature 18 (1946) 27-34.

Homans, George C. "The Dark Angel: The Tragedy of Herman Melville." New England Quarterly 5 (1932) 699-730.

Howard, Leon, Herman Melville: A Biography. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967.

Irwin, John T. American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1983.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Jonas, Hans. The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity. 2nd ed. revised. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.

Jung, C. G. Mandala Symbolism. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. CW Vol. 9 part i. Bollingen Series XX. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972.

---. Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. CW Vol. 14. Bollingen Series XX. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970.

---. Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. Collected Works. Vol. 9 part ii. Bollingen Series XX. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959.

Kahler, Erich. The Inward Turn of Narrative. Trans. Richard and Clara Winston. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1973.

Kirsch, James. "The Problem of Dictatorship as Represented in Moby-Dick." In Current Trends in Analytical Psychology. London: Tavistock Publications, 1959, 261-74.

Kugler, Paul K. "Jacques Lacan: Postmodern Depth Psychology and the Birth of the Self-Reflexive Subject." In The Book of the Self: Person, Pretext, and Process. Eds. Polly Young-Eisendrath and James A. Hall. New York: New York Univ. Press, 1987, 173-84.

---. The Alchemy of Discourse: An Archetypal Approach to Language. Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1982.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lacarriere, Jacques. The Gnostics. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1989.

Lawrence, D. H. Studies in Classic American Literature. New York: Viking, 1961.

Lebowitz, Alan. Progress into Silence: A Study of Melville's Heroes. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 1970.

Leverenz, David. Manhood in the American Renaissance. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1989.

Lewis, R. W. B. The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century. Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1955.

Leyda, Jay. The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville. 2 vols. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1951; rpt. with additions, New York: Gordian, 1969.

Martin, Robert K. Hero, Captain, and Stranger: Male Friendship, Social Critique, and Literary Form in the Sea Novels of Herman Melville. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1986.

Mason, Ronald Charles. The Spirit Above the Dust: A Study of Herman Melville. London: J. Lehman, 1951.

Matthiessen, F. O. American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1941.

Maud, Ralph. "Archetypal Depth Psychology and Melville." College English 45 (7) 1983, 695-704.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

McCall, Dan. The Silence of Bartleby. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1989.

McCarthy, Paul. The Twisted Mind: Madness in Herman Melville's Fiction. Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1990.

The Melville Society. A Concordance to Melville's Moby-Dick. Eds. Hennig Cohen and James Calahan. 3 vols. Ann Arbor: Imprints Society, Microfilms Intl., 1978.

Metcalf, Eleanor. Herman Melville: Cycle and Epicycle. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953.

Milder, Robert. "'Nemo Contra Deum...': Melville and Goethe's 'Demonic.'" In Ruined Eden of the Present: Hawthorne, Melville and Poe: Critical Essays in honor of Darrel Abel. West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue Univ. Press, 1981, 205-44.

Miller, Edwin Haviland. Melville. New York: Persea Books, 1975.

Miller, Perry. The Raven and the Whale: The War of Words and Wits in the Era of Poe and Melville. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956.

Moore, Maxine. That Lonely Game: Melville, Mardi, and the Almanac. Columbia, Mo.: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1975.

Murray, Henry A. "In Nomine Diaboli"; "Vicissitudes of Creativity"; "Introduction to Pierre"; "Dead to the World: The Passions of Herman Melville." In Endeavors in Psychology: Selections from the Personology of Henry A. Murray. Ed. Edwin S. Shneidman. New York: Harper, 1981, 82-94; 312-30; 413-81; 498-517.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Myerson, Joel, and Arthur H. Miller, Jr. Melville Dissertations: An Annotated Directory. The Melville Society, 1972.

Nechas, J. W. "The Ambiguity of Word and Whale: The Negative Affix in Moby-Dick." College Literature 2 (1975) 198-225.

Nehamas, Alexander. "The Postulated Author: Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal." Critical Inquiry (Autumn 1981) 133-49.

Neumann, Erich. The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype. Trans. Ralph Manheim. Bollingen Series XLVII. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972.

---. The Origins and History of Consciousness. Trans. R. F. C. Hull. Bollingen Series XLII. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970.

Oates, Joyce Carol. "Melville and the Manichean Illusion." Texas Studies in Literature and Language 4 (Spring 1962) 117-29.

Olsen, Tillie. Silences. New York: Delacorte Press, 1978.

Olson, Charles. Call Me Ishmael. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1947.

Ong, Walter J., S. J. The Presence of the Word: Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967.

Pagels, Elaine. The Gnostic Gospels. New York: Random House, 1979.

Parker, Hershel. "Why Pierre Went Wrong." Studies in the Novel VIII (Spring 1976) 7-23.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

---. "Dead Letters and Melville's Bartleby." Resources in American Literary Studies 4 (1974) 90-99.

---, and Harrison Hayford, eds. Moby-Dick as Doubloon: Essays and Extracts (1851-1970) New York: W. W. Norton, 1970.

---. The Recognition of Melville. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1967.

Percival, M. O. A Reading of Moby-Dick. Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1950.

Pinsker, Sanford. "'Bartleby the Scrivener': Language as Wall." College Literature 2 (1975) 17-27.

Poirier, Richard. The Renewal of Literature: Emersonian Reflections. New York: Random House, 1987.

Pops, Martin L. The Melville Archetype. Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 1970.

Purcell, J. M. "Melville's Contribution to English." PMLA 56 (1941) 797-808.

Reynolds, David S. Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988.

Riegel, O. W. "The Anatomy of Melville's Fame." American Literature 3 (January 1934) 360.

Robinson, Forrest G. Love's Story Told: A Life of Henry A. Murray. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Rogin, Michael Paul. Subversive Genealogy: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983.

Roper, Gordon Herbert. An Index of Melville's Mardi, Moby-Dick, Pierre and Billy Budd. Part of thesis, Ph.D., Univ. of Chicago, 1944.

Roppen, Georg. "Melville's Sea, Shoreless, Indefinite as God." Americana Norvegica 4 (1973) 123-36.

Rudolph, Kurt. Gnosis: The Nature and the History of Gnosticism. Trans. Robert MacLachlan Wilson. New York: Harper and Row, 1987.

Scharfstein, Ben-Ami. Ineffability: The Failure of Words in Philosophy and Religion. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Sealts, Merton M., Jr. Melville's Reading: Revised and Enlarged Edition. Columbia, S. C.: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1988.

---. "Melville's Neoplatonic Originals." Modern Language Notes 67 (February 1952) 80-86.

---. Herman Melville's Reading in Ancient Philosophy. Doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1942. 237 pp. Order 69-16,939.

Sedgwick, William Ellery. Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1945.

Seelye, John. "The Ironic Diagram." In The Recognition of Herman Melville. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1967.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sewall, Richard B. The Vision of Tragedy. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1959.

Sherrill, Rowland A. The Prophetic Melville: Experience, Transcendence, and Tragedy. Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1979.

Shneidman, Edwin S., ed. Endeavors in Psychology: Selections from the Personology of Henry A. Murray. New York: Harper, 1981.

Short, Bryan. Cast By Means of Figures: Herman Melville's Rhetorical Development. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1992.

Short, R. W. "Melville as Symbolist." University of Kansas City Review XV (1948) 38-46.

Sontag, Susan. "The Aesthetics of Silence." In Styles of Radical Will. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969, 3-34.

Steele, Jeffrey. The Representation of the Self in the American Renaissance. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1987.

Stein, W. B. "Melville's The Confidence-Man: Quicksands of the Word." American Transcendental Quarterly 24 (1974) 38-50.

Steiner, George. Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman. New York: Atheneum, 1967.

Stern, Milton R. The Fine Hammered Steel of Herman Melville Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1968.

Tanselle, G. Thomas. "The Sales of Melville's Books." Harvard Library Bulletin, 18 (1969) 195-215.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Thompson, G.R., and Virgil L. Lokke, eds. Ruined Eden of the Present: Hawthorne, Melville and Poe: Critical Essays in honor of Darrel Abel. West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue Univ. Press, 1981.

Thompson, Lawrance. Melville's Quarrel with God. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1952.

Thorp, Willard, ed. Herman Melville: Representative Selections. New York: American Book Company, 1938.

---. "Herman Melville's Silent Years." University Review 3 (1937) 254-62.

Todd, Harriet A. The Quest in the Works of Herman Melville, with Emphasis on Moby-Dick. Privately published, 1961.

Tolchin, Neal L. Mourning, Gender, and Creativity in the Art of Herman Melville. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988.

Updike, John, "Melville's Withdrawal." The New Yorker 10 May 1982, 120-47. Rpt. in Hugging the Shore: Essays and Criticism. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983, 80-106.

Vargish, Thomas. "Gnostic Mythos in Moby-Dick." PMLA LXXXI (June 1966) 272-77.

Walcutt, Charles Child. "The Fire Symbolism in Moby-Dick." Modern Language Notes LIX (May 1944) 304-10.

Weber, Walter. "Some Characteristic Symbols in Melville's Works." English Studies XXX (1949) 217-24.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Weisberg, Richard H. The Failure of the Word: The Protagonist as Lawyer in Modern Fiction. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1984.

Wiggins, James B. Religion as Story. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

Willet, Maurita. "The Silences of Herman Melville." American Transcendental Quarterly 7 (1970) 85-92.

Wright, Nathalia. Melville's Use of the Bible. Durham, N. C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1949.

Young-Eisendrath, Polly, and James A. Hall, eds. The Book of the Self: Person, Pretext, and Process. New York: New York Univ. Press, 1987.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.