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THE URBAN MELVILLE

by

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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
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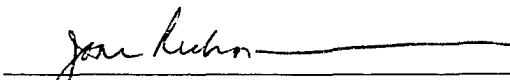
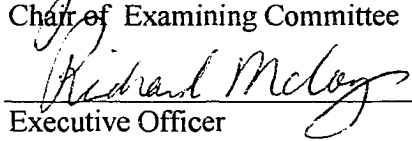
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Preface

This dissertation, which has been in the try-works for nearly a decade, sets out to do one thing that previous Melville scholarship did not do and more recent scholarship only does in part: to account for Melville's uses of cities by looking at his cities through the lens of his lifelong relationship to New York City. What I discuss in this work is how most of the ways Melville uses urban metaphor in his fiction and poetry can be explained in light of his urban experience and how thoroughly saturated he was in the ongoing life of his native city.

While Melville scholarship has only relatively recently begun to deal with Melville's cities, the fact remains that he spent most of his life in New York. Except for his four years at sea and his adolescence in Albany and Lansingburgh, the years in Pittsfield, Massachusetts were his only substantial period of residence outside Manhattan. And yet, it was during the time in Pittsfield that he wrote almost all the works that deal directly with New York. This can be partly accounted for by the fact that the Pittsfield period was immensely, and intensely, productive, the time when he wrote most of his major works. It was a time of great personal and artistic growth: his friendship with Hawthorne, his wide reading, his travel on three continents, all fed the growing artist. But it was also a time of growing dissatisfaction with the circumstances of his life. He was increasingly frustrated by his inability to provide a comfortable living for his large family, increasingly cut off from his literary associates in New York, and at times he was in poor physical and emotional health. At the same time, he was dealing with demanding philosophical and artistic issues that absorbed his energies. When I began working on this topic, I was particularly interested in the question of why so many of Melville's struggles during this most productive period took the form of fictional reassessments of his relationship to New York, even as his family tried in various ways to make it possible for him to move back there. I took this to mean that perhaps his lifelong relationship to New York City had greater significance than other readers had seen in it thus far.

There is no doubt that Melville's eminence in what we have come to think of as the American Renaissance puts him in the company of Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau and the other great voices from further north, but what sets him apart is his lifelong identity as a New Yorker, and his need always to deal with something the rest of the American Renaissance could go home from: the growing American city. As native, intermittent and finally permanent New Yorker, Melville alone in his period was situated at the intersection of the American city and the American Renaissance. The present work deals with one very basic feature of that intersection, the area where Melville's life as New Yorker serves as a source of urban metaphor. The many other aspects are things I look forward to dealing with in future works.

The meaning of Melville's life to his work has been such a major force in Melville criticism that the earliest critics tended to read the work as autobiography. In the Preface to The Companion to Melville Studies John Bryant quotes a letter from Willard Thorpe that reminisces about the errors fallen into so easily by the Melville readers of the 1930s: "'We know enough now so that the contributors of [the Companion] can indeed make it a work that will endure. How different it was fifty years ago when I first turned to Melville! Much of the little we knew about the man and his works was wrong'" (ix-x). Julian Hawthorne, who as a child had played with his father's friend "Mr. Omoo," decried the same tendency in a 1926 review reprinted in Critical Essays on Herman Melville's "Pierre, or, The Ambiguities":

A few years ago, Mr. Raymond Weaver and after him several other pious zealots, filled so large a balloon with hot air in regard to Melville that the loom of it was seen across the Atlantic, and was brought to the attention of the present Mr. John Freeman, with the consequence of his little monograph And, to be serious for a moment, there is no harm in

recounting facts; the mischief begins when their discoverers, or rediscoverers, erect upon them a super-structure of inferences and deductions. Mr. Freeman, for example, has allowed himself to select characters, or incidents, from Melville's books, and to assume that they may be revelations, more or less veiled, of his actual personal experiences . . . " (122).

It was only after World War II that projects like the Melville Log and Leon Howard's biography gave some factual basis to the ongoing tradition of biographical interpretation. Here I stay well within that tradition, reading Melville's cities in terms of Melville's (New York) City, but making and examining connections where they have not been made or examined so thoroughly before.

From the 1950s on critics paid increasing attention to the various functions of cities in Melville's work. Some readers concentrated on one or another aspect of the urban element in the work, while others surveyed the various guises under which cities appear. In 1968 John Henry Raleigh discussed Melville's use of the city in his study, "The Novel and the City: England and America in the Nineteenth Century." In the section on Melville, Raleigh says that cities "are invariably Evil, heartless, remorseless, indifferent" (320). Raleigh sees Melville's cities first as abstractions, since they are so large that they cannot be portrayed in their entirety, and second, as reflections of the novelist's "most profound insights (and fears) into the nature of man, the natural world, and the final meaning of experience" (322). He numbers Melville among "provincial city-haters, like Tolstoy or . . . D. H. Lawrence" (300). Raleigh does not refer to Melville's life, and this may be why he misses the much more complex relationship Melville, a native, not a provincial, had with cities he knew and cities he used in his work.

In 1970 Paul McCarthy explored Melville's cities in more detail in "City and Town in Melville's Fiction." McCarthy notes that towns and cities "often serve as

nothing more than mere points of arrival and departure for wandering heroes" (214) in Melville's work, and takes note of Melville's New York childhood and the fact that his last years were spent in New York City. He also catalogues a number of other cities with which Melville was acquainted or to which he had traveled. He limits his discussion, however, to a chronological consideration of works in which cities play a substantial part, usually as settings: Redburn, Moby-Dick, Pierre, "Bartleby." He touches briefly on the London phase of Israel Potter, and the two stories dealing with failures in New York, "The Fiddler" and "Jimmy Rose." McCarthy comes to no conclusions about what the city meant to Melville or its overall significance in his work, preferring only to survey some of its manifestations in works where it figures prominently. Most surprisingly, despite his opening mentions of Melville's New York life, McCarthy makes no connections between Melville the New Yorker and the cities he portrays.

The following year Harold T. McCarthy, in "Melville's Redburn and the City," narrowed his focus to one work and discussed various issues of modern city life as Redburn perceives them in Liverpool: the problems of poverty, property, emigration and other economic forces that lead, through the city, to an increasingly dehumanized way of life. McCarthy is not alone in failing to consider Redburn's relationship to New York--in fact, he barely mentions it in passing--and he ignores the different responses Redburn has to New York on the way out and on the way back. He also does not consider the question of Melville's life in New York and how that relates to Redburn. James Polk, in "Melville and the Idea of the City," surveys Melville's various uses of the city, which he sees as a symbol to which Melville had to resort again and again to express "his vision of truth" (278). The City, says Polk, shows up in Melville's work "variously conceived as an image of hell, of heaven, of society, of the past, or of dark passages of the individual soul" (278). This study moves from Typee and its descriptions of Polynesian villages to the labyrinthine complexities of Jerusalem in Clarel. Although his article deals with actual cities and their actual features and how these factors work in their uses as symbols, Polk

does not speak of Melville's relationship to New York and the role it played in his choice of symbols.

In 1975 Janis P. Stout published "The Encroaching Sodom: Melville's Urban Fiction." Stout's focus is on the hellish elements of cities in Melville's work, and she sees this under two aspects: Melville looking at the city as a humanitarian, seeing the inhumanity of the city and the hellishness of urban life, and Melville using the city as a symbol for more universal themes, particularly "deprivation and loss of meaning" (157). She sees Redburn's New York as "only a gateway to the sea; otherwise it is all cruelty" (158), not considering the other roles New York plays in Redburn, and not discussing Melville's life in New York as it might have influenced this novel and the others she discusses: Pierre, Israel Potter, and the story "Bartleby." Since Stout restricts herself to fiction, she does not include any discussion of Clarel and the uses Melville makes there of Jerusalem and other Biblical urban archetypes, particularly Sodom and Gomorrah.

John H. Randall III, in "Bartleby vs. Wall Street: New York in the 1850s," reads this most disturbing of Melville's stories as a comment on commercialism, and the city as its inevitable result and setting. Randall begins by stating that he sees Melville as "basically a New Yorker, and his early literary life, for better or worse, is bound up with New York City," and that "Bartleby," is, "except for Pierre . . . his most extended account of the meaning which New York City and the life lived therein had for him" (138). This is typical of "Bartleby" criticism, which generally sees the story as being about Melville the disappointed author, lapsing into his supposed period of silence. Along with the rest of these readers, Randall fails to comment on the fact that this story was written while Melville was living in Massachusetts, during a period of intense productivity that saw the creation of some of his most "urban" works. But at least Randall nods in the direction of Melville's native city in his study, even though he does not explore its particular significance. He concludes: "Thus the image of New York City in 'Bartleby' is a starkly negative one, in which the city stands for a callously self-interested mercantile society in

which any deviance from its norms . . . leads to punishment by imprisonment or even death If Melville chose not to follow Bartleby's way, but to live in New York and become a custom house official in it from immediately after the Civil War til his retirement some time before his death, it is not because he did not see through the city and recognize it for what it really was" (144). A 1984 dissertation by Wyn Kelley explored Melville's use of urban metaphor to conclude, as I do, that Melville was not anti-urban, but Kelley concentrates on the esthetic advantages urban elements lent to Melville's post-Moby-Dick work, while I look more closely at the sources of these metaphors and the ways they are used throughout Melville's career.

When I began this project, these were the readers who had commented explicitly on Melville's use of cities. While they certainly helped to remedy a deficiency by giving particular consideration to Melville's use of cities, and advanced some useful notions about these cities' meanings, they left out all consideration of Melville's life as a New Yorker, and since his life is one of the best researched in all of American literature, and indeed since most of that life was lived in New York, this seemed to me to be a serious omission. I set out in this work to supply a remedy, and look at Melville's cities in terms of his own urban experience.

Melville's major biographers have given more or less space to his urban periods, especially the New York childhood, without necessarily relating this to the work his urban experience influences. The earliest of the major Melville biographers relied on family reminiscences and the accounts of nineteenth-century writers (many of them reprinted in Sealts, Early Lives of Melville), among other sources, before the wealth of factual material unearthed in the last four decades had yet surfaced. Raymond Weaver and Lewis Mumford read Melville's novels as if they were entirely factual, relying on this for their interpretations. Weaver mentions New York City in passing, but seems to attach no special significance to it. Mumford, not surprisingly, is more overtly interested in the social settings of Melville's life, and writes about Melville's New York life at greater

length. He passes stern judgment on Melville's New York, and for that matter on all of Melville's America, which he regards as backward, provincial and generally not a propitious place for an author to grow up. But despite his own well-known interest in things urban, Mumford makes no connection between Melville's use of cities and his life as a New Yorker.

Newton Arvin's biography concentrates on Melville's inner life and therefore only considers New York's effect on Melville through his early years. Arvin discusses the Manhattan childhood and the years of early fame, during which Melville made great use of the city's resources, particularly the libraries and literary salons, but after discussing this period Arvin barely mentions New York. He disposes of the outward events of the last New York period, including Melville's nineteen years as a customs inspector, in one paragraph. New York, to Arvin, is not Melville's home in any special sense, and he does not discuss any special relationship between the cities in Melville's art and his native city.

Leon Howard's biography, published the following year, was written concurrently with Jay Leyda's Melville Log, and makes conscious and careful use of the newly rediscovered facts of Melville's life as Leyda unearthed them. This factual basis allowed Howard to proceed without relying on interpretation, inference and guesswork as his predecessors had had to. One result of this is a much clearer picture of Melville's actual relationship to New York, and it is finally here, in Howard's biography, that the outlines of Melville the New Yorker begin to emerge. Using family letters and papers that earlier biographers had no access to, Howard was able to document such hitherto unmentioned episodes as the many efforts the Melvilles made to move back to Manhattan from Pittsfield between 1856 and 1863. Howard's work makes it possible to read Melville's work with a surer sense of what is actually fact and what fiction.

A work that sets out to separate fact from fiction in Redburn was published the same year. In Melville's Early Life and "Redburn" William H. Gilman avails himself of the same wealth of primary material used by Leyda and Howard as he for the first time

discusses Redburn not as biographical data, which earlier biographers had assumed it to be, but as a work of fiction woven of events from both inside and outside the actuality of Melville's first twenty-one years. Gilman focuses on the social context and the family's economic ups and downs, but along the way he reveals much of what it was like for the Melville children to grow up among the privileged in Manhattan and then to be exiled upstate by economic misfortune. He documents to a far greater extent than any other biographer, including Howard, the texture of the childhood years in New York: the parties given and attended, the schools, the churches, the moves to ever more comfortable houses in ever more prestigious neighborhoods. Gilman puts the Liverpool Melville visited in perspective, citing the comparisons some of Melville's contemporaries made between Liverpool and New York or Brooklyn.

The most recent major biography, Edwin Haviland Miller's Melville, concentrates on the major human relationships in Melville's life, particularly the relationship with Hawthorne. With this as his focus, he inevitably pays more attention to the early Pittsfield years than to any of the New York periods. On the whole Miller sees very little that was special or positive in Melville's relationship to his native city, but with the focus on family relationships and important friendships, Miller does not say much about cities at all, either in Melville's life or in his work.

Indispensable in tracing the outlines of the New York Melville is Eleanor Melville Metcalf's Herman Melville: Cycle and Epicycle. Some of the family reminiscences, records, letters and other material appear only in abbreviated form, if at all, in Leyda's Log. For example, both Leyda and Metcalf include the 1857 letter in which Herman's uncle Peter Gansevoort, acting on the family's suggestion that Herman would be better off living in New York again, reported that he had been unable to get Herman a job as a customs inspector because of Herman's residence in Massachusetts (Leyda 569; Metcalf 165). Metcalf prints Herman's sister Augusta's reply, detailing all

the ways Herman is professionally and personally tied to New York City, including the fact that he never voted in Massachusetts (165).

More recently, readers dealing with other issues seem to take Melville's New York origins and influences almost for granted. The New York links that earlier critics were unaware of, ignored, or suppressed, possibly out of a wish to legitimize Melville by linking him more firmly to New England, are freely acknowledged in more recent work, even if they are not explicitly explored for their own sake. Michael Paul Rogin's Subversive Genealogies: The Politics and Art of Herman Melville (New York, 1983) examines Melville's work in light of his family's participation in his region's public life and the social and political movements of his period. He reads the artistic consequences for Herman of his father Allan's successes and ultimate failure in New York business, although any more specifically urban considerations are not Rogin's focus. But he ends with a poignant "Coda" describing how a "visitor to New York City searched in vain in 1979 on East 26th Street for the house in which Melville wrote Billy Budd." [The visitor] ends with a visit downtown to the old Custom House, two blocks from the site of Melville's birthplace; in 1979 it "had been converted to a museum. It housed an exhibit of Indian artifacts" (316). Even with this new, matter-of-fact inclusion of the New York strain in Melville's life, however, Rogin does not take up the question of New York's particular meaning for Melville. In Rogin's reading of Melville, New York is finally present, but it has no more significance than any other location.

Allan Melville's death and its effect on his family are central to Neal Tolchin's Mourning, Gender, and creativity in the Art of Herman Melville (1988), which finds one of the sources of Melville's pervasive sense of unsettled alienation and ingrained disappointment in Herman's prolonged and unresolved mourning for his father, complicated by the cultural expectations that surrounded mourning in Victorian America. Of course Tolchin looks closely at Redburn, as well as Pierre, but, while he discusses the symbol of the father's outdated guidebook and attaches the appropriate significance to

Allan Melvill's last disastrous New York deal, he does not explicitly connect Redburn's father's guidebook to Melville's father's city. Tolchin sees in Redburn's Liverpool a nexus of "commerce and bereavement" (98), a representation of the ubiquity of death in urban settings. Since this is his focus, he goes no further with the meaning of cities.

The outdated guidebook comes up again in John Samson's White Lies: Melville's Narrative of Facts (1989), which concentrates on Melville's use of travel literature. Samson comments on the significance of the guidebook in terms of the commercial and social changes in Liverpool, without making any connection either to Melville's experience of New York or his use of it. Samson considers the contemporary popular works, both travel books and fiction, that Melville knew and used in his own fiction. His discussion of Redburn includes some of the current popular sources Perry Miller points us to, among them Charles Briggs' The Adventures of Harry Franco, but Samson reads these works in connection with Melville's use of Adam Smith and not in terms of what Melville's actual use of these sources does for the urban aspects of Redburn or Pierre.

Another recent work that assumes the importance of the city for Melville, and takes it into greater account than some others, is David Reynolds' Beneath the American Renaissance (1988), which deals with the matrix of popular culture, particularly the literature, that surrounded Melville and the other major literary figures of his time. Among the various categories of popular novel Reynolds names, he classes Redburn among the "dark-reform" novels so often set in cities (146). He also ascribes to the conventions of genre some of the city metaphors Melville applies to shipboard life: White-Jacket is a city-mystery dark-reform novel, in his taxonomy. It makes lurid use of the sinful side of city life, transferring the standard reform-novel techniques to a work dedicated to naval reform. This allows Reynolds to trace the urban metaphors Melville uses to "[wage] his naval reform war" in White-Jacket to sources in another category, "city-mysteries" (150). I believe that there were actual city scenes that Melville could have seen first hand that also made their way into White-Jacket, but Reynolds' scheme

would explain the inclusion even of these. Reynolds is concerned with the contemporary popular fiction, and with showing how Melville's works at once belong to and transcend the customary categories, so he does not talk specifically about, for example, the sources of urban metaphor in Redburn, either in Melville's life or in the particular texts he must have known. But Reynolds recognizes New York and its popular culture as a source of Melville's Subversive way of writing, in contrast to what he calls the Conventional way, the way more closely embraced by his friends in the New York literary community.

Two recent books about the Civil War are further examples of the way readers have become increasingly comfortable with an urban perspective on Melville. First, Stanton Garner's The Civil War World of Herman Melville (1993) studies Melville's life during the war years, concentrating on Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War. Garner views the life from the angle of Melville's great attention to, and occasional involvement in, the war's events, and the work they eventually fed. Melville's final return to New York City happened in the middle of the war, in 1863, and the city he came back to was greatly changed from the one he had left in 1850. Typical of Garner's approach is his section on the background to "The House-Top," Melville's poem about the draft riots of July 1863. Going into the actual political sentiments of two different groups of New Yorkers, one of which Melville belonged to, Garner reads the poem not as a direct expression of Melville's own thinking, as has been so often assumed, but a representation of the thought of someone Melville would have regarded as a political radical (254-257).

One of the works that makes the assumption that the speaker of "The House-Top" voices Melville's own sentiments is Iver Bernstein's New York City Draft Riots, a history of the riots that uses Melville's poem to frame discussion of the civic mood behind and around the riots. Since this is a historical rather than a literary study, Bernstein does not explore the poem at length or in detail, but his use of it shows a renewed appreciation of Melville the New Yorker commenting on New York events, even those at which we know he was not present.

Another work that goes into the political context of Melville's times to discover sources for his art is Helen Trimpi's Melville's Confidence Men and American Politics in the 1850s (1987). Trimpi, who refers early in her study to Melville as "a native New Yorker and a Massachusetts resident" (11), unearths actual public figures who could plausibly have served as models for the various manifestations of humanity on the Fidele. But even though she brings to light vast amounts of information about urban politics in the mid-nineteenth century, and situates The Confidence-Man in a political context Melville would have known in New York State and New York City, her work does not look into the sources of Melville's urban metaphor. She does not discuss the functional and metaphorical resemblances between ships and cities and how they can both work as small worlds. She also does not comment on the interaction of the Fidele with the cities at which it stops. In fact, the whole question of the ways both ships and cities work as metaphors for the world, in Melville and elsewhere, bears further investigation, and it is one more area I look forward to studying in future work.

In the scheme of American urban literature suggested by Sidney Bremer in Urban Intersections, Melville's New York is more "a pre-Civil War city-town" (19ff) than the more alienating industrial and economic cities of later in the century. Nineteenth-century writers of the Romantic period, Bremer suggests, dealt with a different kind of city from the modern, overwhelming cities of more recent periods. For American writers of Melville's time and before, literary cities were more organic, "open-ended" communities that "expressed the voluntary community of [their] inhabitants" (22). The pastoral-urban dichotomy that grew up later is, in the pre-Civil War city-town, a "permeable" boundary, which explains the easy way Melville's *Pierre* moves from city to country (25). But Bremer is more interested in literary manifestations of larger social forces throughout American literary history than in the sources of any one writer's urban metaphor. The text Bremer most frequently cites to demonstrate Melville's indictment of the economic forces behind American cities is "The Tartarus of Maids," his story about a hellish mill

town that is contrasted with "The Paradise of Bachelors," a scene of gentlemen having a fine time in London. Melville's treatment of New York is not particularly anti-urban, Bremer realizes, and reveals the bad side of industry more than the bad side of cities.

What Bremer thus shows in passing is that while issues of industrialization are important to Melville, he deals with them on ships or in factory towns. Melville does not use explicitly urban settings to explore those issues, closely related though they may be, probably because New York has never concentrated its energies in manufacturing as smaller cities and whaling ships did. For Melville the New Yorker, taking the stamp of his native place, cities are not mere cites of industry but areas of great complexity characterized by constant change. New York furnished Melville with a range of metaphor that allowed him to explore a range of issues in his work; coming as he did from a city that was not restricted at any time to manufacturing, he naturally used cities to express more than mere disapproval of the bad effects of industrialization.

Two general histories of literary life in New York show this increasingly urban understanding of Melville and his relationship to New York. Thomas Bender's New York Intellect (1987) and Shaun O'Connell's Remarkable, Unspeakable New York: A Literary History (1995) look at Melville from two different angles, but they both see him as an author rooted in New York. Bender's survey of New York's intellectual life concentrates on the nineteenth century and, in some ways, updates Perry Miller's The Raven and the Whale, revisiting much of the old territory of the Knickerbockers and the cultural matrix out of which Melville and the generation of Young America arose. O'Connell concentrates on the twentieth century and treats the earlier periods as background, and understandably oversimplifies Melville's attitudes toward and uses of New York. He also falls into some easily avoided errors by following the party line of the early Melvilleans and relying on material that quotes Melville out of context. He gets Melville's birthday wrong, for example, and says that "Hawthorne and His Mosses" was written when both Hawthorne and Melville were residents of the Berkshires when in fact

Melville had not moved there yet; he also follows another source and quotes a letter written while Melville was living in Massachusetts as evidence of his supposed late-life bitterness at having to live "in New York resentfully employed as an inspector of cargoes on Hudson River docks, a forgotten man" (23). But even as O'Connell attributes to Melville a "caustic vision of New York" (23), and even as he calls him "a reluctant resident," (25), he seems to understand how deeply New York saturated Melville, and recognizes that "Melville would return to the City throughout his life for literary opportunities and for employment" (23), and that "[a]t the center of [Melville's] consciousness was New York City, [his] daily reality and an ever-present symbol of America's future" (21).

Bender's study situates Melville firmly in the literary milieu of Young America, the New York-based movement that championed a native literature and an expanded democracy, and makes clear his differences with the "legal gentry" (141), the Duyckincks and their circle, whose movement did not go far enough for him. He remained, Bender says, "subversive in his incessant questioning" (151), even as he "took his stand with New York" (152). But, since his is a general survey, Bender's does not focus more closely on the sources of Melville's urban viewpoint.

So even as readers have made greater acknowledgment of, and paid greater attention to, Melville's New York identity in recent years, this is the first detailed look at his use of urban metaphor and its sources in his experience. Clearly it often supports what the more general studies have suggested, but it also demonstrates that the city runs deeper in Melville than has been previously believed. The implications of this are among the questions I hope to deal with in future work.

This work is organized around four major manifestations of the city in Melville's work as they relate to his urban experience. The first chapter covers the urban images and metaphors, the evidence of Melville's local speech patterns, and the influence of the

New York literary set. I discuss the the urban metaphors in the early non-urban works in light of what Melville had already seen of New York, Albany and Liverpool. For Melville's New York speech patterns I refer to his choice of rhymes in the poems and his phonetic spelling of Polynesian words. I also touch on the "Young America" section of Pierre, the philosophical discussions of Mardi and the arguments in The Confidence-Man in light of the literary climate in New York in the 1840s.

The second chapter deals with the urban archetype, especially as represented by Jerusalem in Clarel. Here I discuss the tension between skepticism and belief as embodied in the actual Jerusalem and the Jerusalem of the Bible, with the additional factor of the American idea of the New World as the New Jerusalem, and Melville's identity as a citizen of the New World's premier city.

The third chapter deals with the city as a place of exile and failure. As I have mentioned, most of these works were written during the phase of Melville's life when he was a New York author in exile in Massachusetts. This chapter includes the exiles from the city: Redburn, whose trip to Liverpool re-urbanizes him after years away from New York, and Ishmael, whose self-exile is voluntary and amicable. It also deals with exile to and imprisonment in the city, especially in Israel Potter, "Bartleby" and Pierre, as well as with the native failures in "Jimmy Rose" and "The Fiddler," both set in new York. I relate these themes to Melville's not always amicable self-exile in Massachusetts and his efforts to return to New York.

The last chapter deals with the cities offstage and offshore in the form of ports and ships. Here I discuss White-Jacket, where Melville often draws the reader's attention to the resemblances between shipboard and urban life, and where Lima and other port cities play an offstage role. I also deal with "Benito Cereno," in which Lima plays an offstage role, and The Confidence-Man, in which stops at various cities and towns serve to change the cast of the floating riverboat-as-city, as well as the less explicitly urban Billy Budd and Moby-Dick.

I look at all these aspects of Melville's cities through five main phases of his life, divided roughly chronologically but mainly with regard to what his relationship was at any given time to New York City. The first phase was his Manhattan childhood and upstate adolescence, followed by a second period as a New Yorker abroad, roughly the same as his four years at sea. The third phase encompasses the years when Melville was a young New York author enjoying his first success. Then came the period of self-exile in Massachusetts, followed by a final phase beginning with the return to New York in 1863, his years as a private citizen of New York. I discuss these phases in greater detail in Chapter 1.

The intersection of these five phases of Melville's life with the four aspects of his use of cities provides a framework for a biographical consideration of the urban element in Melville's work, but I hope in years to come to be able to expand on this into a broader consideration of larger issues suggested by this work, issues that arise at that other intersection, where the American Renaissance meets the American city.

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I

New Yorker at Home and Abroad

Although the places with which Herman Melville is most often associated are the Pacific Ocean and Pittsfield, Massachusetts, he was born, spent most of his life, and died in New York City. And although he is most often associated with ships and the sea, cities occur at least as often in the Melville canon, both as settings and in the form of other urban elements. Melville's lifelong relationship with his native city explains his choice of cities as settings and the urban metaphors that turn up everywhere, even in works with nothing else urban in them.

Melville's cities occur under four main aspects. First are the various traces of Melville the New Yorker and the signs of the formative influence of his native city. Urban metaphors and images reflect a city-trained eye looking at unfamiliar phenomena and seeing them in familiar terms. These include, for example, his description, in Mardi, of the action of the wind as it "almost lifted the light boat's stern into the air, vexing the counterpane as if it were a petticoat turning a gusty corner" (33), or his comparison of the blue shark to "a Bond Street beau" (40). There is also the opening of The Encantadas, as evocative of New York as it is of the Galapagos: "Take five-and-twenty heaps of cinders dumped here and there in an outside city lot; imagine some of them magnified into mountains, and the vacant lot the sea; and you will have a fair idea of the general aspect of the Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles" (764). Then there are the regional speech patterns, visible in Melville's strange spellings of Polynesian words and, later, the rhymes in his poems. This "eastern accent" was also commented on by members of Melville's lecture audiences in the 1850s (Sealts, Lecturer 53).

The second aspect is the way cities serve as settings for stories of exile and failure. Characters are exiled from their cities, exiled to and imprisoned in cities, or else fail somehow in their native cities. This includes the voluntary exiles of "Bartleby" and Pierre as well as Israel Potter, the involuntary exile, imprisoned in London for forty

years; it also includes the native failures of "Jimmy Rose" and "The Fiddler" and young Redburn, the economic exile from the city, as well as the desperate Ishmael's self-exile to the sea. In every case but that of Israel Potter, the city of exile or failure is New York. The third aspect is the way the city of Jerusalem functions: as the urban archetype of Judaeo-Christian culture, and the actual city Melville confronted in 1856-7 and wrote about twenty years later in Clarel. This city and the surrounding Holy Land become the setting for Melville's exploration of his religious and philosophical conflicts.

The fourth and last aspect is the evocation of various literal and metaphorical cities offstage and offshore. These include the urban aspects of shipboard life, to which Melville draws attention from Redburn through Billy Budd, and the ports, seen and unseen, that exert their shipboard influences. All of these various uses of cities have their roots in Melville's experience of cities, particularly his lifelong relationship to New York.

Melville's lifelong involvement with New York divides his life into five major phases. The first was his privileged Manhattan childhood, with a social status that came from his father's commercial success, his mother's coming from an old Hudson Valley Dutch family, and both his grandfathers' having been genuine American aristocrats--heroes of the Revolutionary War. Although his father did not allow him to play in the street (Leyda I, 28), he saw enough of New York to use some of the impressions of his first eleven years in Redburn. Another childhood memory that surfaces in that novel is the disappointment of being forced out of his pleasant city childhood by his father's business failure. This was his own first, and involuntary, exile from New York. As William Gilman has shown, his mother's social standing in Albany made life there not too unlike the life they had lived in Manhattan, but his father's death and brother's business failure forced the family to move, in 1837, to Lansingburgh, a much smaller and more culturally anemic town (Gilman 98-100). This initial phase ends with Melville's sailing from New York to Liverpool, where he was first exposed to a major city other than New York. Liverpool shared many of the characteristics of the New York Melville

got to know again in the 1840s, and it seems, in the novel he wrote a decade after the trip, that Liverpool re-urbanizes the young Redburn, who behaves more like a New Yorker when he comes back than he does on the way out.

In the second phase, Melville was a New Yorker abroad. This lasted from his return from Liverpool in 1839 to the publication of Typee in 1845. During this period he made two extended journeys. One was to the Midwest looking for employment. There he saw many of the developing towns of that region and reacquainted himself with his uncle Thomas Melvill (as that branch of the family still spelled it), himself an exile from his adopted Paris. It was in this period that Melville took a riverboat part way down the Mississippi, gathering impressions that were later to show up in The Confidence Man (Howard 35-37). The second journey was the long voyage in the Pacific, from 1841 to 1844. Here he saw the Polynesian scenes that he later supplemented with research and used in Typee, Omoo and Mardi. It was also here that his New York speech patterns and his lack of talent in the conventions of spelling made him write things that other students of the South Seas found strange. Charles Anderson, who documents this period thoroughly, notes that Melville's spelling of Polynesian words seems strange not just to him but to others, including Robert Louis Stevenson. Anderson calls his unusual spellings "merely typical of his phonetic inaccuracy." In fact, they reveal great phonetic accuracy. Melville was using his New York ear to make sense of an unfamiliar language in the same way he used his New York eye to describe the shape of a fish, the behavior of canvas on a boat or the placement and appearance of islands.

Soon after his return to the United States Melville began writing Typee, thus opening the third phase, his life as a New York author. With the publication of his first novel Melville found both fame and a profession. His home base in Manhattan had been reestablished when his brothers Gansevoort and Allan each opened a law practice in the city. In 1847, after his marriage to Elizabeth Shaw of Boston, and after the publication of Omoo, he and Allan bought a house at 103 Fourth Avenue, making it possible for him to

live in New York again. During this period he had the benefit of New York's libraries and other resources, including the kinds of conversations that were only available to him among the literati of New York. The influence of this period on his later work shows not just in the philosophical speculations of Mardi and the portrait of "Young America" in Pierre but also in The Confidence Man, which, as Paul Smith has shown, revisits some of the old New York arguments with Emerson along the way. Also traceable to this period is Melville's method of writing: working systematically all day until insistently interrupted by his family, then eating, visiting and otherwise amusing himself, usually at home. His own writing habits are described in a letter from his wife to her stepmother (Leyda I, 266); Melville himself describes a more manic and driven version later in Pierre.

The fourth phase of Melville's New York life was his time as a New Yorker in Pittsfield. At first, in 1850, he simply intended to find a less crowded place to live in the city so it would be easier to write. Later, he decided to try the country, in an area he had known as a boy (Howard 154-161). In the beginning, for the first year or so, things went well. The Melvilles were surrounded by literary (and literate) neighbors, including Oliver Wendell Holmes and, of course, the Hawthornes a few miles away. Friends from New York visited often. Melville had begun Moby-Dick in New York and under Hawthorne's influence nearly completed it in his first year in Pittsfield (although he had to rent a room in Manhattan to finish it up) (Howard 168; Leyda I, 414). But after the Hawthornes moved away in November 1852, and a number of other disappointments set in, his voluntary self-exile to the country no longer seemed such a good idea. It was then that he began to use New York as a setting for his work in a way he had not before. In his imagination the self-exiled New Yorker was moving back to his city. More of Melville's urban works were written during this period than in any other: Pierre, "Bartleby," "The Two Temples," "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs," "Jimmy Rose," "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids," "The Fiddler" and Israel

Potter all have at least partly urban themes and settings, and in Pierre, "Bartleby," "Jimmy Rose," "The Two Temples" and "The Fiddler" Melville seems almost to be predicting for himself, from the depths of his urban depression, a gloomy urban future. In fact, as early as 1855 he was trying to sell his farm and get back to New York, or at least get an appointment to a foreign consulate. Finally in 1856-7, in an effort to combat his depression, he went on a trip to the Holy Land. This gave him material he would use when he got back to New York and wrote Clarel. By the beginning of the next decade his father-in-law Lemuel Shaw was concerned enough about him to write to Herman's brother Allan:

I am as deeply impressed as you can be of the necessity of Herman's getting away from Pitts[field]. He is there solitary, without exercise or occupation except that which is likely to be injurious to him in overthrowing his mind. I therefore have hoped that some situation may be found for him, where he has easy employment and moderate exercise of mind and body, and give him an opportunity to associate habitually with others I hope you will not fail to take some measures . . . to get an office in the N.Y. Custom House. I should hope that he could do the moderate daily labor required there, & thus be enabled to live in New York and remove him from Pittsfield (Metcalf 191).

Toward the end of the Pittsfield period Melville became interested in the progress of the Civil War, and began to write poems that would later go into Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War. A number of these poems use New York as a setting and a New Yorker as speaker, even though some of them deal with events that occurred before Melville was back in the city. The other works set in New York, especially those dealing with failure, seem to show that he feared the city was passing him by while he was in the country; this is especially evident in his use of changing neighborhoods and left-behind inhabitants in "Jimmy Rose" and Pierre. Throughout the 1850s Melville made several

efforts to sell his farm and move back to the city. While he was not able to sell it, he nonetheless tried to escape it by renting a house in Manhattan for the winter of 1862.

Finally in 1863 he and his family were able to settle again in New York, at 104 East 26 Street, his brother Allan's old house. It was here that he began the longest and last phase of his life, as a private citizen of New York, "this, my native place," as he referred to it in two letters written shortly after he moved (Correspondence 388). His years of great fame were over, as were the rural and maritime adventures. His family income was finally secure. The work of this period distilled his experience and thinking, and while some of it reflected aspects of his daily life in New York--the section of Weeds and Wildings titled "A Rose or Two" grew from his own rose garden--he never again used New York as a setting once he was safely back in it. In his Gramercy Park study--once again he was in a good neighborhood, only a few blocks from the hub of New York high society, in which he did not participate--he wrote instead of cities he had known before. In the mid-1870s he concentrated his energies on Clarel, in which Jerusalem plays a central role: it is both the actual Jerusalem that Melville encountered in the 1850s and the Jerusalem of religious faith. In the poem it functions as a ground for the conflict between faith and doubt, and in the structure of the poem it does what New York did in Melville's life: serves as a starting and ending point. The travelers who make the tour with Clarel begin in Jerusalem, circle around to Jericho, the Dead Sea, Mar Saba and Bethlehem, and end the journey back in Jerusalem, as Melville himself had circled back after all his travels to the premier city of what his countrymen regarded as the New Jerusalem.

It was also in this period that he was able to make use of his travels to European cities. The long poem "Naples in the Time of Bomba" was part of a projected but unfinished work, "The Marquis of Grandvin," in which Naples was intended to play a large part. This poem recalls a riotous street scene during Melville's visit to Naples in 1857, when political unrest was brewing. Thirty years later he was able to turn the

experience into an almost festive meditation on democracy and Italy's lack of it, very different in tone but not that different in subject matter from "The House-Top," his 1866 meditation on the New York City draft riots of 1863. Shorter poems in Timoleon, in the section titles "Fruits of Travels Long Ago," give picture-postcard glimpses of Venice, Pisa, Padua, Milan, the Parthenon. And "Timoleon," the title poem of the 1891 book, uses ancient Corinth and its political situation as the setting for a drama involving a family situation very much like Melville's own: a mother who plainly favors her older son, a younger brother who is first exiled from his city and then invited back, an invitation he declines. Timoleon's relationship to Corinth, and with his brother and mother, bear interesting resemblances to Melville's relationship to New York and his family.

Finally, in Billy Budd, the last of the prose works, the city functions as a metaphor for ship life, and as a source of images, but this is a city thoroughly digested, and it is never New York. So Melville the New Yorker passes through five different stages of life: the New York childhood, the period of the New Yorker abroad, the period of the New York author, the time as a New Yorker in the country, and finally the New Yorker at home, and each period gives rise to a certain aspect of Melville's use of cities.

The formative influence of New York came upon Melville at two different times in his life, one in childhood and the other in adulthood. These periods bracketed his Hudson Valley adolescence, a time of economic exile and disappointment that gave rise to a skepticism that was to remain with him throughout his life. The childhood that preceded this first period of exile was almost exaggeratedly secure and promising, giving the Melvill children--the spelling was not changed until after the move to Albany--every reason to believe that their future was assured. The adult period, the third stage of Melville's life as a New Yorker, was not as opulent or as optimistic as his childhood had been, but, since it was the beginning of his career as a New York author, it represented a triumphant and successful relationship to the city he had had to leave earlier, in a more

helpless period of his life.

Melville wrote very little about childhood. Ishmael recalls a childhood dream early in Moby-Dick, and some readers assume that this dream was originally Herman's. Other than that, all we hear from him about the early part of his life are the regretful remarks in *Redburn* that reveal that Melville's lifelong sense of exile began in his early years, with his involuntary exile from his native Manhattan. Melville's childhood in Manhattan, and even the first year or so in Albany, until his father's death, must not have been easy to leave behind. As children of a rising young merchant and grandchildren of Revolutionary War heroes, the young Manhattan Melvills, connected to the major Dutch families of the Hudson Valley through their mother, were New York aristocrats. As Allan Melvill's fortunes rose, the family's life improved; until Herman's eleventh year, money was no problem and no expense was spared in the pursuit of a more comfortable life. Allan Melvill firmly believed that only New York, the fastest-growing port in the nation, could afford such great opportunities (Leyda I, 28); he and his wife left Boston and Albany behind. In 1818 they settled in a boarding house at 6 Pearl Street. The following year Herman was born, the first of their children to be born in New York. From here the Melvills began a fast move uptown. In 1820 they were able to move to 55 Cortlandt Street, the present site of the World Trade Center, close to the North River and its commercial activities. This was a great improvement over the old boarding house a block from the Battery. The Cortlandt Street house was a brief crosstown commute for Allan, whose business was then at 134 Pearl Street. But even as he conducted his successful business and improved his family's social standing, the City Council cited his privy as a health hazard (Gilman 27).

While New York was wide open to trade at this period, the course of a business career did not always run smooth. As letters from Allan and Maria Melvill to Peter Gansevoort, her brother, reveal, the family's next move was in doubt during their last summer at 55 Cortlandt Street. Allan had cut back his business and the family was

economizing. Maria was bravely rationalizing her disappointment as she contemplated a move to Brooklyn:

Mr Melvill's difficulties . . . will I hope be in some degree more easy, nothing can this year be sav'd in rent but next year a house & large yard & garden may doubtless be had at Brooklyn for a trifling sum in comparison with what is now paid, after all this world has little to offer & I think a pleasant house at B would be much more agreeable through the year than a house in town, where one is in daily dread for four months of the year of being driven from home-- . . . Mr ---s delicacy on this subject is greater than you can imagine" (Leyda II, 904-5).

But luckily for Maria the family was able in 1824 to move uptown to 33 Bleecker Street, then a suburban area that combined all the good points of what Maria had imagined of Brooklyn with a more fashionable address. It was actually just a bit farther east than was strictly fashionable, but Allan and Maria left this deliberately hazy in their letters describing the new house to Peter Gansevoort. Maria describes the inside of the house in great detail, not omitting the view from the bedroom windows:

We have leas'd a House for four Years in Bleecker Street, 'tis New, will be ready to move in on the 15th of April. A handsome two Story house plan'd similar to the one we now occupy--butmore convenient--the Hall is as wide & at the end of it a Tea room, or back building with a Cellar underneath--on entering the House, it has a pleasing effect--having a Door leading into the yard facing the Front entrance--a yard--about one Hundred feet by 26--With Grass Plot & flower beds--a handsome & convenient Basement room for a nursery . . . The second floor is divided similar to Mamma's Third Floor handsomely furnished, with lofty ceilings--The Staircase continues to the Garret without interruption where you enter a large space on either side of which you enter two Pretty bed

chambers with large dormer windows comfortable for any Person & the Prospect extensive & pleasing . . . Those elegant white Marble Houses in Bond Street--& also in Broadway present themselves to the view from the back windows & the Bowery . . . (Leyda 17)

Allan concentrates on the yard, the location and the neighborhood, putting the best possible construction on the site's actual proximity to the Bowery (which was then a perfectly fine place to live, but not as grand as the west side of Broadway):

I have taken on a 4 years lease at \$300 per annum free of taxes, a new brick two story House (which has become fashionable strange as it may appear with any thing comfortable) replete with conveniences, to be handsomely furnished in the modern style under our directions, & a vacant lot of equal size attached to it, which will be invaluable as play ground for the Children, it is situate in Bleecker . . . an open, dry & elevated location equidistant from Broadway to the Bowery, in plain sight of both and almost uniting the advantages of town & country, but its distance from my Store, nearly two miles, will compel me to dine from my Family most of the time, a serious objection to us all, but we shall be amply compensated by a residence, which will obviate the necessity of their leaving town every summer, which deprives me altogether of their Society-- I shall also remove professionally on the 1st May to No 162 pearl St up stairs, in the very focus of Business, surrounded by the Auction Rooms which have become the modern Rialto of merchants . . . (Leyda I, 17-18).

In fact, the Melvills' new house was right at the head of Mott Street, quite close to the Bowery and two blocks from Broadway -- two blocks to the east. Bond Street was one block to the north and its marble houses would have been easily visible from the back windows, but, even with the "extensive and pleasing" prospect afforded by the relatively few buildings in the area, the Bowery would have been easier to glimpse than

Broadway. This was an address which, with a little stretching, could impress the upstate inlaws, and it was pleasant, better for the children, less at risk at times of cholera, and a step up the social ladder over Cortlandt Street.

They quickly established themselves in the neighborhood. Allan became one of the trustees of the New-York Male High School, which opened for its first term in 1824; both Gansevoort and Herman were enrolled that year. The school was only a few blocks from their home, in Crosby Street. They began to attend the new Dutch Church at the corner of Greene and Broome Streets. The school was run on the monitor system, the most proficient pupils being rewarded with responsibility for pupils less far advanced. This was a new method, progressive for its time, typical of the advantages well-to-do parents in charge of their own school could offer their offspring. Although more was expected of eldest son Gansevoort, whom his parents believed to be greatly gifted and very promising, Herman met with a certain amount of academic success, much to the surprise of his father: "You will be as much surprised as myself to learn," Allan Melvill wrote to Peter Gansevoort in February 1828, "that Herman proved the best Speaker in the introductory Department, at the examination of the High School, he has made rapid progress during the 2 last quarters -- & Gansevoort still ranks among the As No 1 in the senior class --" (Leyda I, 32). The previous year Herman had been named monitor at the High School (I, 29). It was during this period that the young Melvills gave a very elaborate party one Thursday afternoon for their friends, doing everything they could to keep up the standard of children's parties in their neighborhood. Their father engaged the driver of the Broadway omnibus to stop at several of the guests' homes to bring them through the snow that had begun to fall that afternoon, and the party went on until midnight, despite the fact that the children had to go to school the next day. The Melvill children were taught the social graces as well as the academic subjects. Gansevoort, Herman and Augusta took dancing lessons (Leyda I, 33). This was all part of the life of the genteel New York child of the early nineteenth century, a child whose world

consisted of a school filled with children like himself, visits to his father's commercial establishment, trips upstate and to Boston to visit relatives, parties with others of the same age and class, church services twice on Sundays, and whatever he could see from his windows. Allan Melvill did not allow the children "to run abroad, or play in the street" (Leyda I, 33), but they hardly needed to with a vacant lot full of flowers and grass next door. And when Herman was eight, things got better still, at least from his mother's point of view. In February 1828 Allan Melvill signed a five-year lease on a house on the west side of Broadway, something to which Maria had always aspired. Allan wrote late in the month to Peter Gansevoort and gave him the details of the rent and extent of the lot: "200 feet deep, through to Mercer St--" (I, 33), and Maria wrote the same day to tell her brother about the interior and the advantages for the children, and the vast improvement this attainment made in her own mood:

Mr M. has leased for five years at a reasonable rent a first rate 2 Story house in Broadway between Bond & Great Jones Street, on the fashionable side of the Street being open in front & no buildings on that side from Bond to Jones St which leaves a delightful opening & pure air for our Boys to play . . . Mr Melvill playfully says that I have at last gained my point which has always been a House in Broadway--My Spirits are better & I am a more agreeable companion than I have been for some time past . . . (Leyda I, 33).

Melville's experience of New York in his childhood was overwhelmingly positive, always sustaining and ever improving, until his father had to face the consequences, in 1831, of an ongoing business arrangement that was questionable to begin with. The disappointment he was to feel at the time from this interruption of his childhood enjoyment of the city, and the loss he wrote of later of his childhood sense of trust in his father and his childhood God, was to last throughout his life and be the dominant mode of his mind and art. But the images and memories of his secure, happy

native city were to stay with him throughout his career as an author. They were especially helpful to him as he began his career as a New York writer, using the images of his childhood New York to explain the sights of the unfamiliar territories of the South Seas, and the familiar speech sounds of New York to transcribe the unfamiliar Pacific languages. His use of these New York speech patterns in a still later phase of his life, when he was a practicing poet, indicates how deeply he had heard them.

In the headnote to the 1836 version of his early poem, "The Last Leaf," Melville's Massachusetts neighbor Oliver Wendell Holmes makes an interesting observation on poetics. In the first version of the poem, published in 1831, he used "one of those false rhymes which produce a shudder in all educated persons, even in the poems of Keats and others who ought to have known better than to admit them." He reprints the "guilty verse . . . : 'But now he walks the streets/ And he looks at all he meets/ So forlorn,/ And he shakes his feeble head,/That it seems as if he said,/'They are gone!'" . . . Here, says Holmes, was what is called a "'cockney rhyme,' -- one in which the sound of the letter r is neglected -- maltreated as the letter h is insulted by the average Briton by leaving it out everywhere except where it should be silent. Such an ill--mated pair as 'forlorn' and 'gone' could not possibly pass current in good rhyming society" (Holmes, Collected Poems 4-5). The subject of the poem was the local Revolutionary War hero, Major Thomas Melvill, Herman's grandfather. Ironically, thirty years after Holmes revised "The Last Leaf" to conform to current rhyming conventions, Major Melvill's grandson was taken to task by American critics for ignoring the same conventions in many of the poems in Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War (1866). The American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular of September 1, 1866 said: "His rhymes are fearful. The first one in his book makes 'law' and 'Shenandoah' rhyme. But as if to show the reader how mistaken he is in imagining that the poet does his best worst at the outstart, he makes . . . 'war' and 'Shenandoah' rhyme" (Kaplan, xxx).

Melville was clearly far less concerned with poetic conventions than his contemporaries. His technique, especially in Battle-Pieces, his first published book of poetry, is always aimed, in an immediate, pragmatic way, at achieving a certain effect in each piece. Living up to the current American standards of poetic beauty was of little or no concern to him as he shortened or lengthened lines, twisted meter, and used his own rules for rhymes. This was not the technique of the successful poets of his day, and contemporaries generally did not look with favor on this type of technical adventurousness. But Melville had educated himself thoroughly in a wide range of styles, and had made his choices accordingly. Beginning in the 1850s, he had undertaken a self-directed, historical study of British poetry, from Chaucer to his Victorian contemporaries. He would surely have seen examples of the "false rhymes" Holmes refers to in Keats, where the *r* is supposedly ignored, but, unlike Holmes, he would not have judged that Keats "ought to have known better." If he thought anything at all about such rhymes, Melville might well have reasoned that they accurately reflected auditory reality. Rhyming "water" with "shorter" as Keats does in "To Charles Cowden Clarke" (ll. 88-89), or "thorns" with "fawns", or "thoughts" with "sorts" in "Sleep and Poetry" (ll. 255-6, 287-8) might have struck Melville as perfectly natural for a British poet for whom final and preconsonantal *r* was as silent as it was for any New Yorker. So Melville rhymes "law," "Shenandoah" and "more" in the first stanza of "The Portent," and rhymes "draw," "Shenandoah" and "war" in the second. He unhesitatingly rhymes "calm" and "arm" in "Apathy and Enthusiasm", and in "Lyon" he rhymes "sword" with "broad" once and "iron" with "Lyon" twice. In "Donelson," a long poem set in New York City, he rhymes "cost" and "forced", and "force" and "loss", all of which still rhyme in the speech of New Yorkers. "Shore," "more" and "saw" all rhyme in "Running the Batteries"; "fort," "retort" and "sought" rhyme in "The Armies of the Wilderness." "More," "restore", "Kenesaw" and "war" rhyme in "On Sherman's Men," and in "The Fall of Richmond" Melville rhymes "forsook," "law" and "adore". And this is by no means an exhaustive

list. Interestingly, despite critical disapproval of this aspect of his technique, Melville made no effort to conform to rhyming convention in his later poetry. The same New York rhymes occur in John Marr and Other Sailors (1888), where he rhymes "quarters" with "waters" ("John Marr"), "finer" with "China" ("Bridegroom Dick"), and "arms" with "palms" ("The Haglets"). He used the same rhymes in his very late poetry: "here" is rhymed with "Cassiopea" in "After the Pleasure Party" (1891), and similar evidence of his New York ear occurs throughout Clarel (1877). These were obviously deliberate choices on the part of a poet who believed that words should rhyme as they are pronounced, not on the basis of how they are spelled. Even Holmes might have chosen on the basis of sound alone if the vocalic r was as much a feature of upper-class Boston speech as it was a feature of the speech of upper-class New Yorkers. Even if Holmes also did not habitually pronounce preconsonantal r, however, he obviously chose to make rhymes with words spelled with no "silent" letters. As published in 1839, the rhyme in "The Last Leaf" was "wan/gone".

For Melville conventions were far less important than the ability to use spelling to suit his own phonetic purposes. As he remarked in the Preface to Typee, "In several works descriptive of the islands in the Pacific, many of the most beautiful combinations of vocal sounds have been altogether lost to the ear of the reader by an over-attention to the ordinary rules of spelling" (xiv). His own seeming inattention to those rules came from a very common inability to grasp intuitively the tremendous complexities of standardized English spelling, an inability he seems to have shared with others in his family. Replying to a letter from her son Allan in December 1839, Maria Gansevoort Melville, herself violating both nineteenth and twentieth century notions of sentence boundaries (only rarely using even the dashes that often served to end sentences in personal correspondence), took him sternly to task for a list of spelling offenses:

My dear Allan . . . I receiv'd your beautifully written letter, excuse me if I again require you to be more careful about the spelling of words,

remember that oblige has but one b, & Helen but one l. that [sic] pantaloons are spelt without er, and that possibly requires two s's, instead of one, that Bisquit is spelt with an l--& that surprised has but one p and that seems is spelt with two e's together, not separated by the letter m--in recommend are two m's instead of one . . . (Metcalf 21).

Melville's own spelling remained a concern throughout his life, as his letters reveal. He frequently commits such spelling errors as "beleive," "cabilistic," "peices," "discription," "noncence," "Polynisian," "occasionally," "despatch" and "cerimony" (Correspondence passim). Most of these are easily recognizable as the so-called "phonetic spelling" that is the despair of composition teachers. Others, such as "beleive" and "peices," result from the easy confusion of the order of two often combined vowels. He was well enough aware of his spelling problem to correct himself when he was in doubt: in a letter to Evert Duyckinck of December 13, 1850, he wrote: " . . . slay--sleigh, I mean . . . " (Correspondence 173). In another letter to Duyckinck on February 12 of the following year, he admits to a very common spelling problem: "Daguerreotype (I spell it right from your sheet . . .)," but later in the same letter he writes, "Daguerretype (what a devel of an unspellable word)" (180). In a letter to his publisher John Murray in 1846, he spelled the same word "darguerreotype" (65). The one letter that reveals his idiosyncratic spelling most clearly is a very early one to his uncle Peter Gansevoort, detailing his life as a schoolteacher (Paltsits 5-7). The eighteen-year-old schoolmaster did not have the grasp of orthography he might have been expected to inculcate in his pupils.

Melville's awareness of his inability to adhere to the ordinary rules of spelling led him to devise his own unorthodox system when he found himself confronted by a strange language. Naturally, the system of orthography he invented to transcribe the sounds he met with was based on the phonological features of his native dialect, and this led to results that proved puzzling to readers whose speech patterns differed from his. He anticipated this in his preface to Typee: "In the Polynesian words used in this volume--

except in those cases where the spelling has been previously determined by others--that form of orthography has been employed, which might be supposed most easily to convey their sound to a stranger" (xiv). Plainly the stranger he had in mind was from the Northeast, and a member of the educated class. In the preface to Omoo he claims to have seen no other versions of the native words he transcribes, and claims further to have relied, again, entirely on his own phonological inventory: "Although it is believed that one or two imperfect Polynesian vocabularies have been published, none of the Tahitian dialect has as yet appeared. At any rate, the author has had access to none whatever. In the use of the native words, therefore, he has been mostly governed by the bare recollection of sounds" (xiv).

But readers from other language backgrounds and other English dialects found his spelling confusing. In his study of Melville and the Pacific, Melville in the South Seas, Charles Roberts Anderson admits to this puzzlement: "Melville's spelling of Tior for Taioa is merely typical of his phonetic inaccuracy" (80). Anderson quotes Max Radiguet, part of the French squadron that was laying claim to the Marquesas when Melville was there, with reference to the unorthodoxy of Melville's spelling: Typee is, says Radiguet, "un recit curieux et bien mene sous le titre, bizarrement orthographie, 'Typee'" (444). Anderson then quotes Robert Louis Stevenson: "'Our admirable friend Herman Melville, of whom, since I could judge, I have thought more than ever, had no ear for languages whatever: his Happar tribe should be Hapaa, etc.'" (Stevenson, Letters II, 112, quoted in Anderson, 444). "In the transcription of hitherto unwritten languages," allows Anderson, "there is considerable diversity of opinion; Melville, however, usually differs from most other writers, and often from all of them."

Melville referred to a variety of sources while writing Typee, and he was aware of other approaches to the transcription of Polynesian words, but, as his Preface makes clear, he thought most of them inadequate. What he chose to use instead was a rather inconsistent system, leading to variations in spelling even within the same book but

varying even more widely between Typee and Omoo, based on his own dialect.

Stevenson's complaint about the spelling of Happar, for example, reveals one of the system's basic principles, based on one of the important features of upper-class New York speech: the letter r after a vowel, particularly in the word-final position, has the effect of lengthening and diphthongizing the preceding vowel. The tribe whose name Stevenson spells Hapaa and Melville spells Happar would have recognized its name as pronounced by either man.

In addition to using the letter r to lengthen vowels (usually a), there were certain other consistent principles Melville used in his Polynesian transcriptions. The letter i, for example, is always pronounced as a diphthong. The word commonly transcribed pae pae is pi-pi in Melville's system (Anderson 157-8). The men's house that Melville calls the Ti is elsewhere transcribed Tai (162). In the word Typee he uses the letter y to represent the same diphthong sound, but he does this rarely. His use of the letter i for this sound and his use of r to lengthen preceding vowels account totally for Melville's spelling of Tior, which would have struck a native speaker of French as bizarre because for him the spelling Taioa would have more accurately represented the same sounds. What Melville uses to represent the sound a Frenchman would expect from the letter i is ee, as in his transcription Mowee for Maui, in which he also uses ow to transcribe the diphthong au. Melville's use of r as a vowel-lengthener is consistent enough to become confusing even to speakers of his dialect, however, especially when he uses it between a or o and another vowel or h. For example, even a New Yorker might be tempted to pronounce the r in such words as Hivarhoo (Hivaoa) and Arreory ('Arioi). At other times he spells the same word with the vowel-lengthening r in one place and without it in another, as when he writes mortarkee and motarkee, kannaka and kannakers, hannapa and hannapar. On another occasion he puts in an r to lengthen a vowel in a word borrowed from English: portarto is his transcription of the Polynesian pronunciation of potato. Once he even uses r to designate the lingua-alveolar tap more commonly represented by l: his spelling of

aloha is aroha.

Plainly he gave the matter of language a great deal of thought as he composed his first two novels, as his remarks on Polynesian vocabulary, syntax and grammar in Chapter 30 of Typee show. But he was as much concerned with Polynesian phonology, as he explains in Chapter 31:

To savages generally is imputed a guttural articulation. This, however, is not always the case, especially among the inhabitants of the Polynesian Archipelago. The labial melody with which the Typee girls carry on an ordinary conversation, giving a musical prolongation to the final syllable of every sentence, and chirping out some of the words with a liquid, bird-like accent, was singularly pleasing (227).

It is clear that Melville was very concerned with the accurate representation of the unfamiliar sounds he heard during his time in the South Seas; it is equally clear that his method of representing those sounds depended entirely on his own New York-bred phonological inventory. Just as his images and metaphors in this unfamiliar part of the world came from what was familiar to him, the letters he used to represent unfamiliar sounds were the ones that, in the speech patterns familiar to him, represented those sounds in English.

The urban element surfaces in three different forms in Melville's first three novels. The first is the urban metaphor, most often similes that liken some aspect of Polynesian life to some familiar, contemporary urban scene in the west. These metaphors have their immediate source in Melville's experience of New York, Liverpool and Lima and things he read and heard about Paris and London. The second form the urban element takes is that of metaphor based on mythic, historic or Biblical cities, connecting Melville's own urban experience to the urban archetype. The third form is that of the city as actual setting, and there are two types here: the Papeete of Omoo, which functions as the setting of much of the novel's action, and the use of cities in the

stories Melville interjects along the way of sailors and other interesting characters. Interjected portraits and histories of this type occur throughout Melville's work, particularly in The Confidence Man, but more importantly, the few such portraits in these early novels are the first manifestations of a character Melville would make much more of later: the urban exile. The familiar urban metaphors begin almost immediately in Typee, with a catalogue of Pacific fish that includes "the prowling shark, that villainous footpad of the seas . . ." (10). A few chapters later, describing the facial tatoos of his Typee "valet" Kory-Kory, Melville says, "His countenance thus triply hooped, as it were, with tatoeing, always reminded me of those unhappy wretches whom I have sometimes observed gazing out sentimentally from behind the grated bars of a prison window" (78). Later in the same chapter he describes Fayaway's feet: "as diminutive and fairly shaped as those which peep from beneath the skirts of a Lima lady's dress" (86). He could have read or heard about "footpads" at any time during his childhood or adolescence, and the twenty-four-hour leave in Lima on New Year's Day 1844 might have furnished him with a glimpse of a Lima lady's foot; the sight of prisoners could have occurred in New York, Albany or even Lansingburgh.

When he says a group of Typees congregated in front of the Ti reminds him of "a group of idlers gathered about the door of a village tavern when the equipage of some distinguished traveller is brought round previous to his departure," he recurs to any of a number of things he might have seen upstate, or read about. His reading is also the most likely source for the urban element in his explanation of the value of salt in Typee: "With a bushel of common Liverpool salt all the real estate of Typee might have been purchased. With a small pinch of it in one hand, and a quarter section of bread-fruit in the other, the greatest chief in the valley would have laughed at all the luxuries of a Parisian table" (114), although it is also possible that things he heard about Parisian food from his uncle Thomas Melvill, as well as the reputation Paris had among fashionable New Yorkers for having the best of everything, were also sources. But plainly personal

experience is the source of these remarks on civilization and its affects:

There were none of those thousand sources of irritation that the ingenuity of civilized man has created to mar his own felicity. There were no foreclosures of mortgages, no protested notes, no bills payable, no debts of honor in Typee; no unreasonable tailors and shoemakers, perversely bent on being paid; no duns of any description; no assault and battery attorneys, to foment discord, backing their clients up to a quarrel, and then knocking their heads together; no poor relations, everlastingly occupying the spare bed-chamber, and diminishing the elbow room at the family table; no destitute widows with their children starving on the cold charities of the world; no beggars; no debtors' prisons; no proud and hard-hearted nabobs in Typee; or to sum all up in one word -- no Money! (126)

Foreclosures, protested notes, bills, debts had been the facts of his entire adolescence; overdue payments to tradespeople and bill collectors plagued his mother in Lansingburgh after his father's death; his mother had been a "destitute widow" and poor relation relying on the charity of her brother Peter Gansevoort. Melville had undoubtedly seen and, in his late childhood, perhaps heard from his parents about, "hard-hearted nabobs" in fashionable New York, where there were also, even in his childhood (although he would only have heard about them and never actually seen one for himself), beggars and debtors' prisons. From his childhood he would also have known about the "gentlemen of leisure who breakfast at home and dine at their club" to whom he likens himself later (151); after the Melvills moved to 33 Bleeker Street, Allan regretted that he could no longer come home for his midday meal (Leyda I, 17-18). He might also have heard an echo of his father's expressions when he wrote of the Ti as "a sort of Bachelor's Hall," almost the same words his father used to describe the state of affairs at 675 Broadway just before the last of the family moved out of Manhattan and up to Albany: ". . . the Boys and myself are keeping Bachelor Hall previous to our final departure . . ."

(Leyda I, 45).

Echoes of the ways of fashionable New York, in the atmosphere of which his mother always aspired to move, can be heard in the descriptions of extensive preparations at the Ti: "Some of the symptoms reminded me of the stir produced among the scullions of a large hotel, where a grand jubilee dinner is about to be given" (158), and the behavior of his Typee valet: "as fidgety about my dilatory movements as a diner out waiting hat in hand at the bottom of the stairs for some lagging companion . . . like a dandy at a ball-room door" (161). The parade of fashionable and fashion-conscious New Yorkers up and down the west side of Broadway is the source of this comparison of savage and civilized behavior: "When I remembered that these islanders derived no advantage from dress, but appeared in all the naked simplicity of nature, I could not avoid comparing them with the fine gentlemen and dandies who promenade such unexceptionable figures in our frequented thoroughfares" (180-181). Another aspect of middle-class New York life is invoked in this discussion of the origins of many of the effects of "civilization" and "evangelism" on the Polynesians:

How little do some of these poor islanders comprehend when they look around them, that no inconsiderable part of their disasters originate in certain tea-party excitements, under the influence of which benevolent-looking gentlemen in white cravats solicit alms, and old ladies in spectacles, and young ladies in sober russet low gowns, contribute sixpences toward the creation of a fund, the object of which is to ameliorate the spiritual condition of the Polynesians, but whose end has almost always been to accomplish their temporal destruction (195).

Urban images of the first type occur less often in Omoo and Mardi. The urban focus in Omoo is on the actual village scenes, particularly in Papeetee, but Melville still found allusions to familiar Western cities useful. He describes the captain of the Julia as "pale and slender, more like a sickly counting-house clerk than a bluff sea captain" (6).

New York City politicians feeding at the public expense are alluded to in a comment on a voracious Tahitian: "Indeed, for gormandizing, I would have matched him against any three common-council men at a civic feast" (118). New Yorkers escorting out-of-town visitors on an outing are invoked in a description of Tahitians coming to view white prisoners in the Calabooza Beretanee: "No doubt, strangers from the distant villages were taken to see the 'karhowrees' (white men), in the same way that countrymen, in a city, are gallanted to the Zoological Gardens" (127).

Countrymen and their relationship to the city come up again in a mention of a Tahitian of the village of Martair (Ma'atea) who has lived in Papeete: "He seems to be quite proud of his residence there; and alluded to it, in the same significant way, in which a provincial informs you, that in his time he has resided in the capitol" (254). Commercial transportation in Lima figures in this description of a transplanted Yankee's method of transporting potatoes from hilltop to beach: "Probably he had seen the herds of panniered mules, driven in a line . . . by mounted Indians, along the great road from Callao to Lima" (228). Tahitian and British churches share a sentence: "Very nearly white when hewn from the reefs, the coral darkens with age; so that several churches in Polynesia now look almost as sooty and venerable as St. Paul's" (297), and of course the less sooty and less venerable St. Paul's in New York would have been among Melville's associations.

In Mardi the urban images have less specific referents. The first, in the novel's tenth chapter, describes the action of the protagonist's small boat on the waves: "[T]he wind being from aft, and getting underneath the canvas, almost lifted the light boat's stern into the air, vexing the counterpane as if it were a petticoat turning a gusty corner" (33). Three chapters later, in a catalogue of Pacific fish, Melville describes "the dandy Blue Shark, a long, taper and mighty genteel-looking fellow, with a slender waist, like a Bond-street beau This dainty spark invariably lounged by with a careless fin and an indolent tail. But he looked infernally heartless" (40). London's Bond Street, the center

of gentlemanly sartorial elegance, is at one level, but the Bond Street of Manhattan, visible from the back bedroom windows of the Melvills' house in Bleecker Street and from the front of their Broadway house, where "Stylish Neighbors" gave "large Part[ies] of Fashionables" (Metcalf 5), would also have been in Melville's thoughts. These allusions to contemporary cities are complemented in these first three novels by the second type, allusions to classical, historical or Biblical cities. None of these occurs in *Typee*, and only a variation, the city-as-idea, occurs in *Omoo*, in Chapter 65. The narrator and his fellow mutineer, Dr. Long Ghost, fancifully plan to urbanize a Tahitian village: "'I'll put up a banana-leaf as physician from London,'" the doctor says, "'deliver lectures on Polynesian antiquities--teach English in five lessons, at one hour each--establish power-looms for the manufacture of tappa--lay out a public park in the middle of the village, and found a festival in honor of Captain Cook!'" (245). This fanciful foray into urban planning deals in a city of the mind, and a city of the imaginative future rather than the historical or mythic past. Allusions to cities of ancient history, mythology and the Bible begin in *Mardi*. At the end of the first chapter the narrator-protagonist (later called Taji) goes aloft at sunset and beholds a complex vision based on Western conceptions of Southwest Asian antiquities:

In the distance what visions were spread! The entire western horizon high piled with gold and crimson clouds; airy arches, domes, and minarets; as if the yellow, Moorish sun were setting behind some vast Alhambra. Vistas seemed leading to worlds beyond. To and fro, and all over this Nineveh in the sky, flew troops of birds. Watching them long, one crossed my sight, flew through a low arch, and was lost to view. My spirit must have sailed with it; for directly, as in a trance, came upon me 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).

The next such instance is in Chapter 20, when the protagonist and his companion sit down to eat: "Having nothing better to do till day dawned, we planted the bread-barge in the middle of the quarter-deck, and . . . laid close siege thereto, like the Grand Turk and his Vizier Mustapha sitting down before Vienna" (64). Once Mardi embarks on its elaborate and difficult political allegory, there are no more urban allusions, although the urban element is present if one wishes to read the archipelago as a type of city. Just as Mardi, because of its fantastical nature, does not feature many allusions to actual or imaginary cities, it also has none of the third type of urban image, the urban setting. Typee and Omoo have enough basis in reality to provide examples of this third category. The first such image, and the only one in the novel, occurs in Typee's twenty-sixth chapter, a long discussion of Marquesan matrimony, domestic arrangements and other social structures, culminating in some highly critical remarks on the treatment of Pacific peoples by Westerners, particularly missionaries. This is the same chapter in which Melville describes the "tea-party excitements" among America's Protestant gentry that finance the missions, and he immediately details their effects: "Neat villas, trim gardens, shaven lawns, spires, and cupolas arise, while the poor savage soon finds himself an interloper in the country of his fathers, and that too on the very site of the hut where he was born" (195). It gets worse, and he gives a graphic example: "Look at Honolulu, the metropolis of the Sandwich Islands! --A community of disinherited merchants, and devoted self-exiled heralds of the Cross . . . --Not until I visited Honolulu was I aware of the fact that the small remnant of the natives had been civilized into beasts of burden. But so it is" (196). He goes on to describe an infuriating scene of natives pulling an insensitive missionary lady through the streets, and reaches a conclusion many other critics of Western imperialism have reached: "May not the unworthiness or incapacity of those who assume apostolic functions upon the remote islands of the sea more easily escape detection by the world at large than if it were displayed in the heart of a city?" (198).

The only other city in Typee is the one--not named, but obviously New York--in which the narrator situates himself at the end of Chapter 33: "Even now, amidst all the bustle and stir of the proud and busy city in which I am dwelling, the image of those . . . trees seems to come as vividly before my eyes as if they were actually present, and I still feel the soothing quiet pleasure which I then had in watching hour after hour their topmost boughs waving gracefully in the breeze" (244).

Omoo starts right off with allusions to actual cities as places of origin of sailors the narrator has known, in particular "a young man, whom, four years previous, I had frequently met in a sailor boarding-house in Liverpool. I remembered parting with him at Prince's Dock Gates, in the midst of a swarm of police-officers, truckmen, stevedores, beggars, and the like" (6), all of whom we will see again in Redburn. The actual urban scenes in the novel are all in Papeetee, while the mutineers are being held there in the British Jail, called the Calabooza Beretanee, or in the small villages they encounter as they travel around Tahiti, and these scenes can only be called urban by stretching it. Omoo's real urban scenes are not settings for the action of the novel, but parts of stories of various minor characters, all of them somewhat tragic, all of them exiles, whom the protagonists encounter in their wanderings. The first of these sad exiles is the tragic landlubber Rope Yarn, whose story is told in Chapter 14. He is hopelessly inept at sea and gets assigned to the lowest sort of work on shipboard, but he had started out rather well "as a journeyman baker in London," Melville tells us, "somewhere about Holborne;

and on Sundays wore a blue coat and metal buttons, and spent his afternoons in a tavern, smoking his pipe and drinking his ale like a free and easy journeyman baker that he was. But this did not last long; for an intermeddling old fool was the ruin of him. He was told that London might do very well for elderly gentlemen and invalids; but for a lad of spirit, Australia was the Land of Promise. In a dark day Ropey wound up affairs and embarked. Arriving in Sydney with a small capital, and after a

while waxing snug and comfortable by dint of hard kneading, he took unto himself a wife; . . . The lady worked him woe in heart and pocket; and in the end, ran off with his till and his foreman. Ropey . . . got fuddled; and . . . meditated suicide--an intention carried out; for the next day he shipped as landsman aboard Julia, South Seaman. The ex-baker would have fared far better, had it not been for his heart A kind word made a fool of him Two or three wags, aware of his infirmity, used to 'draw him out' in conversation . . . I always made a point of befriending poor Ropey when I could; and, for this reason, was a great favorite of his (53-55).

Like Melville, Rope Yarn has been cast out of a city where he is doing well by someone else's economic ambitions. Like Melville, Rope Yarn has wound up among the degraded. But Rope Yarn has sunk to the lowest rank among the low, and we know this has not happened to Melville's narrator the next time an urban exile shows up in Omo. The next urban exile is the narrator-protagonist himself, who describes in Chapter 43 his difficulties, as a "soul of sensibility," with the attitude of other foreigners toward the confined mutineers, or any other sailor, for that matter. Having been a member of decent society ashore, Melville's narrator dislikes being taken for nothing more than a common seaman, and comically elevates his language to express his resentment: "Whenever we met an elegantly dressed European, ten to one he shunned us, by going over to the other side of the road. This was very unpleasant, at least to myself; though, certes, it did not prey upon the minds of the others." He writes in the style of popular romances as he recalls an attempted meeting with a missionary family:

One evening, passing the verandah of a missionary's dwelling, the dame, his wife, and a pretty, blond young girl, with ringlets, were sitting there, enjoying the sea-breeze, then coming in, all cool and refreshing, from the spray of the reef.

As I approached, the old lady peered hard at me; and her very cap

seemed to convey a prim rebuke. The blue, English eyes, by her side, were also bent on me. But, oh Heavens! what a glance to receive, from a beautiful creature! As for the mob cap, not a fig did he care for it; but, to be taken for anything less than a cavalier, by the ringleted one, was absolutely unendurable. I resolved on a courteous salute, to show my good breeding, if nothing more . . . [H]ere goes a bow . . .

"Good evening, ladies," exclaimed I, at last, advancing winningly; "a delightful air from the sea, ladies."

Hysterics and hartshorn! who would have thought it? The young lady screamed, and the old one came near fainting. As for myself, I . . . scarcely drew breath, until safely housed in the Calabooza (167).

This incident drives home a sense of exile that arises earlier, in Chapter 27, when the narrator happens upon a stranded American whaler. After a conventional picture-postcard description of the town of Papeetee, a pleasant tropical village, Melville shows us the ship:

What greatly added to the picturesqueness of the bay at this time, was the condemned hull of a large ship, which at the further end of the harbor lay bilged upon the beach . . . She was an American whaler, a very old craft . . . Before leaving Tahiti, I had the curiosity to go over this poor old ship, thus stranded on a strange shore. What were my emotions, when I saw upon her stern the name of a small town on the river Hudson! She was from the noble stream on whose banks I was born; in whose waters I had a hundred times bathed. In an instant, palm-trees and elms--canoes and skiffs--church spires and bamboos--all mingled into one vision of the present and the past" (101-2).

Beginning with a feeling of sympathy for the old hulk which, like himself at that point, is "stranded on a strange shore," Melville sends his narrator into a double vision of

two places of exile, the upper Hudson Valley and the tropics. For Melville, neither Tahiti nor upstate New York was a place he had chosen to come to. In one exile he experiences an almost perverse wave of nostalgia for another.

The last urban exile we see in Omoo is associated with no actual city, but is a "decayed naval officer" on trial in a native court for aiding and abetting a native girl of fourteen "in her naughtiness, and . . . other misdemeanors" (298). Melville describes "the foreigner" as "a tall, military-looking fellow, with a dark cheek and black whiskers [H]e had lost a colonial armed brig on the coast of New Zealand; and since then, had been leading the life of a man about town among the islands of the Pacific" (290-9). This foreigner, known locally as Captain Crash, is naturally reluctant to go back to civilization and the naval courts, and has been "carrying on the illicit trade in French wines and brandies, smuggled over from men-of-war lately touching at Tahiti." While natives get drunk in Captain Crash's hut, the captain lounges under a tree, "thinking perhaps," says the exiled Melville, "over old times, and occasionally feeling his shoulders for his lost epaulets." On one occasion he entertains the crew of a whaler, and the natives mob the disorderly group and carry them off to the native court. This is among the many charges of which the captain stands accused, and Melville notes: "Thus, in Polynesia as elsewhere:--charge a man with one misdemeanor, and all his peccadilloes are raked up and assorted before him" (299). After a tumultuous trial the captain, "in consideration of his manifold offenses, being deemed incorrigible, was sentenced to eternal banishment from the island" (300).

Captain Crash thus ends up as another double exile: banished already from civilization by circumstances he may or may not have been able to control, he now ends up banished from Tahiti as well, and this after having led the life of a "man about town" in the islands--a free rover, or, as Melville explains in his Preface, an Omoo, "a person wandering from one island to another" (xiv), like the narrator himself.

These three manifestations of the urban element in three novels that are anything

but urban shed light on a submerged and usually unnoticed aspect of Melville's mind. The allusions to familiar cities of the Atlantic as ways to explain phenomena of the Pacific reveal a sensibility formed in an urban environment. Use of historical, mythic and Biblical cities for the same purpose reveals a concern with the urban archetype and an identification, as a native of a city that was taking its place as a world metropolis, with the great cities of the past. Both of these uses of cities, and the turn of mind they represent, occur throughout Melville's work. The use of cities as settings for the novel's action, or as an occasion for authorial social commentary, is perhaps the least interesting because of its thoroughly straightforward nature, but the occurrence, even this early, of exiles from civilization foreshadows one of Melville's main concerns. Even in his first three novels, the experience of the loss of New York surfaces in various ways, alongside the urban allusions that show how New York formed him. Exile and wandering are Melville's main themes, and behind every exile, along the route of every wanderer, are cities, especially the one that was always Melville's home.

II

Exile and Failure

Between 1847 and 1855 Melville wrote most of the works in which New York serves as setting. This was also the period during which he produced the works that deal with urban exile and failure. For Melville these were central issues, and in this chronologically and artistically central period of his life he faced them in the context of two phases of his life as a New Yorker. From 1847 to 1850 he was the celebrated New York author, famous for his sensational novel about life among the cannibals. He had new friends in the city's literary world and a new state in life: he was married, restored to his native city after his adolescent exile, finally enabled to support his mother and sisters after the death of his brother Gansevoort in 1846. The economic pressures this situation eventually brought to bear led to his writing *Redburn*, a largely but by no means entirely autobiographical novel about the reurbanization of a young boy whose childhood has been spent in exile from New York. In the second stage of this central period, having moved from New York to Massachusetts, Melville wrote works that show a deepening sense of isolation and alienation from New York and the kind of life he had been living there.

In the works of these two periods several types of urban exile and failure appear. First, in *Redburn*, there is the involuntary exile caused by someone else's economic failure, in this case Redburn's father's premature death, which leads to the family's flight upstate. Although Melville belittled this novel, it is far more than the potboiler he thought it was; in fact, he may have trivialized it precisely because it dealt with much that was painful and unresolved. It was as much an effort to come to terms with his disappointment with his father and his exile from and re-socialization in New York as it was an effort to pay his bills. It also reveals something of the extent and method of Melville's use of sources he became acquainted with during his period of voracious reading in the mid-1840s.

The second type, occurring in Moby-Dick, the first novel of the Massachusetts period, is self-exile from the city, especially as it represents civilization on land. Ishmael runs away to sea whenever life on land becomes unbearable. Also from the Massachusetts period come works that deal with exile and imprisonment in a foreign city (Israel Potter), self-exile and death (Pierre and "Bartleby"), and rejection and failure of natives of New York ("The Two Temples," "The Fiddler," and "Jimmy Rose"). In these works Melville explored from his farm in Pittsfield the worst things that a return to New York could have meant to him. He also confronted the fear that New York and the literary career it had come to represent for him were leaving him behind.

In May and June of 1849 Melville concentrated on Redburn, which was published the following August. In this novel he dealt for the first time with the events of his childhood. His first phase of life as a New Yorker ended in 1830. After eleven years of ever-improving life in Manhattan, a series of business decisions forced the Melvills to move back to Albany, Maria's native city, and the place where Allan and Maria had had their first two children. With the fall in the family's fortunes the socially conscious Maria no longer felt comfortable in Manhattan: "Maria's spirits are occasionally more than ever depressed, while the family requires extraordinary attention, & unless she soon obtains relief . . . I fear that her health will suffer permanent injury," Allan wrote to Peter Gansevoort that summer. "She is very desirous of removing to Albany, to enjoy once more the society of her connexions & friends & feel at home & if possible happy, which she never has been, & never can be here . . ." (Leyda I, 44). Allan overstates Maria's dislike of New York and preference for Albany, perhaps to deflect his brother-in-law's attention from his own reasons for wanting to leave New York : to elude his creditors.

Allan Melvill's most adventurous and least solid business scheme was the immediate cause of the Melvill family's flight to Albany, which was intended to remove Allan from the vicinity of his creditors. Recently this business venture and its results have been examined for their effect on Melville's emotional life. In Subversive

Genealogies (New York, 1983) Michael Paul Rogin sees Melvill's fall as the result of a failed confidence game, and finds its effects in The Confidence Man (250). J. Walter Herbert, in Moby-Dick and Calvinism, sees it as the source of Melville's religious conflicts: his father's liberal Unitarianism always contrasted with his mother's orthodox Dutch Reformed Calvinism, but there was no real conflict until Allan's apparently benevolent God punished him, in a ruthlessly Calvinistic way, with madness and death, instead of rewarding him with temporal success (45-61).

Herman Melville's disillusionment with his father's business ethics and religious beliefs fatally undermined his father's authority. But, as Herbert points out, Allan Melvill's last business deal was typical of the risky practices prevalent in New York, and therefore something with which Peter Gansevoort was very uncomfortable even as he lent Allan the money to pursue it. The mainstays of Albany business, including Gansevoort, were far more cautious than to borrow money to go into a jobbing scheme with people who put up no money themselves but used Allan Melvill's name to create the illusion of their own financial stability (Herbert 47-52).

How much of this Melville knew as a child, or at any other time, is impossible to determine, although it is reasonable to assume that when he and his father sailed up the Hudson together he knew his father had failed in business, the main reason for his having come to New York in the first place. At this point Herman was already being steered into business studies himself; he may have been very much aware of his father's failure and its various meanings. Rogin suggests that it was the desire to outlive the shame of Allan's failure after his death that led the family to change the spelling of its name, resuming the final e that had been used by their aristocratic Scottish ancestors but dropped by their American descendants (32).

In any case, by late September 1830 Maria was in Albany with the girls and the baby Thomas; she returned to Manhattan to bring Gansevoort upstate on October 8. Only Herman and his father remained in New York City. On October 9 the last two New York

Melvills boarded the boat that was intended to take them out of New York for the rest of their lives, or at least until some time in the future when conditions for Allan might be safer. For Allan Melvill that time never came: he did not survive the next two years. For Herman, at eleven, it meant leaving behind a happy and secure life that had turned unexpectedly precarious.

The boat that Allan and Herman boarded for Albany should have left the Cortlandt Street pier on October 9, but bad weather forced a delay until seven the next morning. Herman and Allan spent the night on the dock. On October 11, late in the morning, they arrived at Albany and began settling into their new house on Market Street. These two days of traveling provided many opportunities for Herman to reflect on everything his departure from New York meant. It is possible that the route he and his father took from their house on Broadway to the Cortlandt Street pier took them past their old house at 55 Cortlandt Street, where the family had lived until Herman was five; one or the other of them might have remarked upon it in passing. But more important than that was the opportunity Herman had to reassess his father as they retreated up the Hudson together, even though he may only have felt disappointed and confused. The man who had been able to take every advantage of New York's opportunities, who had given his family all of New York's educational and social advantages, was suddenly unable to read the city correctly at all. This exile from New York and the trip up the Hudson to Albany taught Herman that his father's New York no longer corresponded to the actual city, and his New York childhood was a casualty of this dislocation. This episode is one of the sources of the sense of betrayal, isolation and disappointment that followed him throughout his life, although he did not deal with it until his fourth novel.

Redburn is informed by three early periods of Melville's life as a New Yorker: the childhood and exile upstate, the last stage of his Midwestern job search in the mid-1840s which serves to explain an otherwise puzzling element at the end of the book), and his New York author period. He uses details from each period to explore the conflicts of his

youth, transposing events of his late teens and early twenties to this narrative of the protagonist's early teens, and using the important and traumatic delayed departure from Manhattan (and the actual delay in the St. Lawrence's departure) in his fictionalized first voyage. The main contribution of the late 1840s is Melville's reading of a source for both Redburn and White-Jacket that Perry Miller mentions in The Raven and the Whale, Charles F. Briggs' The Adventures of Harry Franco (1838), an immensely successful potboiler itself from which Melville absorbed many of the details and incidents that surface in both of his own novels of the summer of 1849. So numerous are the parallels between this work and both Redburn and White-Jacket that there is, Miller points out, no doubt that it was one of Melville's major sources. "To the extent that Melville, returning ignorant to New York and acquiring his literary education as he went along, was casting about for forms his audience would accept, Harry Franco helped to predetermine his methods," Miller says. "Briggs' works were so popular it was unthinkable that a youth who had won attention with an amateur sea story, and needed to hold it, would not study Franco to see how a professional managed" (56).

In Typee, Omoo and Mardi Melville used his pre-literary experience in the South Seas and, except for the few Pacific scenes in White-Jacket, he would not go back to that material again until Moby-Dick. By 1849 only one area of his shipboard life remained unused, and that was his 1839 trip to Liverpool as a ship's boy. By the time he wrote Redburn Melville had experienced the almost instant fame that followed the publication of Typee, the anticipation and controversy that greeted Omoo, and the public's consternation with Mardi. His financial situation, despite his celebrity, had become more and more urgent as the number of his dependents grew: by 1849 he was supporting his wife and their infant son, born that February, and he was at least partly responsible, with his brother Allan, for the support of his mother and sisters.

His travels had served him well as subject matter before, especially when he had stuck to telling a good story and not gone off into the kind of political and philosophical

allegorizing that had made Mardi his most puzzling and least commercially successful work thus far. Another travel story was a sensible choice for a novel he knew had to sell better than his last. But there was another ingredient in his choice: for the first time the story was based in the Atlantic rather than the Pacific. Inevitably, and perhaps intentionally, this brought the story closer to home, and gave Melville his first opportunity to tell explicitly part of the story of his relationship to New York.

Critical estimation of Redburn has always been higher than Melville's own. Although Mardi was a critical and financial failure, Melville thought it was an important step forward in artistry, and, as he wrote to his publisher Richard Bentley in early June 1849, "I[t] will reach those for whom it was intended; and I have already received assurances that 'Mardi,' in its highest purposes, has not been written in vain" (Correspondence 131-132). He then explained that he was preparing

a thing of a widely different cast . . . : a plain, straightforward, amusing narrative of personal experience--The son of a gentleman on his first voyage to sea as a sailor--no metaphysics, no conic-sections, nothing but cakes & ale. I have shifted my ground from the South Seas to a different quarter of the globe--nearer home--and what I write I have almost wholly picked up by my own observations under comic circumstances (132).

In October, after Redburn's London publication, Melville wrote to his father-in-law, Lemuel Shaw:

It may be deemed a book of tolerable entertainment;--it may be accounted dull.--As for the other book [White-Jacket], it will be sure to be attacked in some quarters. But no reputation that is gratifying to me, can possibly be achieved by either of these two books. They are two jobs, which I have done for money--being forced to it, as other men are to sawing wood Being books then, written in this way, my only 'success' (as it is called) springs from my pocket, & not from my heart (138-139).

In a letter he wrote that same day to Richard Henry Dana Jr., Melville referred to Redburn as "[a] little nursery tale of mine" (93). On December 14 he wrote to Evert Duyckinck from London, expressing surprise at Redburn's favorable reception, adding, "I am glad of it--for it puts money into an empty purse. But I hope I shall never write such a book again--Tho' when a poor devil writes with duns all round him . . . what can you expect of that poor devil? --What but a beggarly 'Redburn!'" (95).

Melville's early biographers, lacking the specific information uncovered in the 1950s and incorporated into Jay Leyda's Melville Log and Leon Howard's biography, as well as William Gilman's Melville's Early Life and Redburn, seemed all too eager to take the first of Melville's comments literally. They read Redburn as straight autobiography, not realizing that certain important details of Wellingborough Redburn's life--the date of his father's death, for example--were not identical with the facts of Melville's "first voyage to sea as a sailor." Other details, such as the delay in the Highlander's sailing, due to poor weather, have two sources, one literal and one a childhood echo.

Melville's disparaging comments hint that a deeper kind of truth is being told in this novel, and that the revision of his own biographical details serves the purpose of telling a far more personal story than any of his previous works had told. Redburn is indeed "nearer home", and both the belittling comments and the ten-year interval between his Liverpool trip and the use of it in his writing indicate that Melville was for the first time confronting emotional truths that troubled him.

One of the obvious revisions of autobiographical fact is the age at which young Redburn goes to sea. Melville mentions no specific age for Redburn, but clearly the protagonist is in his adolescence, several years younger than Melville, who was twenty-one when he sailed to Liverpool. Lowering the protagonist's age--and telling the story through the narration of an older and wiser Redburn who lives in New York--gave Melville greater leeway to enlist the reader's sympathy. Among other things, it allowed him more opportunity to show Redburn's emotions, which might not have been credible

and probably would not have been seen as proper in a young man. This was certainly a wise strategy in a novel intended to make money, but another reason Melville lowered his protagonist's age is to tell more of the emotional truth of his own earlier years.

In Melville's reworking of his own story, Wellingborough Redburn, economic exile from New York, travels to a British city and then re-encounters his own with a restored native's ease, but while he is in the foreign city that reurbanizes him he finds his father's old guidebook to that same city irrelevant, although revelatory of other things. Melville's disappointment in his father's inability to read New York's commercial ways in the late 1820s is represented here by Redburn's inability to follow his father's old routes through the byways of Liverpool. Redburn's father's Liverpool was no more there for his son three decades later than Allan Melvill's New York was still waiting at the mouth of the Hudson for Herman and his brothers when they finally returned from their economic exile.

The guidebook is an ingenious symbol that Melville only introduces in the thirtieth chapter, halfway through the book, which is most likely when it first occurred to him. He had many chances to introduce it before, especially in the opening chapters when he describes exactly what Redburn brings to sea with him, and if it had been a part of his plan at that point, that would surely have been the place to mention it. When he finally does bring it in, he devotes several chapters to what it reveals of the differences between the father's city and the son's. He even takes several opportunities to make comparisons with New York: "And even as this old guide-book boasts of the, to us, insignificant Liverpool of fifty years ago, the New York guide-books are now vaunting of the magnitude of a town, whose future inhabitants, multitudinous as the pebbles on the beach, and girdled in with high walls and towers, flanking endless avenues of opulence and taste, will regard all our Broadways and Bowerys as but the paltry nucleus to their Nineveh," going on to evoke an image of upstate archeologists excavating the "present Doric custom-house . . . as a proof that their high and mighty metropolis once enjoyed a

Hellenic antiquity" (149). Without mentioning New York, and before entering on great specifics about the new and old Liverpool, he states the basic problem posed by the guidebook: "I little imagined that the Liverpool my father saw, was another Liverpool from that to which I, his son Wellingborough was sailing. No; these thoughts never obtruded . . ." (152). After a meditation on urban mutability, he adds, "Yes, the thing that had guided the father, could not guide the son," and adds a typically urban conclusion: "And I sat down on a shop step, and gave loose to meditation" (157).

In the following chapter he compares New York's wharves to the "mighty docks" of Liverpool, characterizing the shipping facilities of his native city as "the miserable wooden wharves, and slip-shod, shambling piers of New York In New York, to be sure, I could not but be struck with the long line of shipping, and tangled thickets of masts along the East River; yet, my admiration had been much abated by those irregular, unsightly wharves, which, I am sure, are a reproach and disgrace to the city that tolerates them" (161). This is one of a number of explicit comparisons between New York and Liverpool, most of which reduce Liverpool, which Redburn has looked forward to as a place of European splendor, to the size of the one city he has known before.

These deflating comparisons begin as soon as Redburn catches his first glimpse of the purple hills of Wales: "But, after all, the general effect of these mountains was mortifyingly like the general effect of the Kaatskill Mountains on the Hudson River" (126). Having expected everything English to be superior to everything American, he finds it mortifying that the mountains look familiar; of course, Melville's earlier narrators felt, or admitted to, no such mortification when they perceived similarities between New York and the South Seas.

The disappointment continues when he first sees the city: "Looking shoreward, I beheld lofty ranges of dingy warehouses, which seemed very deficient in the elements of the marvelous; and bore a most unexpected resemblance to the ware-houses along South-street in New York. There was nothing strange; nothing extraordinary about them

To be sure, I did not expect that every house in Liverpool must be a Leaning Tower of Pisa, or a Strassbourg Cathedral; but yet, these edifices I must confess, were a sad and bitter disappointment to me" (127). When the crew is settled in its boarding-house near the wharves, he looks around and sees more familiar sights that take the glow off his first encounter with fabled England: "I examined the place attentively; it was a long, narrow, little room, with one small arched window with red curtains, looking out upon a smoky, untidy yard, bounded by a dingy brick-wall, the top of which was horrible with pieces of broken bottles, stuck into mortar From the street came a confused uproar of ballad-singers, bawling women, babies, and drunken sailors. And this is England?" (133) When he begins to tour the town with his father's outdated guidebook, his disappointment is crystallized: "Is there nothing at all in the British empire but these smoky ranges of old shops and warehouses? is Liverpool but a bric-kiln?" (Melville later called New York a brick-kiln in two letters of 1850.) "Why, no buildings here look so ancient as the old gable-pointed mansion of my maternal grandfather at home, whose bricks were brought from Holland long before the revolutionary war! 'Tis a deceit--a gull--a sham--a hoax!" (159).

Along with his disappointment in the real England, what Redburn experiences in Liverpool is an intensified re-exposure to the realities of urban life. In fact, he is exposed to aspects of urban life in Liverpool that he would never have experienced first hand in New York. The most vivid of these is the incident of the woman and her children dying of starvation in a basement in Lancelott's-Hey, a tiny alley near the docks. Faced with the overwhelming human misery of the scene and impelled by his conscience to do what he can to help, he gets a swift education in the compartmentalized, bureaucratic shifting of responsibility and the merciless victim-blaming that are the worst manifestations of urban self-defense.

He looks for the "ragged old women" he has seen in the vicinity and asks them about the people in the basement. One claims not to know them nor want to; another

says she has no time to help beggars; a third consigns them to death. A fourth, "an old hag," says, "that Betsey Jennings disarves it--was she ever married? tell me that." The local police also disclaim jurisdictional responsibility, saying, "I don't belong to that street," and advising Redburn to "leave these matters to the town" (181-2). His own efforts to relieve their hunger and thirst are completely useless; within three days they are dead. Naturally this causes Redburn the narrator to reflect on human suffering and callousness, while Redburn the protagonist has learned something new of the underside of urban life, something he never could have seen as the "son of a gentleman" in New York.

A few chapters later he marvels at the crowds that fill the streets at evening: "For in some parts of the town, inhabited by laborers, and poor people generally; I used to crowd myself through masses of squalid men, women, and children, who at this evening hour, in those quarters of Liverpool, seem to empty themselves into the street, and live there for a time. I had never seen anything like it in New York" (201). He also learns, apparently for the first time, the significance of eye contact in urban communication. Discussing the dock-wall beggars, he says, "If you so much as glanced your eye on one of them, even for an instant, it was perceived like lightning, and the person never left your side until you turned into another street, or satisfied his demands. Thus, at least, it was with the sailors; though I observed that the beggars treated the town's people differently" (187). In Liverpool the son of a New York gentleman sees street peddlers, ballad singers, beggars of all descriptions, deceitful recruiters for the British navy and army, seedy-looking individuals selling stolen goods; he learns how to deal with these by publicly embarrassing them. He also sees Liverpool's pawnbrokers, and remarks on their number and the fact that they "were generally next neighbors to . . . spirit-vaults; and no doubt, mutually to facilitate business operations, some of these establishments have connecting doors inside, so as to play their customers into each other's hands" (195). This, of course, is the voice of the older, wiser and thoroughly urban Redburn the narrator, through the

pen of Melville the New York author, whose memories of his own youthful reurbanization came into this novel as much from his reading as from reminiscence.

Looking back on it later in a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, Melville recalled the year 1844 as the beginning of his growth: "My development has been all within a few years past Until I was twenty-five, I had no development at all. From my twenty-fifth year I date my life. Three weeks have scarcely passed, at any time between then and now, that I have not unfolded within myself" (Correspondence 193). This is at least partly due to the habit of wide and active reading that Melville adopted in the mid-1840s, when he returned from the South Seas and began his life as a New York author. No longer confined to Albany or Lansingburgh as he had been in his adolescence, he was frequently in the city, and after the publication of Typee he was a fully incorporated member of New York's literary set.

Under the influence of his fellow literati, as they called themselves, he read widely in the great works, as well as in the current popular writing. It is certain, for example, that he read Charles Briggs' highly popular novel, The Trippings of Tom Pepper (1847, 1850); according to Merton Sealts, he owned a copy of the first volume. It is virtually certain that he also absorbed Briggs' even more popular novel, The Adventures of Harry Franco (1837).

The urban incidents that Briggs sets in New York and Melville sets in Liverpool are of particular interest, but interesting echoes begin much earlier. Both novels begin with a youth from a ruined family living in a rural village to the north of New York City. Each youthful protagonist decides to make his way in the world and heads down the Hudson to New York. In the city, where Redburn has distressing encounters with pawnbrokers, Franco wanders into an auction house and is cheated there. Most of what happens to Franco in New York happens to Redburn in Liverpool: the clerks in Harry Franco's boarding house in New York are described in the same terms as the sailors in the Liverpool boarding house where the crew of the Highlander stays.

Franco is as impressed with the New York waterfront as Redburn is with the docks of Liverpool:

Perhaps those who are in the daily habit of seeing sights like these, may think it extravagant in me to speak of them in such terms; but those who have spent their lives in a secluded village will remember with what wondering eyes they first looked upon the crowded wharves of a thronged seaport like New York in its hey day of activity, and they will think my words are cold, and my descriptions tame, as in truth they appear to me. Since that day I have seen the navies of half the world, and the crowds of merchant ships which fill the walled docks of London and Liverpool, with their flags floating heavily on the murky atmosphere of those surly cities; and I have visited most of the seaports worth seeing in the old world and in the new, but I have never seen any, for brightness and beauty, for liveliness and joy, that can compare with New York (153).

Melville's disapproving remarks contrast interestingly with those of Briggs, the transplanted New Englander. Briggs could be impressed with New York's waterfront; Melville, as a native, looked at the harbor with a proprietary sense that highlighted their shortcomings. This was, after all, his harbor, and in any case, it would have been unseemly for a sophisticated native to seem to boast.

Harry Franco has an encounter with waterfront grocery-store lowlife very much like that Redburn experiences (164-5); when Franco gets to sea, a sailor with delirium tremens jumps overboard in a thunderstorm (190); he is ordered aloft to "grease the peril of the maintopsail yard" and, like Redburn, fails to understand the order (191). Melville echoes a number of the incidents of the rest of Briggs' first volume, which is full of various interesting episodes and adventures at sea.

Melville must have found the second volume particularly interesting. After two years of predictable and sometimes preposterous adventures, various versions of which

crop up in White-Jacket. Harry Franco returns to a New York he barely recognizes, a phenomenon Melville himself must have experienced when he returned in the 1840s. Real estate speculation has spread like summer cholera, and the talk everywhere is of money. He has the experience Melville himself might have had if he tried to find his old homes in lower Manhattan: he looks for his old boarding house and finds "no house stood there now: a street had been cut through the very spot, and towering high brick stores, with square granite pillars, had sprung up all around it" (II, 4). He looks for his lady friend's house in St. John's Square, where Redburn's New York friends also live, and finds that that house too is gone. Eventually, after other incidents that serve as excuses to describe various aspects of the New York scene, Franco makes his obligatory but ostensibly inadvertent venture into the Five Points, the New York slum that held the place in the national mind that the South Bronx holds today:

I had unconsciously strayed into a wretched street, the houses of which on either side were disgustingly mean and filthy in their appearance. Vile looking women, negroes, and squalid children, hogs, and all manner of unclean things, were seen all around; and oaths, and lewd talk, and boisterous revelry, without mirth, were heard proceeding from the cellars and shop doors. I did not know before that there was such a vile and wretched spot in the city, and I spoke to a negro woman, who sat on the sill of a cellar door, smoking a pipe, and asked her what it was.

"Get away, white man," replied the wench, "you don't say you don't know where de pints is; get along wid your bodering me. Dis is Five Points, dat you knows precious well." (II, 61-2)

So far this is the standard fictional encounter with unexpected urban horror. But Franco is then enticed by a begging child into a wooden shanty in a courtyard, and the episode becomes a clear source for Redburn's encounter with death in Lancelott's-Hey. In the shanty are a dying woman and two more starving children. "I could hardly believe

that there were human beings living, or rather dying, in such a condition, in the very centre of this great and wealthy city," Briggs has his narrator remark, but Franco does nothing for them and learns nothing further about the bad side of city life; almost predictably, he is rescued from growth in understanding by the sudden appearance of his long-lost lady-love, the wealthy and well-born Georgianna DeLancey, who shows up just then to do her Protestant mission work with just this slum family (II, 63). Briggs does not allow his protagonist the insight from this incident that Melville makes sure to give young Redburn.

Redburn's deeper understanding of urban reality comes to him in the course of his explorations of Liverpool, but we see the true results of it in his conduct in New York. The older Redburn who narrates the novel is a settled New Yorker, so we know that Redburn's retreat upstate at the end of the book is not permanent. That is one clue to his renewed relationship with his native city. But his behavior when he first gets back into port is an even better clue as to how great an effect his urban sojourn has had on him. In the novel's early chapters he is an upstate hayseed who can hardly find his way to a glass of water in the city he has forgotten during a childhood in exile. On his way back in, however, he and his friend Harry Bolton, whom he has met in England and who has decided to emigrate, navigate New York easily. On their first morning ashore they go to breakfast: "I piloted Harry to the sign of a Turkey Cock in Fulton-street, kept by one Sweeny, a place famous for cheap Souchong, and capitol buckwheat cakes," where he orders ham and eggs, "which I had tasted at the sign of the Turkey Cock before" (303). He is also able now to put Harry in touch with a job contact in the city, despite his earlier inability to negotiate his own way onto a transatlantic ship.

This has its source in Melville's own experience in New York after his job-seeking trip through the Midwest with his friend, Eli James Murdock Fly. They spent the summer of 1840 traveling and looking for gainful employment, and in the autumn of that year, having found nothing to keep them out there, they returned to New York and spent

a number of weeks there. As Gansevoort Melville, the obvious prototype of the job contact Redburn unearths, wrote to his brother Allan on November 26:

Herman is still here--He has been & is a source of great anxiety to me--He has not obt'd a situation--Fly is still on the lookout--He has so far been entirely unsuccessful-- . . . They are both in good health & tolerable spirits--& are living at a cheap rate \$2.50 per week, exclusive of dinner-- They dine with me every day at Sweeny's and are blessed with good appetites--as my exchequer can vouch--Herman has had his hair sheared & whiskers shaved & looks more like a Christian than usual--" (Leyda, I, 110).

What Melville made of this time in Redburn is the only indication we have of what he may have been feeling, but his portrayal of this period as a time for Redburn of renewed acquaintance with and comfort in New York is a fair indication that it may have been the same for Melville himself. Whether his own reurbanization was, like Redburn's, the exclusive result of the time in Liverpool or also the result of the travels in the west is not possible to determine, but clearly this novel about a first voyage is as much about a rediscovery of the city as about the discovery of the wider world.

In the summer of 1850, in search of greater space to live in and quiet to work in, Melville moved his family to Broadhall, the former home of his uncle Thomas Melvill, then owned and operated by his cousin Robert Melvill. The Pittsfield, Massachusetts area was, then as now, something of a summer colony for New York and Boston artists and literary types, and it was among this crowd that the Melvilles spent the summer.

In early August, with Evert Duyckinck visiting from New York, Sarah Morewood, a Pittsfield neighbor of great social energy, organized the famous picnic on Monument Mountain at which Hawthorne and Melville met. When Evert Duyckinck returned to New York later that month Melville wrote him a comic letter, pitying him for having to

be in New York while he himself was up in the country. Of course, the lack of rural detail and the long-drawn-out ironic fancy full of urban detail bespeak the city man transplanted to and infatuated with the country:

I could not avoid a real feeling of grief, to think of you, once more in those dreary regions which are Trans-Taconic to me.--What are you doing there, My Beloved, among the bricks & cobblestone boulders? Are you making mortar? Surely, My Beloved, you are not carrying a hod?--That were a quizzical sight, to see any godly man, with a pen behind his ear, and a hod on his shoulder.--I have a horrible presentiment that you are even now hanging round the City-Hall, trying to get a contract from the corporation to pave Broadway between Clinton Place & Union-Square. For heaven's sake, come out from among those Hittites & Hoddites--give up mortar forever.--There is one thing certain, that, chemically speaking, mortar was the precipitate of the Fall; & with a brickbat, or a cobblestone boulder, Cain killed Abel.--Do you drink Lime-water in the morning by way of a stomachic? Do you use brick-bats for paper-weights in the office? Do you & [Cornelius] Mathews pitch paving-stones, & play ball that way in the cool of the evening, opposite the Astor-House? --How do they sell mortar by the quart now? Cheaper than ice-cream, I suppose.--A horrible something in me tells me that you are about dipping your head in plaster at Fowler's for your bust.--But enough.--the visions come too thick for me to master them (Correspondence 167-168).

These images may have been part of the conversation during Duyckinck's visit. In a letter to his wife on August 4, 1850, the evening after the party on Monument Mountain, Evert Duyckinck wrote,

To tell of these [rural comforts and amusements] to a lady encased in hot bricks in New York would be unprovoked cruelty . . . A drive yesterday

to Pontoosuc would have conquered all affection for bricks & mortar . . .
 [Their children] George & Henry I should like to tumble about in these
 bowls of cream here & have you abusing the city & crying 'beautiful' and
 'enchanted'" (Metcalf 80-81).

Two days later he wrote again, full of urban comparisons: "You must see Pittsfield--The fat woman on Davis' stoop does not compare--I am in earnest--with Saddleback and the small birds sing sweeter than the Sunday newsboys or the demented milkman" (83). The following day he wrote to his brother George, "Allan Melville came up last night & says the heat of the city is still oppressive. Here every breath is a new luxury and every new look out a fresh discovery" (84).

The next day he wrote to his wife: "I write this in bed between five and six AM--so you see that I think of you the first of all things in the day and another thing how much wider awake I am in the country than the city. I have always told you so. In the city I am a martyr to the depressing influence of baked bricks but here I would rise with the lark if there was one," and goes on to hint at how many other New Yorkers were enjoying the area's bucolic raptures that summer: "We descended upon the huge rambling hotel at the Springs [at Lebanon, New York]. Half Broadway was promenading there after dinner" (84). As a result of this rural infatuation and the good effect of this socially stimulating and physically restorative summer, Melville decided to move to Pittsfield with his family in the fall. He looked around for property and bought the farm next to Broadhall in September 1850.

Not every member of Melville's household, which at this point included his mother, sisters Augusta and Helen, his wife Elizabeth and their son Malcolm, looked forward to the move to Massachusetts. On the last day of September 1850, Augusta Melville wrote to Evert Duyckinck,

And now of our approaching departure --It made me sad to think of it:--
 not that I do not love the country, for I am always happier there--but I

grieve to leave friends whom I have learned to prize & associations that have become dear.--And most of all, Mr. Duyckinck, I shall miss your many kindnesses & ever grateful attentions--but I must learn to do without them, remembering that 'passing away is written in all'" (94).

But by early October they had moved in, not to leave until 1863.

The pleasant novelty of his first year in the country is reflected in Melville's letters, although his allusions to and inquiries after the old haunts in New York reveal the beginnings of a sense of isolation. He laments the need to go to New York to finish Moby-Dick in a letter to Hawthorne on June 1, 1851: "In a week or so, I go to New York, to bury myself in a third-story room, and work and slave on my 'Whale' while it is driving through the press. That is the only way I can finish it now,--I am so pulled hither and thither by circumstances" (Correspondence 191), indicating that the peace and quiet he had moved to the country for in the first place were a transplanted New Yorker's fantasy and not rural reality. But he was back in Pittsfield four weeks later, "disgusted," as he wrote to Hawthorne, "with the heat and dust of the Babylonish brick-kiln of New York," and resolved to finish his book in the country (195).

By December 1850 he was beginning to feel that he had lost touch, and wrote in a jocular vein to Evert Duyckinck:

If you overhaul your old diaries you will see that a long period ago you were acquainted with one Herman Melville; that he then resided in New York; but removing after a time into a remote region called Berkshire, and failing to answer what letters you sent him, you did but reasonably suppose him dead; at any rate did not hear anything of him again, & so by degrees you thought no more about him (Correspondence 172).

In the same letter he describes his daily life:

Do you want to know how I pass my time?--I rise at eight--thereabouts--& go to my barn--say good-morning to the horse, & give him

his breakfast. (It goes to my heart to give him a cold one, but it can't be helped.) Then, pay a visit to my cow--cut up a pumpkin or two for her, & stand by to see her eat it--for its a pleasant sight to see a cow move her jaws--she does it so mildly & with such a sanctity. --My own breakfast over, I go to my work-room & light my fire--then spread my m.s.s. on the table--take one business squint at it, & fall to with a will. At 2 1/2 p.m. I hear a preconcerted knock at my door, which, (by request) continues till I rise and go to the door, which serves to wean me effectively from my writing, however interested I may be. My friends the horse & cow now demand their dinner--& I go & give it them. My own dinner over, I rig my sleigh & with my mother or sisters start off for the village--& if it be a Literary World day, great is the satisfaction thereof. --My evenings I spend in a sort of mesmeric state in my room--not being able to read--only now & then skimming over some large-printed book In the country here, I begin to appreciate the Literary World. I read it as a sort of private letter from you to me (174)

As early as April 1851 Hawthorne wrote to Evert Duyckinck in a way that suggests that, for some of the transplants to the Berkshires, the novelty of country life was beginning to wear thin:

I wish I could come to New York; for one needs, sometimes, a relief from too profound repose. Melville and I talked of making an excursion thither, at some indefinite period I have nearly come to the conclusion that summer is the worst time to be in the country, it being so impossible to ramble about in the hot-sun; whereas, in cities, there is always the shady side of the well-watered street, and awnings on the sunny side; not to speak of iced-creams and all kinds of iced liquors, which are greatly preferable to the luke-warm basin of a brook, with its tadpoles and

insects mingling in your draught (Metcalf 103).

This excursion never came off, and by November 7 Melville wrote to Duyckinck, sounding as though he still needed it: "And now what is the news with you? I suppose the Knights of the Round Table still assemble over their cigars & punch, & I know that once every week the 'Literary World' revolves upon its axis. I should like to hear again the old tinkle of glasses in your basement, & may do so, before many months"

(Correspondence 172-173). Melville was in New York for the first two weeks of January 1852, where he wrote on January 8 to Sophia Hawthorne expressing his gladness at her appreciation of Moby-Dick and promising that his next work would be "a rural bowl of milk" (219). The character of this next work, Pierre, or, The Ambiguities, changed dramatically in the writing, but it remained, at least on the surface, a pastoral fantasy as long as the rural idyll that produced Moby-Dick lasted.

Moby-Dick is the least urban of Melville's works. New York and New Bedford, the only two urban settings in the book, fade from the thought of the narrator and the sight of the reader as soon as the Pequod leaves port. This most remarkable of Melville's works is also remarkable for its relative lack of the type of urban allusion and scene so often found in the early works. Even though Ishmael starts out from New York and describes it with the eye of one who knows it well, he does not leave a trail of New York references, as do the protagonists of Typee, Omoo and Mardi, that would mark him as a native. Ishmael speaks of New York in the manner of a perceptive and appreciative visitor who often comes to the city but spends most of his time elsewhere, reflecting Melville's own perfectly amicable withdrawal from his native city, and his recently acquired attitude of detachment from New York life that characterized the pleasant early days in Pittsfield. Ishmael's description of New Yorkers running to the edges of Manhattan to be near the water in their free moments is not part of an anti-urban diatribe, coming as it does amid citations of similar phenomena in a variety of settings. Nor does Ishmael blame his need to get out of New York on New York. His explanation of his

departure is an evocation of his own gloomy mood and the irresistible attraction of the sea; he never lists "the good old city of Manhatto," as he refers to it in the beginning of Chapter Two, as one of the causes. All things considered, the most interesting aspect of Melville's use of New York in Moby-Dick is his failure to make much use of it at all.

The only actual urban scenes in Moby-Dick are descriptions of the whaling town of New Bedford. Ishmael spends two nights and a day there on his way to Nantucket, from which he insists on embarking. As he describes it in the second paragraph of the second chapter, "New Bedford has of late been gradually monopolizing the business of whaling, and though in this matter poor old Nantucket is now much behind her, yet Nantucket was her great original--the Tyre of this Carthage" (9) His landing in New Bedford and settling in are an experienced adult's version of the early New York scenes in Redburn: "It was a very dubious-looking, nay, a very dark and dismal night, biting cold and cheerless. I knew no one in the place . . . [T]he congealed frost lay ten inches thick in a hard, asphaltic pavement,--rather weary for me, when I struck my foot against the flinty projections, because from hard, remorseless service the soles of my boots were in a most miserable plight . . . I now by instinct followed the streets that took me waterward, for there, doubtless, were the cheapest, if not the cheeriest inns" (9).

Far from being defeated by any of this, as Redburn almost is, Ishmael observes and reports. He makes one uncharacteristic reference to the last city he was in: "I sat down on an old wooden settle, carved all over like a bench on the Battery" (14), but other than that, he is too interested in getting to sea to be overcome any further by depression; in any case, he has already been revealed as a character who does not blame the mood he is in on the place he is in. This is Melville's current attitude toward the city. He was no longer living there, but this was because he was still in a rural idyll and not because he was in some state of anti-urban irritation. His mind was so far from the city that the urban allusions that pepper his earlier works occur very rarely here. Even Father Mapple's sermon about the story of Jonah omits all mention of the city that was Jonah's

destination, the ancient Nineveh that Melville refers to so often elsewhere. But plainly this work, and Melville's mind, are elsewhere, to the point at which even the ship-as-city metaphor is virtually absent. Moby-Dick does not even end in a return to port: ship and crew are lost at sea, and the displaced Ishmael, whose abode even as he tells his story remains a mystery, is the sole and permanently cityless survivor.

The absence of urban metaphors in Moby-Dick may have a number of causes. First, as letters of this period make clear, he was moving to Pittsfield to live in a bigger house and have more quiet in which to write. He was not doing it primarily to escape from New York, since he was neither annoyed by nor at odds with anything in his native city when he first moved to Massachusetts. Second, this move was also an effort to extend the happy times of the summer of 1850. He was still happy with country life, so he was not entertaining thoughts of what a return to New York would mean. Third, he seems to have adopted a new frame of reference with his new address, reflecting his new gentleman-farmer's perspective in his embrace of a de-urbanized idiom. A fourth and related factor is the influence and inspiration of Nathaniel Hawthorne and other New England writers, including Emerson. Transcendentalism informs Moby-Dick more than any of Melville's other works, and certainly the style of the New England writers influenced him as much as their thinking did. They did not season their work with urban allusions, and this would have made it all the easier for the newly ruralized Melville to leave them out of his writing. Only when the non-urban Moby-Dick aroused disapproval in New York and the sweetness of country life began to fade did cities reappear in Melville's work.

Much as Melville enjoyed his early time in Pittsfield, and fruitful though his friendship with Hawthorne was, the idyll could not last. On November 21, 1851 the Hawthornes moved away from Lenox to West Newton, a day away by train (Leyda I, 436), and although correspondence and visits continued, the early intensity and intimacy were no longer possible. According to Leon Howard, that left Melville with "no outlet

for his emotions except through his manuscript" (190), into which he poured the frustrations and doubts of the winter of 1851-52. On November 15 and 22, the Literary World ran Evert Duyckinck's review of Moby-Dick, which, while generally favorable and very perceptive, included comments on the novel's technique and on the religious opinions of Ishmael that probably annoyed Melville with their prudish conventionality:

The intense Captain Ahab is too long drawn out; something more of him might, we think, be left to the reader's imagination Ishmael['s] . . . wit may be allowed to be against everything on land, as his hand is against everything at sea. This piratical running down of creeds and opinions, the conceited indifferentism of Emerson, or the run-a-muck style of Carlyle is, we will not say dangerous in such cases, for there are various forces at work to meet more powerful onslaught, but it is out of place and uncomfortable. We do not like to see what, under any view, must be to the world the most sacred associations of life violated and defaced.

We call for fair play in this matter. Here is Ishmael, telling the story of this volume, going down on his knees with a cannibal to a piece of wood, in the second story fireplace of a New Bedford tavern, in the spirit of amiable and transcendent charity, which may be all very well in its way; but why dislodge from heaven, with contumely, "long-pampered Gabriel, Michael and Raphael" . . .

Nor is it fair to inveigh against the terrors of priestcraft, which, skilful though it may be in making up its woes, at least seeks to provide a remedy for the evils of the world and attribute the existence of to "hereditary dyspepsias, nurtured by Ramadans" -- and at the same time go about petrifying us with imaginary horrors, and all sorts of gloomy suggestions, all the world through

So much for the consistency of Ishmael -- who, if it is the author's

object to exhibit the painful contradictions of this self-dependent, self-torturing agency of a mind driven hither and thither as a flame in a whirlwind, is, in a degree, a successful embodiment of opinions, without securing from us, however, much admiration for the result (Recognition 41-42).

Here his New York literary friends came as close as they could to calling Melville a Transcendentalist, not a compliment in a city whose intellectual class had many fundamental differences with Emerson. The review was reprinted in the December 1 issue of the Dollar Magazine; Melville could not have been happy about that. In fact, his unconventional ways and opinions were becoming the subject of comment among his New York friends and their main representative in Massachusetts, Sarah Morewood. In a letter to George Duyckinck on December 28, 1851 she discussed Melville in friendly but critical terms:

Mr Herman was more quiet than usual--still he is a pleasant companion at all times and I like him very much--Mr Morewood now that he knows him better likes him the more--still he dislikes many of Mr Hermans opinions and religious views--It is a pity that Mr Melville so often in conversation uses irreverent language--he will not be popular in society here on that very account--but this will not trouble him--I think he cares very little as to what others may think of him or his books so long as they sell well--I hear that he is now engaged in a new work as frequently not to leave his room till quite dark in the evening--when he for the first time during the whole day partakes of solid food--he must therefore write under a state of morbid excitement which will soon injure his health--I laughed at him somewhat and told him that the recluse life he was leading made his city friends think that he was slightly insane . . . Mrs Melville is looking better in health than I have ever yet seen her look--I am strangely

attached to her and her family now that I know them so well as I do
(Leyda I, 441).

If he was beginning to feel alienated from his friends in the city, the feeling had not yet found its way into his book. In early January, Melville went to New York; on January 8 he wrote to Sophia Hawthorne expressing his pleasure at her understanding of Moby-Dick, promising that his next novel would be quite different, "a rural bowl of milk" (Correspondence 219). The following day he had to decline an invitation from Evert Duyckinck, but the tone of his request to see him another time was perfectly cordial: "I wont' [sic] be able to see you at 11 o'clock as you propose. I will be glad to call though at some other time--not very remote in the future, either" (Leyda I, 444).

He was not yet possessed by the resentment that led to the venomous portrait of Pierre the author amid the silly members of "Young America in Literature." It had built up sufficiently, however, so that a month later, on February 14, Melville wrote from Pittsfield to "the Editors of the Literary World," requesting the cancellation of his subscription in curt, businesslike tones: "You will please discontinue the two copies of your paper sent to J.M. Fly at Brattleboro' (or Greenbush), and to H Melville at Pittsfield. Whatever charges there may be outstanding for either or both copies, please send them to me, & they will receive attention" (Leyda I, 447). By the time Melville opened negotiations with his British publisher Richard Bentley, in March 1852, the last part of this "rural bowl of milk" had become a melodrama of urban despair and death, the first in a series of works dealing with exile, failure and death in New York and other cities.

Whatever the specific cause of his annoyance with the Duyckincks, there was no question that Melville was in what Herschel Parker and Brian Higgins call "a new mood" in which he "began writing passages relevant only to himself" and not to Pierre, the character he had created. And Parker and Higgins show that he was "reacting specifically to the reviews of his latest book, Moby-Dick" (14). This reaction set in after his 1852 trip to New York, "when the manuscript [of Pierre] was already thought of as nearly or

actually complete,"and they cite a series of specific phrases from the novel that ironically echo or twist phrases from reviews of Moby-Dick on both sides of the Atlantic. Melville, say Higgins and Parker, "certainly read some of [these reviews] in New York City as he worked his injured pride and his fears for his career into the outlet most readily available, the story that had been about Pierre Glendinning" (15-16).

Pierre opens with an evocation of a beautiful country morning from the viewpoint of an urban visitor, perhaps echoing the happy surprise of Melville's New York friends as they met the summer mornings in the Berkshires: "There are some strange summer mornings in the country, when he who is but a sojourner from the city shall early walk forth into the fields, and be wonder-smitten with the trance-like aspect of all the green and golden world." From this description of the impressions of an urbanite abroad in the countryside, the next sentence plunges headlong into the language of the type of novel Melville believed he had to write in order to sell: "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" (3). On one level, he was aiming at the overwhelmingly female audience of popular novel readers, and began this novel in a vein that he thought would guarantee this audience's readership. His inclusion of female characters and use of sex-based situations in which he could deploy them were new elements for him, and he exploited these elements in ways he thought would appeal. He probably also thought the overripe tone of the opening chapters was perfectly within aesthetic bounds for this audience. On another level, he was subverting a genre he probably thought his more conventional friends approved of. But midway through the book, almost certainly at the same time his alienation from the New York literary community was deepening, he began to lose sight of his intended audience and allowed the novel to become an outlet for his disappointment.

At almost exactly the halfway point the novel changes its tone from the merely

overripe and sometimes ironically melodramatic to the bitterly satirical, and pulls up short to re-establish contact with the basic narrative only after lengthy, self-indulgent digressions clearly intended to soothe the author's pains, and only incidentally serve any other function.

It is no coincidence that the protagonist's decision to move to New York with his illegitimate sister comes at the halfway point, when Melville was beginning to see that a return to New York would not be truly possible for him in the foreseeable future, for both personal and financial reasons. This led not only to great alterations in the novel's techniques, making it thoroughly ambiguous, but it also led Melville to portray his native city in uncharacteristically negative terms. The difference between the New York of Moby-Dick and that of Pierre is the fictional manifestation of the difference in Melville's attitude toward his native city from one year to the next. The accepting, knowledgeable, interested attitude of Ishmael, the occasional visitor, contrasts starkly with the hellish city in which Melville places Pierre and his self-assumed charges, and reflects Melville's need to protect himself emotionally from his feelings that he had been exiled from New York for a second time, and this time by his own choice.

In fact, Melville paints New York as a positive element in the lives of Pierre, his mother and his betrothed, Lucy Tartan, in the first half of the novel. Lucy herself is from the city, and in one of the early lists of Pierre's numerous perfections, Melville is careful to add:

But the breeding of Pierre would have been unwisely contracted, had his youth been unintermittingly 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).

Melville's ongoing love affair with the country becomes evident, however, in a slightly later passage in which he summarizes the advantages of Pierre's upbringing:

In conclusion, do not blame me if I here make repetition, and do verbally quote my own words in saying that it had been the choice fate of Pierre to have been born and bred in the country. For to a noble American youth this indeed--more than in any other land--this indeed is a most rare and choice lot. For it is to be observed, that while in other countries, the finest families boast of the country as their home; the more prominent among us, proudly cite the city as their seat. Too often the American that himself makes his fortune, builds him a great metropolitan house, in the most metropolitan street of the most metropolitan town. . . . Whereas the town is the more plebeian portion: which, besides many other things, is plainly evinced by the dirty unwashed face perpetually worn by the town; but the country, like any other Queen is ever attended by scrupulous lady's maids in the guise of the seasons, and the town hath one dress of brick turned up with stone: but the country hath a brave dress for every week in the year . . . and the country weareth her sun by day as a diamond on a Queen's brow; and the stars by night as necklaces of gold beads; whereas the town's sun is smoky paste, and no diamond, and the town's stars are pinchbeck and not gold (13).

Lucy Tartan is from the city, but she prefers the country: "[S]he resided an only daughter with her mother, in a very fine house in the city. But though her home was in the city, her heart was twice a year in the country. She did not at all love the city and its empty, heartless, ceremonial ways" (25-26). Twice a year she visits her Aunt Llanyllyn in the village of Saddle Meadows. Lucy's mother, a notorious matchmaker among New York's young people, fosters their romance so subtly that Pierre barely notices, and in describing how faintly Pierre perceived her interference Melville calls forth a not terribly

elevated street image: "Once, and only once, had a dim suspicion passed through Pierre's mind, that Mrs. Tartan was a lady thimble-rigger, and slyly rolled the pea" (27). Visits to Lucy in the city were part of Pierre's early life, as the description of the subtle matchmaking scene makes clear.

The city is also the source of culture and entertainment: Lucy reminds Pierre that when he returns for his next visit "this evening we are to look over the book of plates from the city, you know" (40). And, as in Clarel, images of ancient cities crop up as needed, usually in descriptions of the most rural scenes: "[T]he wooded hills, whose distant blue . . . stood before them like old Babylonian walls, overgrown with verdure; while here and there, at regular intervals, the scattered peaks seemed mural towers; and the clumped pines surmounting them, as lofty archers, and vast, out-looking watchers of the glorious Babylonian City of the Day" (35). The ancient city Melville uses most often figures among these metaphors: "No dense mobs of Nineveh confound all personal identities in Saddle Meadows" (53).

But the city is also the source of other things. It is in the course of his childhood visits to his aunt Dorothea in the city that he first sees and learns the story behind the portrait of his father as a romantic young man just back from a visit with the French emigree whose daughter Pierre believes to be his illegitimate half-sister. The portrait, in Pierre's possession in the time of the narrative, has been sent to him via "an express, confidential messenger, an old gentleman of leisure, once [Aunt Dorothea's] forlorn, because rejected gallant, but now her contented, and chatty neighbor," a prototype of a later New York reject, Jimmy Rose (73). The portrait was stealthily painted by Pierre's uncle Ralph, a member of the artistic set, whose notions of social propriety are so unconventional that the idea of Pierre Glendinning Sr. marrying the emigree does not disturb him in the least (77). This has its basis in Pierre's own battles with convention begin soon after he makes up his mind that the mysterious Isabel is indeed his sister and must be acknowledged, despite his mother's implicit but nonetheless adamant opposition:

"[H]e so poignantly felt his first feeling of the dreary heart-vacancies of the conventional life" (90), and as he works, at feverish length, to the conclusion that he must leave Saddle Meadows for New York, his city connections become less conventional.

In Book VII, "Between Pierre's Interviews with Isabel," Melville sends Pierre into the woods to visit a favorite childhood scene, a huge, mysterious glacial erratic, perched securely but in a position that looks precarious. Pierre has found the letters "S.ye W." cut into stone, and Melville invents a peculiar New York relative, another foreshadowing of Jimmy Rose, to furnish an improbable explanation: "Happening in the end to mention the matter to . . . a white-haired old gentleman, his city kinsman, who, after a long and richly varied, but unfortunate life, had at last found great solace in the Old Testament, which he was continually studying with ever-increasing admiration; . . . this not-at-all-to-be-hurried white-haired kinsman, had laid his tremulous hand upon Pierre's firm young shoulder, and slowly whispered--'Boy; 'tis Solomon the Wise'" (133).

Other cities continue to appear metaphorically as needed: "Love is built upon secrets, as lovely Venice upon invisible and incorruptible piles in the Sea," Melville writes, describing Pierre's lack of candor with his mother about the arrival of the controversial portrait (81). "Never Saya of Limeean girl, at dim mass in St. Dominic's cathedral, so completely muffled the human figure," as Isabel's sweeping hair (149). But New York is increasingly linked to eccentricity, genteel failure, harmless peculiarity, and a growing impatience with all conventionality: "[T]he never-entirely-repulsed hosts of Commonness, and Conventionality, and Worldly Prudent-mindedness return to the charge; press hard on the faltering soul; and with inhuman hootings deride all its nobleness as mere eccentricity, which further wisdom and experience shall assuredly cure" (167).

Pierre finally decides that he has to take refuge with Isabel and Delly Ulver, a local farm girl who has been ruined by a married man, in the unconventional, bohemian side of New York, a side neither the young gentleman Pierre nor Melville himself as a

young man would have known first hand. Conventional New York, from which Pierre is still naive enough to expect some sort of welcome, cruelly rejects him, in the person of a hastily invented cousin whom Melville introduces in the second half of the novel and has Pierre murder at the end. Disgust and impatience with convention is an old familiar element in Melville's work, but disgust with New York is something new, a result of his feelings of rejection by the conventional and worldly prudent-minded editors of the Literary World and others who were, in his mind, making his native city a far less comfortable place for him.

Melville still tried to make Pierre an interesting melodrama, continuing to use the overripe language of the first half of the novel long after the last of the ripe rural scenes that originally called it forth. Setting the scene at the beginning of a chapter that shows Pierre at work on his book--and probably shows just as much of Melville at work on Moby-Dick in the summer of 1851, as well as at every other book he wrote under the same compulsions and with the same compulsive methods--he writes: "The long rows of cooled brick-kilns around him scarce know of the change; but from the fair fields of his great-great-great-grandfather's manor, Summer hath flown like a swallow-guest; the perfidious wight, Autumn, hath peeped in at the groves of the maple, and under pretense of clothing them in rich russet and gold, hath stript them at last of the slightest rag, and then ran away laughing; prophetic icicles depend from the arbors round about the old manorial mansion . . . wild howl the winds in the woods: it is Winter" (295).

At the same time, he seems to have tried to cast the scenes of Pierre's entrance into the city in the mold of the urban horror fiction of the 1830s and '40s--what David Reynolds calls "dark city" novels. In another fascinating contrast to Ishmael's description of New York, Pierre's approach to the city is entirely a reflection of his own moods and growing depression. Pierre, Isabel (who is now passing as his wife) and Delly have traveled since early morning by stage from Saddle Meadows, and they reach New York at dusk. Melville manipulates the atmospherics after first noting "The stage was belated"

(229):

Though the thoroughfare was winding, yet no sweep that it made greatly obstructed its long and imposing vista; so that when the coach gained the top of the long and very gradual slope running toward the obscure heart of the town, and the twinkling perspective of two long and parallel rows of lamps was revealed--lamps which seemed not so much intended to dispel the general gloom, as to show some dim path leading through it, into some gloom still deeper beyond--when the coach gained this critical point, the whole vast triangular town, for a moment, seemed dimly and despondently to capitulate to the eye (229).

They feel a change in the pavement as they reach the city's cobblestones; Pierre tells Delly that this is because "the buried hearts of some dead citizens have perhaps come to the surface": "And are they so hard-hearted here?" asked Isabel. 'Ask yonder pavements, Isabel. Milk dropt from the milkman's can in December, freezes not more quickly on these stones, than does snow-white innocence, if in poverty, it chance to fall in these streets'" (230). Isabel wonders about the side-streets, which she refers to as "side-glooms" three times and pronounces "horrible;" she also wonders at the silence of this formerly residential area now inhabited by those who, like Jimmy Rose, have been left behind among buildings now used as warehouses. Pierre explains, "[B]rick and mortar have deeper secrets than wood or fell, sweet Isabel" (231). They are looking for a house in this neighborhood that Glen Stanley, Pierre's city cousin, inherited and once offered to Pierre for him to use after his wedding. The only person living in the house at the moment is another Jimmy Rose type, "an old, confidential bachelor clerk of [Glen's] father's, who on a minimal rent, and more by way of safe-keeping to the house than any thing else, was now hanging up his well-furbished hat in its hall" (220-221). Pierre has notified Glen of his intentions but Glen, out of a hidden rivalry for Lucy Tartan's love, has kept it locked up and made no preparations for Pierre and his party.

Significantly, Pierre can recognize the house, but does not know the number, which the city-bred stage-driver demands. When ordered to look for a house with lights, the coachman points out the watch-house: "[T]he first light in this here street will be the watch-house of the ward--yes, there it is--all right! cheap lodgings ye've engaged--nothing to pay, and wictuals in" (232). This gives Melville an opening for some judgmental comments on drivers and, implicitly, the city they serve:

To certain temperaments, especially when previously agitated by any deep feeling, there is perhaps nothing more exasperating, and which sooner explodes all self-command, than the coarse, jeering insolence of a porter, cabman or hack driver. Fetchers and carriers of the worst city infamy as many of them are; professionally familiar with the most abandoned haunts; in the heart of misery, they drive one of the most mercenary of all the trades of guilt. Day-dozers and sluggards on their lazy boxes in the sunlight, and felinely wakeful and cat-eyed in the dark; most habituated to midnight streets, only trod by sneaking burglars, wantons, and debauchees; often in actual pandering league with the most abhorrent sinks; so that they are equally solicitous and suspectful that every customer they encounter in the dark, will prove a profligate or a knave; this hideous tribe of ogres, and Charon ferry-men to corruption and death, naturally slide into the practically Calvinistical view of humanity; and hold every man at bottom a fit subject for the coarsest ribaldry and jest; only fine coats and fullpockets can whip such mangy hounds into decency (232).

An altercation with the driver is interrupted by a convenient police officer, who becomes suspicious of Pierre when he asks for a hotel in the area: "There is no hotel in this neighborhood," he tells Pierre; "it is too off the thoroughfares" (234). As Pierre orders his luggage down from the coach, Melville points up a lesson in the effects of rural

ignorance of city ways:

During all this scene, Delly had remained perfectly silent in her trembling and rustic alarm; while Isabel, by occasional cries to Pierre, had vainly besought some explanation. But though their complete ignorance of city life had caused Pierre's two companions to regard the scene thus far with too much trepidation; yet now, when in the obscurity of night, and in the heart of a strange town, Pierre handed them out of the coach into the naked street, and they saw their luggage piled so near the white light of a watch-house, the same ignorance, in some sort, reversed its effects on them, for they little fancied in what really untoward and wretched circumstances they first touched the flagging of the city" (235).

This is the same uninformed, bemused ignorance with which Redburn first looks at the city, without benefit of authorial explanation: in that earlier novel, Melville was not interested in making negative comments on New York, or making his native city the setting for failure and death. In Pierre, however, Melville makes use of an aspect of the city that he has not dealt with before: the changing neighborhood, once fashionably residential, now given over to commercial use, inhabited after business hours only by the marginal, the unconventional, and those left behind as the parade of fashion and economic power made its way further and further uptown. By the early 1850s New York had several such neighborhoods, and several of Melville's childhood addresses, as well as other places important in his early life--his school, his church--were in them. The area where Melville's childhood was centered, between Wall Street with its traders and lawyers and Greenwich Village, fading as a place of residence for society yet even then an area for artisans and artists, had turned into that sort of place. Along with his resentment of his New York friends' endorsements of convention and his fears about having been left behind by his city's literary life, he knew that in actual fact the places of his own childhood New York were no more, or were no longer serving the functions they

had served when he first knew them. The part of lower Manhattan to which Melville brings Pierre, Delly, Isabel and eventually Lucy, and the areas in which the protagonists of "Jimmy Rose" and "The Fiddler" live, are at once representations of urban mutability (and human transience) and of his own specific feelings of having been made to change functions and of having been left behind.

Melville takes every opportunity to exploit New York's image of heartlessness and Pierre's naive but high-minded encounters with it. No sooner have Pierre and the women left the coach than Pierre asks the police officer to guide them to the watch-house, where he asks the officer on duty to watch out for Delly and Isabel while he goes in search of lodgings, and asks three of the napping off-duty officers to bring their baggage inside the building, as if he were at an inn. He then has some predictable encounters with strange New York ways: checking at the house his cousin promised him, he finds it dark and boarded up, and returns to the station to inform Isabel. Then he asks an officer to hail him a cab, and after an argument ends up going for one himself. Unable to find one right away, he walks toward Broadway, the sight of which takes him by surprise:

Not habitually used to such scenes, Pierre for the moment was surprised, that the instant he turned out of the narrow, and dark, and death-like bye-street, he should find himself suddenly precipitated into the not-yet-repressed noise and contention, and all the garish night-life of a vast thoroughfare, crowded and wedged by day, and even now, at this late hour, brilliant with occasional illuminations, and echoing to very many swift wheels and footfalls (236)..

This is a side of Broadway that other authors had described before, as have others since, but this is the first time Melville depicts it in such lurid terms. On this street, where all he is looking for is a cab (as befits a noble rural innocent), Pierre is propositioned by a prostitute, whom Melville vividly describes:

[I]n the flashing, sinister, evil cross-lights of a druggist's window, his eye caught the person of a wonderfully beautifully-featured girl; scarlet-cheeked, glaringly-arrayed, and of a figure all natural grace but unnatural vivacity. Her whole form, however, was horribly lit by the green and yellow rays from the druggist's. "My God!" shuddered Pierre, hurrying forward, "the town's first welcome to youth!" (237)

True to the conventions of melodrama, Melville provides another coincidence that leads to rejection by respectable, conventional New York society represented by his cousin Glen, whose house Pierre happens to spot at this point. He rings the bell and is informed by "a very civil black" who answers that Glen Stanley is giving a party and has asked that no one be admitted. In contrast to the lewd speech of the prostitute ("Oh, love, you are in a vast hurry, ain't you?"), everything in this scene speaks of upper-class polish and affluence; even the black servant's part of the exchange at the door is in the most correct English, with not a trace of the dialect Melville never hesitated to put in the mouths of his lower-class black characters. Pierre breaks into Glen's party, where he conducts himself like a madman as his foppish city cousin looks on indolently and lazily asks Doc, the servant, to remove him.

This completes the urban component of Pierre's rejection by the world of convention, but it does not end Melville's subversive uses of the conventions of urban melodrama: a horrific scene awaits him on his return to the watch-house of the ward (whose number Melville is careful not to give) (240). During Pierre's sojourn in Broadway there has been a mass arrest in a "notorious stew" (241), and its "entire miscellaneous night-occupants" are nearly rioting in the watch-house:

The sights and sounds which met the eye of Pierre on re-entering the watch-house, filled him with inexpressible horror and fury. The before decent, drowsy place, not fairly reeked with all things unseemly In indescribable disorder, frantic, diseased-looking men and women of

all colors, and in all imaginable flaunting, immodest, grotesque, and shattered dresses, were leaping, yelling, and cursing around him. The torn Madras handkerchiefs of negresses, and the red gowns of yellow girls, hanging in tatters from their naked bosoms, mixed with the rent dresses of deep-rouged women, and the split coats, checkered vests, and protruding shirts of pale, or whiskered, or haggard, or mustached fellows of all nations, some of whom seemed scared from their beds, and others seemingly arrested in the midst of some crazy and wanton dance. On all sides, were heard drunken male and female voices, in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, interlarded now and then with the foulest of all human lingo, that dialect of sin and death, known as the Cant Language, or Flash . . . [W]ords and phrases unrepeatable in God's sunlight, and whose very existence was utterly unknown, and undreamed of by tens of thousands of the decent people of the city; syllables obscene and accursed were shouted forth in tones plainly evincing that they were the common household breath of their utterers. The thieves'-quarters, and all the brothels, Lock-and-Sin hospitals for incurables, and infirmaries and infernoes of hell seemed to have made one combined sortie, and poured out upon earth through the vile vomitory of some unmentionable cellar (240-241).

This is the first time Melville uses such language to describe any part of New York. The only other city he had ever described in these terms was Liverpool, and then he was taking his cue from his contemporaries, particularly the scenes in Briggs' novel in which Harry Franco stumbles into the Five Points. A novel intended to sell would almost require a Five Points scene, but there was no plausible way, even within the broad limits of implausibility Melville allowed himself in this novel, to get Pierre, Isabel and Dally to stumble unawares into the Five Points itself. Melville solves the problem ingeniously by

bringing a distillation of the worst of the Five Points into the watch-house, allowing him to express the fascinated horror and disgust which any contemporary reader would naturally share, and also allowing him to portray Pierre's manly virtue in wading into this horrible throng to rescue Isabel and Delly from the mob. Melville places each of them in particular peril:

Rushing into the crowd, regardless of the random blows and curses he encountered, he wildly sought Isabel, and soon descried her struggling from the delirious reaching arms of a half-clad reeling whiskerando. With an immense blow of his mailed fist, he sent the wretch humming In another quarter of [the room], he saw Delly seized on each hand by two bleared and half-bloody women, who with fiendish grimaces were ironically twitting her upon her close-necked dress, and had already stript her handkerchief from her" (241).

Of course they run out to a waiting cab, leaving their luggage behind so as not to miss the usual comic complication from the ensuing scene at the hotel.

After these sensational incidents Melville pauses to make fun of the New York literati and the type of literature he believed them to prefer. Although not mentioned before this, Pierre, it seems, has been quite the author. The sudden emergence of this trait in the second half of the novel, instead of in the earlier sections in which all of Pierre's talents and accomplishments were extolled, clearly shows a heightening of Melville's annoyance with "Young America in Literature," as he titles this chapter. His irritation with the New York literati is the occasion for this mocking survey of Pierre's works and his adulation by the critics and it also gives Melville occasion to make Pierre not just the philosophical dupe of the sect that finds itself in the Church of the Apostles, but gives him an independent, although tenuous, means of earning his own living and expressing his own truth.

If the novel has always been a remedy for the irritations, feelings of desertion and

betrayal, misunderstanding, and disgust with convention, it becomes even more so in the second half, where Melville also begins to deal with his fear of permanent exile from New York. Add to this the overwhelming anxiety about providing for his large family and the loss of control becomes most poignant: in expressing his anxieties, he was assuring a greatly lessened chance of their disappearing through improved circumstances. If the audience of ladies had not already been lost by the ambiguous implications of incest between Pierre and Isabel, it was surely lost now that he himself was caught up in the settling of personal grievances. "For not only was it the signal misery of Pierre, to be invisibly--though but accidentally--goaded, in the hour of mental immaturity, to the attempt at a mature work,--a circumstance sufficiently lamentable in itself; but also, in the hour of his clamorous penilessness, he was additionally goaded into an enterprise long and protracted in the execution, and of all things least calculated for pecuniary profit in the end," Melville writes of his young protagonist, and there are significant ways in which this also applied to him (238).

The Young America movement, based in New York, took as one of its cultural purposes the founding of a distinct American literature, written by Americans, on American subjects. Among its champions were the very people who had come up to visit Melville in the New York summer colony of the Berkshires in the summers of 1850 and 1851: Cornelius Mathews and the Duyckinck brothers. Melville's argument with Oliver Wendell Holmes over the primacy of British literature over American was part of the summer socializing of 1850, and to advance the American cause Melville, who had recently finished "Hawthorne and His Mosses," offered Hawthorne, a New Englander, as an example of excellence in American literature, despite the current New York-New England rivalry. Holmes, another New Englander, stuck up for the superiority of England.

In New York, American literature was a cause of its own, in keeping with the prevalent sentiments of nationalism in all areas of American life. Melville's championing

of Hawthorne had as much to do with his personal concerns at this time of his life as with his belief in Hawthorne's superiority as an author. Melville remained a loyal member of the movement, however, until he thought its leaders turned on him with the review of Moby-Dick in late 1851. By early 1852 he was writing the "Young America in Literature" chapter of *Pierre*, and his willingness to champion American literature for its own sake had faded. He speaks in this section of *Pierre* of a literature that is frivolous and inconsequential, having nothing to do with national authors or national subjects. It has far more to do with the fatuity and foolishness of the critics than with the silliness of *Pierre's* works, as manifested in his titles (Melville spares us, and himself, samples of *Pierre's* actual writings). There was more to object to here than simply one review of Moby-Dick, however. An entire culture of convention and semi-bohemian accommodation to convention was Melville's target.

Melville opens this part of the book by contrasting two different ways of handling narrative, and concludes, in a mood of critic-defiance, "I elect neither of these; I am careless of either; both are well enough in their way; I write precisely as I please" (244). With this opening salvo Melville goes on to lampoon *Pierre's* principal work, a sonnet titled "The Tropical Summer," for which "the high and mighty Campbell clan of editors of all sorts had bestowed upon him those generous commendations, which, with one instantaneous glance, they had immediately perceived was his due" (245). While Melville does not construct any of *Pierre's* putative works, he does not hesitate to put words in the mouths of fictional critics: "He has translated the unruffled gentleman from the drawing-room into the general levee of letters; he never permits himself to astonish; is never betrayed into any thing coarse or new; as assured that whatever astonishes is vulgar, and whatever is new must be crude. Yes, it is the glory of this admirable young author, that vulgarity and vigor--two inseparable adjuncts--are equally removed from him" (245). Vulgarity and vigor are, of course, some of the things Melville had been criticized for in the previous year or two, and he lampoons literary dilettantes of high

social respectability: "A third [critic] perorated a long and beautifully written review, by the bold and startling announcement--'This writer is unquestionably a highly respectable youth'" (245). He even gets back at the Duyckinck brothers when he describes "[T]wo young men, recently abandoning the ignoble pursuit of tailoring for the more honorable trade of the publisher (probably with an economical view of working up in books, the . . . shreds of the cutter's counter . . .)" (246), and lampoons various efforts on these tailor-brothers' part to advance the works of Pierre Glendinning, "author of . . . 'The Tropical Summer: A Sonnet,' 'The Weather: a Thought,' 'Life: an Impromptu' . . . " (247).

Pierre has, of course, been a youthful version of the type of dilettante James Fenimore Cooper lampoons with even more contempt in his depiction of a Manhattan literary evening in Home As Found. He has not had to earn money from his writings, as do "those unfortunate fellows, who, not only naturally averse to any sort of publicity, but progressively ashamed of their own successive productions--written chiefly for the merest cash--were yet cruelly coerced into sounding title-pages by sundry baker's and butcher's bills, and other financial considerations" (249-250). But Melville's heavy-handedness in this section caused him to miss an opportunity to connect it more organically to the rest of the novel. In a parody of Evert Duyckinck's request for--and Melville's refusal of--a daguerreotype portrait for Holden's Dollar Magazine in February 1851, he misses a chance to connect this portrait with the other portrait that sets the novel's action in motion (254). He is so absorbed in the subject of authorship and his annoyance with his literary colleagues that he allows his authorial control to slip and lets a perfectly melodramatic possibility go unrealized in this premeditatedly melodramatic work.

The Church of the Apostles is Melville's first major symbol of urban mutability since the Liverpool guidebook in Redburn, and it is the first, although not the last, set in New York. Pierre is introduced to this building and the connected office building in which he is to live by Charlie Millthorpe, a hastily introduced boyhood friend from

Saddle Meadows who has come to the city and made his way as a lawyer while living as part of the loose, odd community that lives in the old church. It becomes the central representation of the changing neighborhoods of New York and the hero's changing attitudes toward New York. Melville describes the building this way:

In the lower old-fashioned part of the city, in a narrow street--almost a lane--once filled with demure-looking dwellings, but now chiefly with immense lofty warehouses of foreign importers; and not too far from the corner where the lane intersected with a very considerable but contracted thoroughfare for merchants and their clerks, and their carmen and porters; stood at this period a rather singular and ancient edifice, a relic of the more primitive time. The material was a grayish stone, rudely cut and masoned into walls of surprising thickness and strength; along two of which walls--the side ones--were distributed as many rows of arched and stately windows. A capacious, square, and wholly unornamented tower rose in front to twice the height of the body of the church; three sides of this tower were pierced with small and narrow apertures. Thus far, in its external aspect, the building--now more than a century old-- sufficiently attested for what purpose it had originally been founded Built when that part of the city was devoted to private residences, and not to warehouses and offices as now, the old Church of the Apostles had had its day of sanctification and grace; but the tide of change and progress had rolled clean through its broad-aisle and side-aisles, and swept by far the greater part of its congregation two or three miles up town The venerable merchants and accountants held a meeting, at which it was finally decided that . . . it was now no use to disguise the fact, that the building could no longer be efficiently devoted to its primitive purpose. It must be divided into stores; cut into offices; and given for a roost to the gregarious lawyers. This

intention was executed, even to the offices high in the tower (265-266)

What Melville almost certainly had in mind as the prototype of this building was a public building he would have seen in his childhood and would have come to know well in his adult years in New York, the post office on Nassau Street (still "a very considerable but contracted thoroughfare") between Liberty and Cedar Streets ("a narrow street, almost a lane"). New York was proud of its new uptown post office, which opened in 1845, the year after Melville returned from his time at sea. It was housed in the renovated Middle Dutch Church. The editor of Philip Hone's diary summarizes the former mayor's opinion of the new post office thus: "[In early January 1845] Hone mentions the conversion of the old Dutch Church at Nassau, Liberty and Cedar Streets into a shining new post office, and a very fine one" (Allan Nevins, ed., The Diary of Philip Hone 1828-1851, 725). The 1866 Guide to New York City mentions an interesting historic use as it describes the building with civic pride:

Benjamin Franklin, while residing in New York, used as an observatory for experimenting in electricity, the steeple of the old Dutch Church,--now the Post-Office, on Nassau street The Post-Office, on Nassau street, between Cedar and Liberty streets, was formerly the Middle Dutch Church. At a time--namely, during the war of the Revolution--when most of the churches were turned to military use by the British, this one sustained the greatest injuries; In 1790, it received such repairs as fitted it again for public worship; but it was afterward secured by the government and devoted to its present use; the postmaster's room is so situated as to command a view of all that is going on in the building (8,35-36).

A history written for the centennial of Washington's inauguration brings the story of the building to the last years of Melville's life:

[T]he Middle Dutch Church . . . opened for worship in 1729 but

[was] not completely finished until 1731. Its interior was remodeled in 1764, but during the Revolution the British completely destroyed it by using it as a hospital and a riding-school, and in 1789 the exterior walls were about all that remained of the old building. Owing to lack of funds following the Revolution, repairs were not begun upon it until 1788 and it was not re-opened until July 4 1790. This building, 100 feet long by 70 feet wide within the wall, was worshipped in until August 11 1844, soon afterwards being occupied by the N.Y. Post-Office which remained in it until 1875. In 1882 it was demolished for the erection of the N.Y. Mutual Life Insurance Company's building (Thomas E. V. Smith, The City of New York in the Year of Washington's Inauguration; 1889, reprinted 1972, 130-131).

Melville would have become well acquainted with this building in its new official capacity shortly after its renovation and opening as the Post Office, and he must have found its history especially interesting. Although this was not the church in which he was baptized or the one the family attended before they left New York in 1830, it was part of the denomination to which he belonged as a child; the building's abandonment as a house of worship and refitting for the purposes of communication and commerce must have made it seem to him an especially appropriate metaphor for his own soul's abandonment of his childhood faith and reluctant absorption in the cares of writing and making money. In Pierre the symbolism has an added dimension: the idealistic Pierre throws aside the conventional religion in order to follow what he believes to be the highest impulses, and he follows these impulses in full view of an abandoned church in which live those who, like the conventionally religious, choose the more convenient path--"horological" Pierre against the "chronometrical" Apostles, in Plotinus Plinlimmon's terms. Melville maintains his control of the symbolic aspects of this building by leaving it in a carefully maintained fictional obscurity, which would not have been possible if he had identified it

as the church that had been turned into the Post Office.

By turning a building plainly based on the Post Office into law offices he sketches lightly two themes that become more important in his next New York work, "Bartleby" (1855). Since the Post Office was the city's most famous renovated church at the time, there is no doubt that his New York contemporaries would have thought of it as they read his description of the Church of the Apostles. Whether his New York friends saw his use of a renovated building in a changing neighborhood as a sign that he felt a changing New York was leaving him behind is another question. The reviews of Pierre, from New York and elsewhere, give no indication of this, nor of any other understanding of the Church of the Apostles as an actual New York building; most reviewers were too busy condemning the book to pay any attention to its use of actual urban detail. In this century, Kathleen Kier has identified a Manhattan Episcopal church--Church of the Holy Apostles, in Chelsea-- that she suggests might have been the source of the name Melville uses, but she makes no attempt to identify what building he might have been thinking of (Melville Encyclopedia I, 214).

Melville was attentive enough to the details of the Post Office's interior so that he was able to take one detail--the Postmaster's room from which the entire interior of the building was visible--and use it in his description of Pierre the author working in his heatless room and seeing Plotinus Plinlimmon looking at him from the church tower. His lack of control shows here, too, because he forgets the details of his own fictional renovation. Pierre lives in an office building constructed behind the old Church of the Apostles, in the rear of the church-yard, "a supplemental edifice, likewise to be promiscuously rented to the legal crowd," Melville's first-person narrator explains. "But this new building very much exceeded the body of the church in height. It was some seven stories; a fearful pile of Titanic bricks, lifting its tiled roof almost to a level with the top of the sacred tower" (266). The uppermost floors of this building, being too high for lawyers' clients to climb to, are rented by "scores of those miscellaneous, bread-and-

cheese adventurers, and ambiguously professional nondescripts in very genteel but shabby black, and unaccountable foreign-looking fellows in blue spectacles; who . . . light on the eaves, and in the attics of lofty old buildings in most large sea-port towns . . . They are mostly artists of various sorts: painters, or sculptors, or indigent students, or teachers of languages, or fugitive French politicians, or German philosophers" (267).

Pierre and his charges end up in a room on one of these upper floors, from whose window he sees "the donjon form of the old gray tower" and "a wilderness of tiles, slate, shingles and tin;--the desolate hanging wildernesses . . . wherewith we modern Babylonians replace the fair hanging-gardens of the fine old Asiatic times when the excellent Nebuchadnezzar was king . . . [T]here looms the gray and grand old tower; emblem to Pierre of as unshakeable fortitude, which, deep-rooted in the heart of the earth, defied all the howls of the air" (271).

In his description of Pierre's working life in the office building Melville goes so far as to situate his fictional complex in the same neighborhood as its model (although the real post office had no office building attached): "He had been engaged some weeks upon his book--in pursuance of his settled plan avoiding all contact with any of his city-connections or friends, even as in his social downfall they sedulously avoided seeking him out--nor ever once going or sending to the post office, though it was but a little round the corner from where he was" (285). This was the plan Melville himself had pursued for the three weeks he was in New York working on Moby-Dick in June 1851.

After an encounter with Plinlimmon in one of the colonnades that connect the office building to the old church, Pierre recalls that from his earliest time there he had noticed "a steady observant blue-eyed countenance at one of the loftiest windows of the old gray tower, which on the opposite side of the quadrangular space [between the buildings] rose prominently before his own chamber" (291). Pierre becomes obsessed with "the blue-eyed, mystic-mild face in the upper window of the old gray tower," which plainly echoes his own obsession with Hawthorne's friendship and approval, and his

feeling of desertion when Hawthorne left the Lenox house. Pierre finds that Plinlimmon's face looking at him through the window has an unexpected effect on his morale: "[T]he face seemed to leer upon Pierre. And now it said to him--Ass! Ass! Ass! This expression was insufferable" (293).

In his effort to express his feelings of isolation and discouragement with Hawthorne Melville makes creative use of the position of the postmaster in the renovated post office, in an elevated room from which he could look down on all the activity below. But even as he turns an actual architectural detail to advantage, he seems to forget his own invented architectural details. In his first description of the church and the tower, he specifies that only three sides of the tower had windows (265). It would be most unlikely for a church tower not to have windows on the front and either side, so if there were only three, there would not have been a rear window for Plinlimmon to look out of onto Pierre's building behind the church. In fact, contemporary engravings show a small window in the rear of the tower, and one picture represents it with slats (and another replaces it altogether with a clock). But how much of Plinlimmon's face would have been visible to Pierre through the "suspicious-looking narrow window-slits in the lofty tower" (269), elsewhere described as "small and narrow apertures" (265), is another question. Melville's own obsession with the face may have made it difficult for him to transpose a wonderful image borrowed from the post office's interior to an exterior arrangement in which, without other fictional renovations, it works less well.

Even though his attention to detail sometimes slipped, the melodrama had to go on, and it does: Lucy Tartan comes to live with Pierre (as his cousin) and is disowned by her mother; the sexual confusion between Pierre and Isabel intensifies, along with the other characters' doubts about it; Glen Stanley and Lucy's brother Frederick plot to take Lucy away from Pierre by force. Meanwhile Pierre plugs away at his book, worried, as Melville himself worried over *Moby-Dick*, about what sort of reception he could expect for it, and what that reception might mean.

Melville's own habits during his New York author years, with some melodramatic elaborations, become Pierre's obsessive behavior: he develops eyestrain; he perversely leaves errors in his proofs because they are too hard to read; he goes further and further afield in his evening walks. Melville walked in the evening after writing all day when he was living in New York, and now he sends Pierre "through the greatest thoroughfare of the city; that so, the utter isolation of his soul, might feel itself the more intensely from the incessant joggings of his body against the bodies of the hurrying thousands" (340). Then he takes to walking in Broadway on stormy nights, taking pleasure in the thought that he is braving the elements while others are home safe. He then begins to walk through the side streets to find "the more secluded and mysterious tap-rooms" where he would "eye the varied faces of the social castaways" At last he takes to wandering in the "utter night-desolation of the obscurest warehousing lanes," where one night he has a fainting spell. This does not warn him off his overwork, however; it simply makes him stay out of isolated neighborhoods where he might faint and lie too long in the street. Finally his eyes get so bad that he cannot continue to write, and instead falls into visions during his working time. At last things come to a head, and in a most melodramatic conclusion Melville brings together themes from earlier in the novel while also foreshadowing elements he used later in other works.

Melville moves quickly to the denouement once he reaches Book XXVI. First, Pierre, in a sudden restless mood, decides that he, Isabel and Lucy should take a sail in the bay. On the way they stop at a picture gallery where yet another European portrait excites Pierre and Isabel, although this time Pierre is besieged by doubts that Isabel really is his sister. This is balanced by her reaction to the rocking motion of the boat, which, Pierre believes, confirms that she came from France at an early age. On their return to the building Pierre receives two letters, one a threat from his publisher, and the other an insult from Glen Stanley and Fred Tartan. In desperation he appropriates two pistols from an unknowing neighbor and sallies forth into the streets, sure that he will encounter

Glen and Fred and eager to meet their challenge. As he brings Pierre up Broadway Melville describes it from a pedestrian's viewpoint:

[I]t was between four and five of the afternoon; that hour, when the great glaring avenue was most thronged with haughty-rolling carriages, and proud-rustling promenaders, both men and women. But these last were mostly confined to the one wide pavement to the West; the other pavement was well nigh deserted, save by porters, waiters, and parcel-carriers of the shops.

On the west pave, up and down, for three long miles, two streams of glossy, shawled, or broadcloth life brushed by each other, as long, resplendent, drooping trains of rival peacocks brush . . . [Pierre's] eyes were all about him as he went; especially he glanced over to the deserted pavement opposite; for that emptiness did not deceive him; he himself had often walked that side, the better to scan the pouring throng upon the other (359).

The west side of Broadway was, of course, the "fashionable side of the street" that Maria Melvill so happily moved to as the family relocated from Bleecker Street to its last Manhattan address in 1829. Finally Pierre reaches City Hall Park--"a large, open, triangular space, built round with the stateliest public erections;--the very proscenium of the town" (359), where he sees Glen and Fred, and kills Glen. In rapid succession come the last two scenes: Pierre in the city jail (where Bartleby will die in Melville's next New York work), musing on his imminent death as Lucy and Isabel come in, and the last scene, in which the three are found dead. Lucy dies of shock on hearing that Isabel is Pierre's sister; Isabel and Pierre take poison. Fred Tartan and Charlie Millthorpe discover the bodies and make the expected melodramatic exclamations. And this suicide in the Tombs is one last New York echo, an echo of an event that also comes up in "Bartleby": the suicide of John C. Colt on the day he was to be executed for the murder of Samuel

Adams. Colt was married in the prison before his suicide.

Pierre marks a transition in Melville's life and relationship to New York. From the matter-of-fact acceptance that characterizes all mentions of New York City in Moby-Dick Melville has moved to bitterness and written of his native city the way he had previously written only of foreign cities, notably Liverpool. Part of this is due to Melville's isolation in Massachusetts and consequent inability to research settings he did not know well enough to write about credibly from a distance. The rest, of course, comes from his changing circumstances and growing sense of desertion by friends and colleagues.

The city of Pierre, or the Ambiguities is very much like the city of "Bartleby the Scrivener" but, just as the circumstances of his life changed somewhat between the two works, Melville's use of the city did too. "Bartleby" was first serialized in Putnam's Monthly for November and December 1853, Melville's first magazine story. No other work of Melville's reveals the pervasive presence of New York in his mind as does "Bartleby". This story deals with many of the same themes and elements as Pierre, but here Melville is entirely in control. Where Pierre shows the effects of Melville's lapses into personal irritation and disappointment, "Bartleby" shows an artist's self-discipline in its concentrated calm.

In certain ways, "Bartleby" is another version of the second half of Pierre. In both cases the absolute and uncompromising confronts the provisional, safe and relative, and in both cases the ground of confrontation is Manhattan. Bartleby, in his depths of depression and despair, is what Pierre the disappointed idealist could have become if he had been steered into actions other than the shooting and suicide that conclude the novel. But "Bartleby" is a far different treatment of all the various elements the two works have in common. Technique and plot are significantly different. The sexual element that plays so controversial a part in Pierre is entirely absent from "Bartleby." In place of the omniscient narrator who recounts every tortured thought in Pierre there is a first-person

participant narrator whose limitations and attitudes shape the reader's perceptions. And in place of the generically negative attitude toward New York evident in the novel, the story shows a New Yorker's appreciation for the specific details of the city in a way that make it a rich but indifferent setting. After the publication of Pierre Melville became interested in another work based on a story sent to him by a lawyer he had met in New Bedford. He worked on it throughout the fall and winter of 1852 and corresponded with Hawthorne about it. (Until recently it appeared that he had never completed it, but in 1987 Hershel Parker discovered that it was completed, under the title The Isle of the Cross.)

Meanwhile the reviews of Pierre were almost all unfavorable. This did not have the same effect on him as the equivocal reviews of Moby-Dick, however; he seems to have harbored no particular grudges after these reviews, even after a very disapproving one from the Literary World. The previous dose of critical disapproval may have inoculated him against another full-blown case of resentment and disappointment. In October he received a letter from G.P. Putnam & Co. requesting his contributions to their new periodical, to be edited by Charles F. Briggs, the "Harry Franco" from whom "Omoo" Melville (as these authors were sometimes familiarly known among New York writers in the 1840s) had borrowed so much of his urban treatment in Redburn. It was not until the following summer that he actually made a contribution.

By spring of 1853 his family and friends were expressing concern about his health and starting to campaign for influence with the new Pierce administration for a consular appointment for him. Maria Melville initiated her part of the campaign on April 20 with a letter to her brother Peter Gansevoort that included these lines: "In my opinion, I must again repeat it Herman would be greatly benefited by a sojourn abroad, he would then be compelled to more intercourse with his fellow creatures The constant in-door confinement with little intermission to which Hermans occupation as author compels him, does not agree with him" (Leyda I, 469). The campaign was given up in June, when

it became clear that the only consulates he could hope for would not have paid enough to be worthwhile (476). Later in the year, perhaps during the summer Elizabeth Melville described as "quiet" (478), Melville wrote "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Tale of Wall Street".

Plotinus Plinlimmon would have called the elderly lawyer who narrates Bartleby's story a Chronometrical. "I am a man who, from his youth upwards, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best All who know me consider me an eminently safe man" (14). He confronts a Horological who, like Pierre, refuses any explanation of his conduct, and while the omniscient narrator of the novel furnishes the reader with all necessary explanations, we never learn Bartleby's motives. Pierre's absolutism is expressed in action and provokes outrage; Bartleby's is expressed in widening circles of inaction and produces puzzlement, pity and finally exasperation. In Pierre, the urban specifics are anonymous and submerged. The names of the neighborhood, streets, buildings, even of the city itself, are not mentioned. This allows the reader to become more involved with Pierre's struggles, but that may not have been Melville's only motive. He may have left these things unspecified so as to give his native city a snub, writing about it in one way while ignoring it in another. By the time he wrote "Bartleby" his rancor seems to have cooled a bit, so he speaks through a native New Yorker who unhesitatingly mentions streets, buildings, names and places. In fact, when it comes to famous individuals, such as John Jacob Astor, the narrator of "Bartleby" sounds like any name-dropper. The only thing he hesitates to mention is his own address: "No. ---Wall Street." One is naturally tempted to identify this immediately as No. 10 Wall Street, the address of Allan Melville's law office. This office was, like the narrator's, "but a three minute walk" from the Post Office, at Nassau and Liberty. In addition to the Post Office, put to good but anonymous use in Pierre, the story features other actual locations and local phenomena: the apple sellers' stalls "nigh the Custom House and Post Office" (two and a half blocks apart, between Wall and Liberty Streets),

Trinity Church (across Broadway from 10 Wall Street), the emptiness of Wall Street on Sunday, the parade of the busy and fashionable on Broadway. And in these specifics are hints of future uses of these urban locations. "Of a Sunday, Wall Street is as deserted as Petra; and every night of every day it is an emptiness," written before Melville had seen the Middle East and Mediterranean, foreshadows much of the imagery of Clarel and the image of rooftops during the draft riots in "The House-Top" of 1866: ". . . the roofy desert spreads/ Vacant as Libya." Melville's future use of urban images for phenomena of ocean and river traffic is foreshadowed by this street image: "I remembered the bright silks and sparkling faces I had seen that day, swan-like sailing down the Mississippi of Broadway." And a submerged New York event, John Colt's murder of Samuel Adams in 1841, surfaces in both *Pierre* and "Bartleby": in the novel, Pierre's suicide in the Tombs echoes Colt's suicide hours before his scheduled execution. In the story, the fact that the Adams murder took place in an office suggests to the narrator, in his exasperation, a way to murder Bartleby in a similar setting. Finally, Bartleby also causes his own death in the Tombs by refusing to eat. This new use of detail, and his renewed command of subject matter and technique, are signs of Melville's seriousness about his new vocation as a magazine writer.

As always when he moved into a new genre--short fiction, poetry, the long poem--he was studious and careful of technical considerations. But this tale of a self-exile to the city and self-willed failure and death shows renewed control for another reason as well: while Melville was not entirely finished with the quarrel with New York that he tried to work out in the second half of Pierre, he was able to pursue it more calmly. Here he makes perfectly controlled use of the abstract (such as the metaphor in Bartleby's occupation and the pun in the name of Wall Street, as well as the specific in his free use of actual place names and other urban details) as he works out his disappointment with literary New York.

Failure and rejection in New York without the additional element of self-exile

occurs in three other short stories of the early Massachusetts period. In "The Two Temples," a story rejected by Putnam's in March 1854, Melville goes back to church architecture to contrast rejection by a high-society Episcopal church with acceptance in the gallery of a London theatre. In "The Fiddler," published in Harper's Magazine in September 1854, a former child prodigy whose fame is long faded provides an example of cheerful acceptance of life's realities to an author whose poem has just been lambasted by the critics. Finally, in "Jimmy Rose," published in the November 1855 issue of Harper's, he uses a changing neighborhood to explore the change in social standing suffered by a financially ruined New Yorker. All three of these stories are set in Manhattan; all three involve rejection by some established element of New York society; all three were written while Melville was living a financially precarious life in Massachusetts, coming to terms with his profession and his feelings of alienation from literary New York.

Charles F. Briggs regretfully rejected "The Two Temples" when Melville submitted it in 1854. The piece was a bit too graphic in its satiric depiction of the fashionable Grace Episcopal Church on Broadway, and although the contrasting portrait of a London theatre was inoffensive enough, Briggs could not risk the wrath of New York's social leaders. "I am very loth to reject the Two Temples as the article contains some exquisitely fine description, and some pungent satire," Briggs wrote Melville on May 12, "but my editorial experience compels me to be very cautious in offending the religious sensibilities of the public . . ." (Leyda I, 487). George Palmer Putnam wrote in the same vein on May 13: "There seems to be reason to fear that some of our church readers might be disturbed by the point of view of your sketch. I regret this very much, as we shd have been glad to have had it in this number.--Do you think this could be avoided?--" (Leyda I, 488). If revisions would have made the story acceptable, they were apparently never made; "The Two Temples" was not published. It is difficult to imagine how Melville could have recast his story of a would-be worshipper, banished from

the fashionable temple, taking refuge in the church tower to watch the service through a screen. His graphic portrayal of the sexton, whom his narrator describes as "the great, fat-paunched, beadle-faced man" (303), was clearly identifiable to his contemporaries; they would have had no trouble recognizing Isaac Brown, Grace Church's second sexton, who held the office for thirty years (Rowland 339). Without this menacing character to evict the narrator from the church in the beginning of the story, or course, the whole tale would lose. But the sexton would not have been the only thing New Yorkers would have recognized.

From the very beginning, Grace Church was clearly intended: the narrator bemoans the fact that he has "tramped this blessed Sunday morning, all the way from the Battery, three long miles" (303), and soon after that describes the church as one of "these splendid, new-fashioned Gothic Temples" (304). Grace Church was among the newest of New York's Gothic temples, having been consecrated in March 1846. But, as Beryl Rowland points out, certain of the architectural details do not correspond to Grace Church, having been borrowed from Trinity Church, at the head of Wall Street and half a block from Allan Melville's law office, which Melville knew very well (341). A visit to Grace Church confirms that while it would have been possible to climb a series of wooden steps and then a ladder (wood in the story, and now metal), the window the narrator looks out of would not have been accessible, and the stained glass was not yet installed. More telling, "once inside the tower, there would be no way of looking into the church and such a climb would already have attracted attention . . . [A] climb comparable to that described would have brought the narrator out onto the roof from whence [sic] he could look down on the congregation through the transom; there was never any 'curious little window high over the orchestra' [Melville's words], and the narrator could not have heard or seen the service in the way he described" (343-4). On the other hand, as Rowland carefully details, the ascent of Trinity Church's tower corresponds exactly to the climb the narrator makes in "The Two Temples" (345-6), a

climb Melville himself made, with Lemuel Shaw Jr. and his brother Allan, in late January 1848. This was one of his habitual efforts to get "up, aloft," as he did whenever possible when traveling, and according to his young brother-in-law they "had a very fine view of the city" (Leyda I, 270). Getting locked in the tower, and getting into legal trouble after ringing the bells to get out, was Melville's artistic addition, as was the entire situation of the second sketch. Here again Melville gives expression to his feelings of rejection by New York. "I suppose I'm excommunicated; excluded, anyway," says the narrator after first being escorted out the door, exactly the situation Melville was in with the literary establishment of New York. Resolving at first on an independent worship service for the day--"I had best move back to the Battery again, peeping into my prayer-book as I go"--the narrator then spots the little door at the base of the tower and realizes that "there is usually, in these splendid, new-fashioned Gothic Temples, a curious little window high over the orchestra and everything else"--words that seem more appropriate to the description of a theatre--"and that little window, seems to me, if one could but get there, ought to command a glorious bird's-eye view of the entire field of operations below"--which sounds more like a description of the postmaster's room in the Post Office, in the renovated Middle Dutch Church. Sneaking in, he seeks the window from which he "might, at a distance, take part in the proceedings" (303-4), as Melville took part in the practice of authorship in his native city. The magazine writer on his farm in Massachusetts participated in the writer's life the way the narrator participates in the service: "Uncovering my head, and taking out my book, I stood erect, midway up the tall Jacob's ladder, as if standing among the congregation; and in spirit, if not in place, participated in those devout exultings" (305). When he finally reaches the opening, covered by a screen, through which he is nearly scorched by the hot air of New York society, and literary New York's disapproval, he muses, "Little dream the good congregation away down there, that they have a faithful clerk away up here."

Not only is he invisible to the congregation but his view of them is distorted by

the screen: "That wire-woven screen had the effect of casting crape upon all I saw. Only by making allowances for the crape, could I gain a right idea of the scene disclosed" (306). The air of unreality becomes an air of theatricality as he muses on his own detachment from the scene: "[T]he approach to my strange look-out, through perfect solitude, and along rude and dusty ways, enhanced the theatric wonder of the populous spectacle I could not rid my soul of the intrusive thought, that, through some necromancer's glass, I looked down upon some sly enchanter's show" (306). At a distance, this is also how New York's literary life must have appeared to Melville. His ambiguous relationship to New York at this period, and his ambivalence about it, surfaces when the narrator describes his thoughts as he tries to find a way out of the locked tower: "But I was not an outside caller; alas, I was an inside prowler" (308). Locked away from New York in the country, excluded from its literary life by the guardians of conventional taste and morality, he was nonetheless a native, not an outsider.

In the second sketch he does again what he did for the first time in Redburn: he tries to resolve his feelings about New York by relocating the action to another city, this time London. The narrator gets stranded in London, having fled there after the ignominy of his arrest for trespassing in the church, and wanders around in a city he would describe in similar terms later in Israel Potter: "I drifted amid those indescribable crowds which every seventh night pour and roar through each main artery and block the bye-veins of great London, the Leviathan Better perish mid myriad sharks in mid Atlantic, than die a penniless stranger in Babylonian London. Forlorn, outcast, without a friend, I staggered on through three millions of my own human kind" (310). Handed a pass that will admit him to the second half of a play starring Charles Macready, a controversial figure in New York, he finds another low side door and makes another long climb to the highest gallery of the theatre, making explicit comparisons along the way with the church tower in New York. Having accepted, with initial reluctance, the charity of the stranger

who gave him the pass, he also accepts a free cup of ale from the boy selling it inside the theatre, and gives himself up to a good time in the gallery, concluding with the observation that "a stranger in a strange land, I found sterling charity in the one [temple]; and at home, in my own land, was thrust out from the other" (315).

Nothing is resolved, but the same old complaint is aired, with a comparison with London for a new twist: New York is inhospitable even though it is his home, and even a foreign city with no obligations to him whatever is kinder to him. Another London temple, the men's club he calls the Paradise of Bachelors, also offers him hospitality in a "city by itself . . . with a park to it, and flower-beds, and a river-side" (318). He contrasts this with a hellish Massachusetts factory in which young women are worked to the point of collapse.

This same complaint without the added comparison is the basis of the two other New York stories of the Massachusetts period, which deal with native failures, one economic, the other both economic and artistic. "The Fiddler" was published in the September 1854 Harper's, while Putnam's was running Israel Potter in installments. "Jimmy Rose" came out in Harper's in November 1855, over a year later. In between a number of tales and sketches came out that were not specifically urban in setting, and whose cities, where they did occur, were not reflections of his problems with New York. But plainly the fact that he could write about a native New York failure in the summer of 1854 and then recur to the same type again over a year later shows that this was not an unimportant problem for him.

Leon Howard, in his 1951 biography, writes of "The Fiddler" as evidence of Melville's acceptance of his lot as a magazine writer. Later on, however, Howard changed his mind and joined the ranks of those who believe that "The Fiddler" was written by Fitz-James O'Brien, a New York critic who, according to Perry Miller, supported Melville in the early 1850s when much of literary New York was disgusted with him (316-318). Howard added, in a 1958 note, "Francis Wolle, on the evidence of

the Harper's index, attributed [the story] to Fitz-James O'Brien in his biography of O'Brien (Boulder, Colorado, 1944). Aside from the weak evidence of similarity in theme to 'The Happy Failure,' I have found no reason for questioning this attribution and believe 'The Fiddler' should be excluded from the Melville canon" (215-216). The editors of the Northwestern-Newberry Melville accept the authority of Elizabeth Melville's inclusion of "The Fiddler" in her own list of her husband's stories, and her grouping of a copy of the story in a folder with the other texts of his magazine fiction (793-798). If Melville did write "The Fiddler" it is certainly not his best story, but the setting again is New York, the main character is a native failure, and this rather Whitmanesque individual lives in one of Melville's favorite changing neighborhoods. Despite Howard's belief that it should be excluded, the Northwestern-Newberry edition includes it .

"Jimmy Rose" is based more than previous stories in an outdated building, as well as in a changing neighborhood. As in "I and My Chimney," a tale of the same period but plainly based on his house in Massachusetts, a man's relationship with a building is central. But unlike "I and My Chimney" the first person narrator is not the subject of the tale. One of those shadowy gentlemen left behind by the years and the city, such as those who run errands for Pierre's Aunt Dorothea, is the subject, and the analogy with the faded and dilapidated building in the city serves to emphasize the social fall old Jimmy Rose has taken. This story also gives the most explicit indications of Melville's concern that the life of New York was passing him by.

The opening sentence makes this clear: "A time ago, no matter how long precisely, I, an old man, removed from the country to the city, having become unexpected heir to a great old house in a narrow street of one of the lower wards, once the haunt of style and fashion, full of gay parlors and bridal chambers; but now, for the most part, transformed into counting-rooms and warehouses" (336). The New York to which Melville imagined himself returning was not the stylish, fashionable city he knew as a child; the parts of the city he had lived in then had been turned, as he well knew, to

the purposes of commerce, and he undoubtedly expected to have the same bemused reaction to the changed city as the narrator if he ever inherited the means of moving back there again. Jimmy Rose is one of those "few strange old gentlemen and ladies" who "still lingered in the neighborhood, and would not, could not, might not quit it," not even for the reasons that drove Allan Melvill and his family out of those very neighborhoods in 1830.

The city's success is what has caused these fossilized gentry to be nothing but remnants in their own neighborhoods; they were once at the top of the town's social strata but now are virtually invisible among the area's new inhabitants. This was not an experience any of Melville's relatives had had in New York, although certainly his grandfather, the Revolutionary War general celebrated in Holmes' poem "The Last Leaf," was such a figure in Boston, and it may have been of him, among others, that the New York grandson was thinking as this story formed. He also might have been thinking of what his father could have become if he had stayed in New York after losing his fortune, and had also somehow lost his family along the way.

Certainly he was speculating on his own future in the city, and not with a sense of happy anticipation. Once again, as in "Bartleby," Melville is in both the narrator and the pathetic Jimmy Rose; if anything, the narrator once again functions as a buffer, providing both a mediating intelligence and an emotional shield against too direct contact with a disturbing character. The narrator settles back in the city with a wife and daughters, as Melville himself would have in the same situation, and the house into which they move, a bequest to the narrator, is the former home of Jimmy Rose.

Here is Melville thinking himself back into the city he was removed from so many decades earlier, and perhaps visualizing his return to one of his four childhood residences in Manhattan. Since one of Jimmy's houses is on the Battery (339), Melville may even have had in mind the boarding house in which he was born, or the house in Cortlandt Street--the house in which the narrator eventually finds Jimmy is "an old house

of [Jimmy's] in C---- Street" (1285). The narrator proceeds on a search up Broadway for the unfortunate character, reminiscent of the travels the Master of Chancery makes in an effort to run away from Bartleby--this time right after hearing of Jimmy's financial ruin. And once again comes a philosophic sigh from the narrator that, like the one at the end of "Bartleby," reconnects the isolated figure to humankind: "Ah! poor, poor Jimmy--God guard us all--poor Jimmy Rose!" (339). The sigh comes at three other points in the narrative, an excess that typifies the crucial artistic differences between this story and far greater works.

Jimmy after his fall leads a life that, except for his social skills, is rather like Bartleby's. He is in the position of one who is socially acceptable but cannot reciprocate invitations, a genteel charity-case, rather like those Melville alludes to in *Omoo*: "[T]hose who have houses and lands, are incessantly bored to death with invitations to come and live in other people's houses; while many a poor gentleman who inks the seams of his coat, and to whom the like invitation would be really acceptable, may go and sue for it" (255). He is "poor in the last dregs of poverty; a pauper beyond alms-house pauperism; a promenading pauper in a thin, thread-bare, careful coat; a pauper with wealth of polished words; a courteous, smiling, shivering gentleman . . ." (342). He lives off the interest of a minuscule income "from an unknown quarter," and eats one meal a day, aside from what he can get as a guest. He is tolerated as an inoffensive, smiling guest with inexplicable roses in his otherwise unhealthy cheeks, ready to stop in with the latest gossip around tea-time, or just before dinner. He still flirts with the ladies, although they find "his compliments somewhat musty, smacking of cocked hats and small clothes--nay, of old pawnbrokers' shoulder-lace and sword belts. For there still lingered in Jimmy's address a subdued martial air; he having, in his palmy days been, among other things, a general of the State militia" (343). The sudden introduction of this military past suggests that Melville was at this point hearing echoes of his grandfather, and the nature of Jimmy's military service, in the militia of the State, suggests an echo of the office of

Master-in-Chancery held by the narrator of "Bartleby," another inoffensive, eminently safe individual who, without money, could have ended up another Jimmy Rose if he had had the social graces.

Like Bartleby, Jimmy is dead when the narrator tells his story, and the narrator makes a great deal out of the moral to be drawn from his life: the roses in his cheeks, the natural happiness in the world that Jimmy maintained even in his penurious dependence, should be a lesson to others who lament their smaller misfortunes or, more selfish yet, look down on those who have failed when they themselves have not. On one level it is the bland consolation dispensed so often by the kind of religious fiction that a young woman brings Jimmy in his last illness, and on that level it may even have consoled Melville in his more conventional moments. But aside from being a pleasant piece of popular fiction, rather typical of the magazine fiction of the time, the story is mainly interesting for its use of urban detail, another thing it shares with "Bartleby."

The narrator here is a little shy about mentioning street names and dropping the names of the famous, but the attention to basic Manhattan reality contrasts again with Pierre: Melville was no longer snubbing Manhattan by ignoring it even as he wrote about it. In this story as in "Bartleby" Melville made an attempt to come to terms with his changed relationship to his city, and also seems to have been trying out one of the possible worst-case scenarios for his own return. In the case of "Jimmy Rose," with its echoes of his grandfather and its glimpse of what Manhattan could have ended up doing to his father, Melville makes the familial connection to New York that he, as the first of his family born in Manhattan, did not have in fact, and he imagines himself, in the situation of the narrator, coming back to the city, living in an unfashionable neighborhood as one of its superannuated residents, and crying "dribblets from my dotage" (345) over a long-dead alter ego who once inhabited the same old house. A great part of the value of this example of Melville's changing-neighborhood fiction lies in what it reveals of Melville's thoughts about his native city at this crucial period of exile.

The last of these exile-and-failure works, this time having nothing direct to say about New York, is Israel Potter, the only one of Melville's novels to appear in serial form before publication as a book. It appeared in Putnam's in 1854, over the same period that other urban stories were appearing in Harper's, and its urban settings are Paris and London. Since it is based on an older narrative, the inclusion or omission of the original's urban elements could indicate something of what Melville felt about cities and exile at this point in his life, and particularly what he felt about New York, which figures only in the fleeting urban metaphors and similes that are more typical of the early fiction than the other works of urban exile and failure from this period.

In addition to the reintroduction of New York metaphors, Melville makes two other changes in the urban balance of the original work. In the pamphlet on which he based his novel there is no elaboration on the meeting with Benjamin Franklin (and none of the exploits Melville invents with John Paul Jones, an irresistible interposition for someone who might have been hungering for an opportunity to write more sea yarns) and no description of Paris; also in the original there is considerable description of the debased life Potter led in London, and Melville cuts this short, preferring to deal with the urban side of Potter's forty years of exile in terms of culturally current symbols, saving the anguish of exile for the final homecoming scenes, which for him would have had distinctly urban echoes. Much of this has to do with the practical choices Melville made about how to deal with the original narrative to make it a more interesting story, but it also reflects his handling of the issues involved in his own continuing exile from New York.

Henry Trumbull's Life and Remarkable Adventures of Israel Potter, published in 1824 and reproduced in facsimile in an appendix to the Northwestern-Newberry edition of Melville's novel, was intended to win popular and official sympathy for Potter, who was trying to get a pension on the basis of his military service during the Revolutionary War. The Trumbull/Potter narrative grinds on and on in the voice of a pity-seeking old

veteran--a voice the old veteran himself might well have thought it beneath him to use, but Trumbull must have thought it suited his purposes.

Melville's decision to change the narrative from the first to the third person furnishes part of an explanation for his handling of the urban sequences in his novel. He must have realized that an elderly veteran with a personal cause was not the type of narrator who could credibly recount the exciting and adventurous incidents that would have kept Putnam's readers interested. He may also have realized that an unsophisticated New England farmer would in fact have missed much of what would make his life interesting to an urban readership, so he writes a third-person story that includes just enough dialogue and incident to reveal Potter's innocence and naivete but frees the narrative from the protagonist's limitations.

Where Trumbull/Potter's tale concentrates on catalogues of grievances and small martyrdoms, Melville's concentrates on close calls, imprisonments, escapes and near-escapes, frantic chases, sea battles, and other heroic and picaresque derring-do that sustains interest far more effectively. It is Melville who brings John Paul Jones into the story, having him meet Israel in Paris, where Melville's narrator describes Jones in a way Trumbull and Potter never could have: "So at midnight, the heart of the metropolis of modern civilization was secretly trod by this jaunty barbarian in broad-cloth; a sort of prophetic ghost, glimmering in anticipation upon the advent of those tragic scenes of the French Revolution which leveled the exquisite refinement of Paris with the blood-thirsty ferocity of Borneo; showing that broaches and finger-rings, not less than nose-rings and tattooing, are tokens of the primeval savageness which ever slumbers in human kind, civilized or uncivilized (63).

This is part of Melville's general embellishment of the visit to Paris that Trumbull covers in three quick pages and Melville expands into three chapters. The relish with which Melville tells this part of the tale is evident from the first incident, when Israel, crossing the Pont Neuf--the first of two famous bridges in European cities that Melville

makes use of in this novel--gets into a fight with a French bootblack whom he mistakes for a British collaborator out to steal his false-heeled boots.

This is a slightly more complicated version of a standard trope, the rube's first encounter with the metropolis: New Yorkers had been chuckling over stories of upright but unsophisticated farmers (particularly New Englanders) committing gaffe after gaffe in the sophisticated city for several generations, and Melville himself had used various versions of this before, in Redburn and Pierre. Here it is wartime, the rube is also a spy, and the city is Paris, for which New Yorkers have always had a perhaps unjustifiably high regard. The rube is an American hero, so the reader sympathizes with his predicament even while being amused, and the foreign setting means that the communication difficulties usually brought about by differences in dialect are here exacerbated by an outright difference in language. Melville also adds another twist when he has Dr. Franklin upbraid Israel for his error and give him money to recompense the bootblack for damages. This is an opportunity to put homely maxims and advice of all kinds into Franklin's mouth, some of which bears directly on urban ways: "'Stop, have you the exact change ready?'" Melville has Franklin ask. "'Don't be taking out all your money in the open street'" (43). Having introduced Dr. Franklin and his lodgings in the Latin Quarter, Melville cannot resist devoting the eighth chapter to a description and discussion of yet another changing neighborhood, this time in Paris. "[T]he Latin Quarter, at once the haunt of education and economy, seemed peculiarly to invite the philosophical Poor Richard to its venerable retreats," Melville's narrator explains. "Here, of grey, chilly, drizzly November mornings, in the dark-stoned quadrangle of the time-honored Sorbonne, walked the lean and slippered metaphysician . . ." (47). Melville's fascination with urban change surfaces in his evocation of the Latin Quarter's past and present:

Long ago the haunt of rank, the Latin Quarter still retains many old buildings whose imposing architecture singularly contrasts with the

unassuming habits of their present occupants. In some parts its general air is dreary and dim; monastic and theurgic. In those lonely narrow ways--long-drawn prospectives of desertion--lines with huge piles of silent, vaulted, old iron-grated buildings of dark grey stone, one almost expects to encounter Paracelsus or Friar Bacon turning the next corner, with some awful vial of Black-Art elixir in his hand.

But all the lodging-houses are not so grim. Not to speak of many of comparatively modern erection, the others of the better class, however stern in exterior, evince a feminine gaiety of taste, in their furnishings within. The embellishing, or softening, or screening hand of woman is to be seen all over the interiors of this metropolis. Like Augustus Caesar with respect to Rome, the Frenchwoman leaves her obvious mark on Paris (47).

Melville also makes use of the interior of the Latin Quarter room in which Franklin puts Potter during his stay in Paris. The items left on the mantle are an occasion for Potter's puzzlement and Franklin's paternal interference; the appearance of a chambermaid with a secondary specialty in other types of customer service is a chance to reveal Potter's naivete and have Franklin interfere again. All of it serves as food for sensible, upright but amusingly naive soliloquies from Potter. And the Parisian interior is also the setting for the meeting with John Paul Jones that makes possible the series of sea battles that form the novel's central chapters. Between the early adventures in Paris and the final long imprisonment in London are other adventures, told in a lively narration that features the type of urban metaphor that is typical of Melville's earlier work. Some of these metaphors are clearly based in New York, while others are more generically urban. Recrossing the Channel after the Parisian mission, Potter finds himself becalmed on the ferry. As Melville's narrator describes it, "The French and English coasts lay distinctly visible in the strange starlight; the white cliffs of Dover resembling a long straight row of

lamps. Israel seemed standing in the middle of the crossing of some wide stately street in London" (66-67).

After his escape from the suddenly-deceased Squire Woodcock's house Potter confronts a rural vista that includes a "grove of dwarfish trees" that "looked like some closely-clustered town on its banks, lorded over by spires of churches" (76). The scene transports Potter back in memory to the scene in Boston the night before the battle of Bunker Hill, as other characters and narrators have been transported in or out of urban scenes in Melville's other works. Walking the main-deck of a navy ship, Melville recurs to images from works in which he exploits the similarities between urban and shipboard life: "Israel walked the crowded main-deck of the seventy-four, continually brushed by a thousand hurrying wayfarers, as if he were in some great street in London, jammed with artisans, just returning from their day's labor" (85).

The view of England, Ireland and Scotland from the deck of John Paul Jones' Ranger brings forth a small portrait of the neighborhood most central to Melville's intended readers: "England, Scotland, and Ireland, with all their lofty cliffs, being simultaneously as plainly in sight beyond the grass-green waters, as the City Hall, St. Paul's, and the Astor House, from the triangular Park in New York" (99). As John Paul Jones spikes the cannons of a British fort, Israel follows with a bucket full of spikes, "like a footman, or some charitable gentleman with a basket of alms," either of which would have been a common sight to any New Yorker (101). In the ensuing battle Jones, trying to bring an enemy vessel into a fight, "courteously led her forth, as a beau might a belle in a ball-room" (112). The extra guns on Jones' ship "peered just above the waterline, like a parcel of dirty mullatoes from a cellar-way" (115). Between two battling ships lies "[a] long lane of darkling water . . . like that narrow canal in Venice which dozes between two shadowy piles, and high in the air is secretly crossed by the Bridge of Sighs" (125).

The child of a city of change may have had his native New York in mind when he

likened these two interlocked fighting ships to "two houses, through whose party-wall doors have been cut; one family (the Guelphs) occupying the whole lower story; another family (the Ghibelines) the whole upper story" (126). He recurs to this Renaissance feud later in the London chapters. He uses an image he would use again in Clarel when he describes the end of the Bonhomme Richard: it "slowly sunk, like Gomorrah, out of sight" (130).

Another of Melville's additions to the original narrative is a calamitous accident in which Israel manages to grab hold of part of a British ship after a battle and gets swept off John Paul Jones' ship and back into enemy hands. He tries to pass for a regular member of the crew but is eventually found out and interrogated by the captain and officers. This gives Melville yet another occasion for some urban comment. The captain asks Potter to name the ports at which the ship has touched, and, after Potter makes a few lucky guesses, asks him to describe Boston. "'What sort of a place is Boston?'" the captain asks. "'Pretty considerable of a place, sir,'" Potter replies. "'Very straight streets, ain't they?' 'Yes, sir; cow-paths, cut by sheep-walks, and intersected with hen-tracks,'" Potter replies (140-141). In the climate of literary and commercial rivalry between Boston and New York, this must have been a deliciously provocative description.

More serious comments on the nature of urban life start the closer Potter gets to his final plunge into London. "Once more in beggar's garb, the fugitive sped towards London, prompted by the same instinct which impels the hunted fox to the wilderness; for solitudes befriend the endangered wild beast, but crowds are the security, because the true desert of persecuted man," Melville writes at the end of the chapter on Ethan Allen, who also does not appear in the original narrative. "Among the throngs of the capital, Israel for more than forty years was yet to disappear, as one entering at dusk into a thick wood. Nor did ever German forest, nor Tasso's enchanted one, contain in its depths more things of horror than eventually were revealed in the secret clefts, gulfs, caves and dens of London," Melville adds, whetting the reader's appetite for scenes of urban horror to

surpass anything in Dickens. After all, the city in question is London, the world metropolis of its day, the epitome of all urban vices and virtues. "But," Melville adds, "here we anticipate a page" (153).

In fact, Melville never gives us that page. Melville does not even bother to paraphrase or recast the long sequence of unrelieved miseries and misfortunes that forms the latter part of the Potter/Turnbull narrative, self-serving and self-pitying as it is; the original is devoid of interesting urban detail, and in any case Melville had already written his scenes of British urban misery in Redburn. The poverty and hopelessness described there as it crosses a foreign adolescent's path would have been far easier to write than scene after scene of unremitting degradation for a lively and occasionally clever protagonist. Melville's intermittent depression might have been activated, or exacerbated, by having to write forty years' worth of basic misery, and in any case it would have been a dull project.

But he does give us the condensed symbolic version of Potter's urban experience. Just as the Parisian interlude begins with an episode on the Pont Neuf, so London is epitomised by the traffic over the London Bridge. Melville first has Potter enter London on a Monday morning, in November--a Blue Monday--a Fifth of November--Guy Fawkes' Day!--very blue, foggy, doleful and gunpowdery, indeed . . . that Israel found himself wedged in among the greatest everyday crowd which grimy London presents to the curious stranger. That hereditary crowd--gulf-stream of humanity--which, for continuous centuries, has never ceased pouring, like an endless shoal of herring, over London Bridge (158).

Just as Melville's discussion of the Latin Quarter (which epitomizes Paris for Potter as the bridge epitomizes London) includes a brief history of the area and its architecture, the description of Potter on the bridge begins with an evocation of its history and architectural peculiarities. Although much of the ancient grotesquery has gone when

Potter comes across the bridge, "enough of grotesque and antiquity clung to the structure at large, to render it the most striking of objects, especially to one like our hero, born in a virgin clime, where the only antiquities are the for ever youthful heavens and the earth" (159). Melville is careful to put this experience in context: "On his route from Brentford to Paris, Israel had first passed through the capital, but only as a courier. So that now, for the first, he had time to linger and loiter, and lounge--slowly absorb what he saw--meditate himself into boundless amazement" (159). Perhaps echoing his own feelings about his initial reaction to the Berkshires and his feeling, in the mid-1850s, of not being able to escape, Melville continues: "For forty years he never recovered from that surprise--never, til dead, had done with his wondering" (159).

The Turnbull/Potter London is only a setting for Potter's self-pitying catalogue of difficulties and frustrations, never described or thought of abstractly. Melville elevates the city into a symbolic construct, appropriating the image of Dante's City of Dis to give it a properly infernal dimension. Henry Cary's translation of Dante, the one Melville knew, includes in a note a paraphrase of some lines in Canto X that must have interested Melville. A tormented spirit in the City of Dis tells Dante, "But not yet fifty times shall be relumed/ Her aspect, who reigns here queen of this realm,/ Ere thou shalt know the full weight of that art," which Cary paraphrases, "'Not fifty months shall be passed, before thou shalt learn, by woeful experience, the difficulty of returning from banishment to thy native city'" (42). Those tormented in the City of Dis are heretics and participants in the conflict between the Guelph and Ghibelline factions that tore Florence apart for Dante; the echo of banishment from New York and the torment of the exiled Potter in London had special resonances of the factors keeping Melville apart from New York. This undoubtedly played its part in Melville's decision to abbreviate the London period: "[T]hese experiences," he writes at the beginning of Chapter 25, "both from their intensity and his solitude, were necessarily squalid. Best not enlarge upon them. For just as extreme suffering, without hope, is intolerable to the victim, so, to others, is its

depiction, without corresponding delusive mitigation," going on to suggest that "we too cross over and skim events to the end" as pedestrians cross the street to avoid the corner occupied by a beggar" (161).

In fact, Potter is kept in London by factors that also kept Melville in Massachusetts:

Originally he had fled to the capital to avoid the dilemma of impressment and imprisonment. In the absence of other motives, the dread of those hardships would have fixed him there till the peace. But now, when hostilities were no more; so was his money. Some period elapsed ere the affairs of the two countries were put on such a footing as to support an American consul at London. Yet, when this came to pass, he could only embrace the facilities for a return here furnished, by deserting a wife and child . . . (162).

And how much of Israel's pain in London is the surface manifestation of Herman's pain in exile from New York is revealed by Melville's use of a New York image as he introduces Potter's daydreams of his home. Setting the scene for a reverie of New England that momentarily leaves Potter unaware of where he is, Melville calls forth an image of the most notorious building in the Five Points: "[B]y good luck, he was employed . . . to trim the sword in an oval inclosure within St. James' Park, a little green, but three minutes' walk along the gravelled way, from the brick-besmoked and grimy Old Brewery of the palace, which gives its ancient name to the public resort on whose borders it stands" (164). This irreverent comparison of New York's worst rookery with the palace of St. James must have delighted American readers, particularly those New Yorkers with little patience left for Britain, but later readers can also see a reflection of the complex interrelationships of images and places of exile that worked in Melville's mind as he drew this novel to a close.

The final chapter, in which Potter comes home to the rural equivalent of a

changing neighborhood and finally dies, reveals more of this complex pattern. Melville's description of Potter walking through the old site of his father's farm recalls descriptions of those who return to the city looking for the familiar old sights that have been burnt out, built over, renovated beyond recognition, rezoned and cut through for new streets; the lack of old familiar faces recalls the social isolation of so many of Melville's superannuated characters:

But the exile's presence in these old mountain townships proved less a return than a resurrection. At first, none knew him, nor could recall having heard of him. Ere long it was found, that that more than thirty years previous, the last known survivor of his family in that region, a bachelor, following the example of three-fourths of his neighbors, had sold out and removed to a distant country in the west; where exactly, none could say.

He sought to get a glimpse of his father's homestead. But it had been burnt down long ago. Accompanied by his son, dim-eyed and dim-hearted, he next went to find the site. But the roads had years before been changed. The old road was now browsed over by sheep; the new one ran straight through what had formerly been orchards. But new orchards, planted from other suckers, and in time grafted, thrived on sunny slopes near by, where blackberries had once been picked by the bushel. At length he came to a field waving with buckwheat. It seemed one of those fields which himself had often reaped. But it turned out, upon inquiry, that but three summers since, a walnut grove had stood there. The he vaguely remembered that his father had sometimes talked of planting such a grove . . . ; yet where precisely that grove was to have been, his shattered mind could not recall. But it seemed not unlikely that during his long exile, the walnut grove had been planted and harvested, as well as the

annual crops preceding and succeeding it, on the very same soil (168).

Here again, in a rural setting, we see evidence of Melville's fear that New York would not know him and would be a completely foreign place to him when and if he ever returned. This fear of perpetual exile haunts the works of the early-to-mid-1850s, the period when the pleasures of country life wore thinner than ever and relations with the New York literary community became more distant.

Melville's decision to abstract and condense Potter's exile in London coincided with, and was probably rooted in, his weariness with life in Pittsfield and his financial inability to get back to New York, but it was just as much rooted in his need to finish the book dramatically in a year that also saw the publication of "Paradise of Bachelors and Tartarus of Maids," "Jimmy Rose," "The Bell-Tower," "The Encantadas" and "Benito Cereno." In addition to the pressures of authorship, Melville had a crippling attack of rheumatism in his back that February, and in June an attack of sciatica so severe that his neighbor Dr. Holmes visited him in a professional as well as neighborly capacity. Much of the misery of this period found its allegorized way into a thoroughly Pittsfield story, "I and My Chimney," in the summer of that year (Leyda II, 489-511). That story seems to mark the point at which Melville stopped taking his worries mentally to New York and playing them out against the scenes he imagined would await him on his return. His actual return to New York was eight years away, but the plan to return, and efforts to bring it to pass, began in this period. Meanwhile the pressures of life in the country did not let up, physical problems abated but did not disappear, and finally in the fall of 1856 Melville went back to the old world to recover from the strains of life in the new.

III

Confronting the Urban Archetype

In 1856, in his sixth year of self-exile from his native city, after a period of intense productivity and little critical or financial success, Melville was enervated and depressed. His family, probably finding him difficult to live with, acted on their concern and made it possible for him to take a long trip to Europe and the Mideast in the hopes that he would recover his strength and his spirits. Rheumatism, sciatica and eye trouble had been plaguing him, very probably as a result of his sedentary and almost self-destructive writing habits. On September 1, Lemuel Shaw wrote to his son Samuel from Boston:

I suppose you have been informed by some of the family, how very ill, Herman has been. It is manifest to me from Elizabeth's letters, that she has felt great anxiety about him. When he is deeply engaged in one of his literary works, he confines him to hard study many hours in the day, with little or no exercise, & this specially in winter for a great many days together. He probably thus overworks himself & brings on severe nervous affections. He has been advised strongly to break off this labor for some time, & take a voyage or a journey, & endeavor to recruit . . . I]n the autumn he will go away for four or five months, Elizabeth will come here with her younger children, Mrs. Griggs & Augusta will each take one of the boys, their house in Pittsfield will be shut up. I think he needs such a change & that it would be highly beneficial to him & probably restore him (Leyda II, 521).

A trip to the Holy Land was something Melville himself had tentatively planned with enthusiasm during his last voyage, the 1849 trip to Europe. The idea presented itself during a conversation aboard the Southampton with a Dr. Taylor, cousin of New York author Bayard Taylor, and the German scholar George Adler. That night Melville wrote

in his journal: "This afternoon Dr. Taylor & I sketched a plan for going down the Danube from Vienna to Constantinople; thence to Athens on the steamer; to Beyrouth & Jerusalem -- Alexandria & the pyramids . . . I am full (just now) of this glorious Eastern jaunt. Think of it! Jerusalem & the Pyramids -- Constantinople, the Aegean, & old Athens!" (Journals 7). The expense of this additional trip prevented it from being anything more than a plan until 1856, when it was no longer an indulgence but more of a necessity.

So Elizabeth moved to Boston with the children for the winter, the Pittsfield house was shut up, and Melville himself went to New York, where he boarded the Glasgow and left for Europe on October 11, the same date on which he had left New York for his last trip across the Atlantic, and the same date on which he had first arrived in Albany after being forced to leave New York in 1830.

Faith and the lack of it were on his mind when he landed in Liverpool and visited Hawthorne, the American consul, whom he had not seen in several years. Melville's journals mention the visit without going into any detail, but Hawthorne's record the substance of the conversation:

Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken, and informed me that he had 'pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated:' but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and, I think, will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. It is strange how he persists -- and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before -- in wandering to and fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand hills amid which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other. If he were a religious man, he would be one of the most truly religious and reverential; he has a very high and noble nature, and better

worth immortality than most of us" (English Notebooks 43, 2-3).

Melville was indeed, as Walter Bezanson says in his introduction to Clarel, "a religious type," who, although he had left his childhood Calvinism behind, "needed a myth of comparable force to take its place" (cviii). His trip to the Holy Land was not intended to revive a moribund faith. What it did was confirm him in his skepticism by giving him a chance to confront in reality what he had known before only as place-names in the setting of a discarded myth.

These place names have always had a great hold on the American imagination, starting with the Puritan founders of New England whose identification with the Chosen People was so thorough that they chose Hebrew names for their children as well as their cities. The Plimoth Plantation group early appreciated the image of a city on a hill from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:14): "[W]ee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us," John Winthrop wrote aboard ship as he and his flock crossed the Atlantic for the New World in 1630 (A Modell of Christian Charity, quoted in Miller and Johnson 199). Twenty-one years later Peter Bulkeley, another Puritan minister associated with the Plimoth group, made the same comment, as Charles Feidelson mentions in Symbolism and American Literature: "[T]he crude huts and muddy streets were transmogrified into a focal symbol of God's emerging idea: 'Wee are as a City set upon an hill, in the open view of all the earth, the eyes of the world are upon us'" (80). This sense of mission and of having been chosen has characterized the American self-image from the beginning. As Melville himself notes in White-Jacket:

And we Americans are the peculiar, chosen people--the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. Seventy years ago we escaped from thrall; and, besides our first birth-right--embracing one continent of earth--God has given to us, for a future inheritance, the broad domain of the political pagans, that shall yet come and lie down under the shade of our ark, without bloody hands being lifted. God has

predestinated, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls. The rest of the nations must soon be in our rear. We are the pioneers of the world; the advance-guard, sent on through the wilderness of untried things, to break a new path in the New World that is ours [T]he political Messiah . . . has come in us, if we would but give utterance to his promptings. And let us always remember that with ourselves, almost for the first time in the history of earth, national selfishness is unbounded philanthropy; or we can not do a good to America but we give alms to the world (151).

The idea of being part of a community important and influential enough to be observed and even emulated by "all the earth" has also been part of the New Yorker's self-image since at least the opening of the Erie Canal and the city's attainment of commercial primacy in this country. A local Protestant minister even characterized New York in these same terms in 1851, the year after Melville moved to Pittsfield: "[T]he metropolis was 'a city that is set on a hill,' an influence for good or for evil that would penetrate even to the remotest districts of the nation" (Spann 274). No New Yorker would question this assumption today, and such was the city's growth in power and influence in the nineteenth century that it must have been widely believed in Melville's day as well.

For Melville the cities of the Near East were archetypal and mythic, not real. They were ideas of cities, symbols of the urban element in ancient human experience. Westerners did not go to see the daily reality of the city of El Khuds; they went to encounter the ancient idea of the holy city of Jerusalem. That so many nineteenth-century travelers did not come to this encounter with the faith of pilgrims and crusaders of bygone ages did not lessen the power of the encounter for them, although it changed its nature. When Melville, native of the city that had come to symbolize, even in his father's day, commercial opportunity and financial success, encountered the dry, rocky

remains of the city David built to be the dwelling place of God, he experienced a very familiar sense of disappointment. New York, the capitol of this world, had disappointed him by not guaranteeing him a secure, happy life. Jerusalem, the city that embodied human contact with the divine, disappointed him by not supplying spiritual security and joy.

The journal Melville kept on this trip reveals his fascination with the cities he visited. He made a point of revisiting some of the sights of Liverpool that he had first seen in 1838, noting in his entry for November 8, 1856, "After dinner went to Exchange. Looked at Nelson's statue, with peculiar emotion, mindful of 20 years ago" (50), moved at least partly by nostalgia for the re-urbanizing experience of Liverpool nearly two decades earlier. From Liverpool he went to Constantinople, passing Algiers, which aroused a memory of the Galapagos as he left it: "Leaving it in the distance the town looked like a sloping rock, covered with bird lime--the houses all white" (52).

Six days later he was ashore exploring Syra, his first Mediterranean port. As usual, he saw the unfamiliar in terms of the urban familiar. In a sentence structured like the opening of "The Encantadas" he notes: "Take all the actors of operas in a night from the theatres of London, & set them to work in their fancy dresses . . . &c . . . will give some notion of a Greek port" (53). He went, as always, to the highest point in the city so as to get the most inclusive view. He writes of poverty with the discomfort of the fallen patrician: "Poor people live here. Picturesque. Some old men looked like Pericles reduced to a chiffonier--such a union of picturesque & poverty stricken" (54). His next port was Salonica, where he saw another reminder of New York: "Aspects of streets like those of Five Points Rotten houses. Smell of rotten wood" (55). What Melville knew at first hand of the Five Points, then New York's most notorious slum, we do not know, but the Five Points was the most important slum in the national urban rhetoric of the nineteenth century.

In Constantinople he encountered boys rowing out to the ship and saw in them the

fabled newsboys of New York: "Specimens of oriental news boy. The self-possession & easy ways" (58). He registered a New Yorker's complaint against the nocturnal lack of safety and entertainment in this foreign city: "Staid in all night. Dangerous going out, owing to footpads & assassins. The curse of these places. Cant' go out at night, & no places to go, if you could" (58). He also remarks on a lack of system in urban planning, after getting lost in the city: "No plan to streets Perfect labyrinth. Narrow. Close, shut in. If one could but get up aloft, it would be easy to see one's way out But no. No names on the streets no more than to natural allies among the groves. No numbers. No anything" (58-59).

Melville's wish to get "up, aloft" was no different from that of any other visitor to any city. He escorted his brother-in-law to the tower of Trinity Church so that the young Bostonian could have the best possible view of New York, and his own wish to view the living map of the cities of the Middle East was certainly in the same vein. But his ascent to a high place to look at cities from above reverses the spatial relationship implicit in the Puritans' image of themselves as a city on a hill. The Puritan city was metaphorically elevated so as to be seen as widely as possible, in keeping with their mission into the wilderness; they were to be a living sermon, an example to the whole world. When Melville climbed to the tops of towers he remained invisible but made the literal city more visible to him. The actual city spread out beneath the solitary viewer offers a private communication, not the public sermon delivered by the city on the hill. Likewise the solitary viewer, although elevated above the city like a preacher above a congregation (or a muezzin in a minaret), delivers no sermon, but reads other silent, visual lessons. The view from above was of great importance to Melville in his travels, and never more so than when he tried to absorb whatever the Holy Land could teach him.

When he finally does get "up, aloft" in the Watch Tower, he exults, "From the top, my God, what a view! Surpasses everything" (60). He remarks on the pigeons in the Pigeon Mosque: "In its courts, the pigeons covered the pavements as thick as in the West

they fly in hosts" (60). The closeness and crowding of Constantinople's narrow streets impresses him with its potential for peril, perhaps surpassing anything he knew first hand in New York: "Have to beware of your pockets. My guide went with his hands to his. -- The horrible grimy tragic air of these streets. The rotten & wicked looking houses. So gloomy & grimy seems as if a suicide hung from every rafter within. --No open space--no squares or parks. You suffocate for room. --You pass close together" (61). This sounds like classic descriptions of the Five Points. But out by the cemetery he sees a happier sight: ". . . the cemeteries of Pera. Great resort in summer evenings. Bank of the Bosphorus--like Brooklyn heights" (62).

In the Bazaar he is followed, despite all his street skills, "for two or three hours by an infernal Greek, & confederates. Could neither intimidate or elude them. Began to feel nervous; remembered that much of Schiller's Ghost-Seer hangs upon being followed in Venice by an Armenian. The mere mysterious, persistent, silent following. At last escaped them" (64).

That he thought of Schiller and not some past urban experience suggests that most of his experience of urban danger was vicarious. The New York he knew would never, perhaps not even in the Five Points, if he ever ventured there, have given him two or three such suspenseful hours. But he saw a reminder of New York on his return visit to the Tower later that day, and later wrote that it looked like "Croton water pipes on end" (64). He would have seen these water mains being installed in the 1840s (the Croton system began operating in 1842). The public behavior of the Turks in Constantinople impressed him, in implicit contrast to the posturings and displays of Broadway: "Perfect decorum between sexes. No ogling. No pertness. No looking for admiration" (67).

On December 30 he landed in Cairo. The next day he went to see the Pyramids, which made a deep impression, but he was disappointed to have had only one day in the city: "It racks me, that I can only spend one day in Cairo, owing to steamer" (73). On January 3 he wrote, "I am wearied to death with two days in Alexandria which might

have been delightfully spent in Cairo" (73), and then used the time to record his impressions. In great detail he noted the appearance of the streets and houses, the latticework over the windows, the vacant houses in certain parts of town. "Aspect of the thoroughfares like London streets on Saturday night. All the world gossiping & marketing,--but in picturesque costumes" (74). He commented on the traffic and manner of driving, the dress of the women, the views from the highest place he could visit--Saladin's citadel (74-75).

Only after these urban observations did he go on to describe the trip to the Pyramids and the fearsome impression they made on him: "Nothing in Nature gives such an idea of vastness It was in these pyramids that was conceived the idea of Jehovah. Terrible mixture of the cunning and awful Pyramids still loom before me--something vast, undefiled, incomprehensible, and awful" (75-76). From the impressions of the Pyramids he reverted to more details of Cairo: life at the hotel, the various and fascinating activities in the great square, the donkey boys and their animals. At Alexandria he was struck by the antiquity of the city: "Seems Mcadamed with the pulverised ruins of thousand cities. Every shovel full of earth dug over. The soil, deep loam, looks historical" (77). And then he went on to note details of the square, people at windows, cries of night watchmen, but reverted to more comments on the Pyramids: "After seeing the pyramid, all other architecture seems but pastry" (78).

On the morning of January 6 Melville landed at Jaffa, which he had read about before and noted earlier on December 27 was "Oldest sea port in the world (some say it was a port before Noah)" (79), but he wrote little about it at this point, since he was only passing through on his way to Jerusalem, which he reached the next day. He spent remarkably little space on his first impressions of Jerusalem, noting only that he spent several days with a guide "roaming over the hills" (79), nothing like the details he left of all the other cities he had seen up to this point. He noted on January 19th (really the 18th--his dating had become inaccurate) that he left Jerusalem with Frederick

Cunningham, an American with whom he had become friendly, for a side trip to Ramla, Lydda and Jaffa. This ancient port was of special interest to Melville not only because of its great antiquity but because of his identification with Jonah. When he was able to get "up, aloft" in the only place he could in Jaffa, the top of the English Hotel, he described the city and surroundings briefly and then added, "I am the only traveller sojourning in Joppa. I am emphatically alone, & begin to feel like Jonah" (80). Cunningham had left, and as if to emphasize how much he felt like Jonah, he referred to the city by its ancient name. On January 24 he described what he did when he was unable to sleep in this ancient port: "[O]nly resource to cut tobacco, & watch the six windows of my room, which is like a light-house--& hear the surf & wind. The genuine Jonah feeling, in Joppa too, is worth experiencing . . . --Joppa is certainly antediluvian--port before the Flood. It has no antiquities worth speaking of--It is too ancient . . . I have such a feeling in this lonely old Joppa, with the prospect of a prolonged detention here, owing to the surf--that it is only by stern self-control & grim defiance that I contrive to keep cool & patient" (81). He was stranded in Jaffa nearly six days, and exulted ("Bravo!") in his entry of January 26, the day of his departure (82).

The journal next chronicles the grand excursion from Jerusalem, the route Melville had his characters follow years later in Clarel. He noted the barrenness of the entire area and saw nothing salvageable in it, using the image of an urban ragpicker to record its worthlessness: "So rubbishy, that no chiffonier could find any thing all over it" (83). He caught a glimpse of Jerusalem: "On way to Bethlehem saw Jerusalem from a distance--unless knew it, could not have recognized it--looked exactly like arid rocks" (84), a sight he mentioned again later in the journal and again in Clarel.

His next entry is a series of notes on Jerusalem, beginning with his impression of the "Village of Lepers" and working through a number of locations with sometimes cryptic one-word notes after each heading. Sometimes he wrote himself longer reminders: "How it affects one to be cheated in Jerusalem" (85) is one such, interesting

for what it reveals of the state of mind of the author of The Confidence-Man, which Melville had brought along with him in manuscript.

He wanted to absorb Jerusalem, he said: "In pursuance of my object, the saturation of my mind with the atmosphere of Jerusalem, offering myself up a passive subject, and no unwilling one, to its weird impression, I always rose at dawn & walked without the walls," and he saw many others doing the same, apparently in an effort to escape "so small a city pent in by lofty walls obstructing ventilation, postponing the morning & hastening the . . . twilight" (86). He made the rounds of the historic and religious sites, including the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which caused him to note: "All is glitter & nothing is gold. A sickening cheat. The countenances of the poorest & most ignorant pilgrims would seem tacitly to confess it as well as your own" (88). The conflicts among the various Christian sects distressed him; he likened the many little chapels belonging to the different Christian sects to familiar New York phenomena: "The Church of the Sepulchre is the thronged news-room & theological exchange of Jerusalem, and still the more appears so, from various little chapels, the special property of . . . the Copts, the Syrians & others . . . much like those boxes of stock-auctioneers, which one sees in commercial Exchanges" --such as the one near the Post-Office in Manhattan (88).

Aside from its associations, Melville found the city remarkable: "Had Jerusalem no peculiar historic associations, still would it, by its extraordinary physical aspect, evoke peculiar emotion in the traveller . . . I have little doubt, the diabolical landscapes great part of Judea (sic) must have suggested to the Jewish prophets, their ghastly theology" (89). But part of the city's impact on him comes from its immense antiquity. Coming from a city that was still only part of a partly wild island, Melville was impressed by the layers of ancient Jerusalem under the more recent: "There are strata of cities buried under the present Jerusalem, Forty feet deep lie fragments of columns, &c" (90). The ever-present stones provide him with a chance to invent a humorous theory of their origin that

might have originated in a scene from the growing city he came from: "My theory is that long ago, some whimsical King of the country took it into his head to pave all Judea, and entered into contracts to that effect; but the contractor becoming bankrupt mid-way in his business, the other stones were only dumped on the ground, & there they lie to this day" (90).

In the Middle East Melville found an antiquity that made Europe look, for once, as young as America: "Compared with these rocks," he noted later in the same entry, "those in Europe or America look juvenile." His disappointment finally comes explicitly to the surface in these notes on Jerusalem: "No country will more quickly dissipate romantic expectations than Palestine--particularly Jerusalem. To some the disappointment is heart sickening, &c. Is the desolation of the land the result of the fatal embrace of the Deity? Hapless are the favorites of heaven" (91). He noted a special concern for the Jews of Jerusalem, exiles in their own city: "In the emptiness of the lifeless antiquity of Jerusalem the emigrant Jews are like flies that have taken up their abode in a skull," he says, having just published several years' worth of fiction in which internally exiled and failed New Yorkers live the same way in his native city. He describes a number of pathetic American missionaries who, in anticipation of the Second Coming and the return of the Jews to Israel (something Melville thought would never happen), have come to Jerusalem to prepare the way. One such family, Melville noted, "have two daughters married here to Germans, & living near, fated to beget a progeny of hybrid vagabonds" (93-94)--and being one himself, he knew what that involved.

Melville had practically nothing to say about Beirut, the next city he saw, on his way back to New York via Europe, but he did make a summary observation, aboard the Smirne, that perhaps was the result of too much description of too many places as much as too great disappointment with the places he had seen: "One finds that, after all, the best noted localities, are made up of common elements of earth, air & water" (96). Two days later, after a conversation with the ship's engineer, he eagerly recorded some gossip

about Mike Walsh, a failed New York politician with whom Melville may have felt he had much in common: "Engineer told me about his acquaintance with Mike Walsh on board this boat last year. Went to Crimea. At Trieste made speech in beer shop to English engineers. Provoked suspicion of Austrian spy, &c. Cornishman enthusiastically in love with magnanimous nature of redoubtable Mike. --He was out at elbows & borrowing money. The 'eminentest' man in E's opinion" (97). Mike Walsh had been a success in New York journalism and anti-Tammany Hall politics, but was defeated in a bid for re-election in 1852 and went into self-exile thereafter. Melville's interest in his story had obvious roots in his own.

The descriptions of the cities he encountered on the return trip--Athens, Naples, Rome, Florence, Bologna, Venice, Milan, and overnight stops through Switzerland, Germany and Holland en route to London, Oxford and Liverpool--do not figure in Clarel but come up later in the poems of the 1880s. Once he left Jerusalem, his physical encounter with the Judaeo-Christian urban archetype had been accomplished. It was only nineteen years later, however, when he was back in New York again to stay, that he used the encounter in his art. Melville made active use of his 1856-7 journal for several years after the trip, even though the material did not surface in his work for quite a while. Various annotations, revisions, underlinings and notes that indicated a plan to use it all in the future were added as he actively read and reread the journal over a period of years (Horsford 41-49). He also, as was his habit, consulted various other sources, including a guidebook that was not published until 1858. He may have started work on the poem within the first few years after his return, while he was absorbing these other sources, but systematic composition of Clarel did not begin until at least a decade after.

In the 1850s, self-exiled in Massachusetts, Melville wrote nearly all the works in which New York City functions as setting, and almost all of this work involves exile and failure. His family's efforts to get him a job in the New York Custom House and bring him back to his city are a major indication of his growing unhappiness in Pittsfield and

his increasing sense of isolation from New York. In Jerusalem he learned that he was not just an earthly exile from his native city but also a spiritual exile from the deeper meanings of the Western urban archetype. In late 1863, however, his exile from New York ended at long last, and his sense of deprivation and isolation was mitigated. After 1863, even though he continued to write about cities, he never again wrote about New York. Once he was back in his native city to stay, he no longer needed to.

Clarel opens with a statement of urban disillusionment. In his hotel, Clarel, the American divinity student who has come to the Holy Land in an attempt to recover his faith, sits and muses on his disappointment with Jerusalem, all the more painful because he had anticipated his encounter with this city with such joy, only to confront "Thy blank, blank towers, Jerusalem!" (I.1.60). Disappointment dominates the whole poem, and it first enters here as disappointment with the urban symbol of religious faith. Jerusalem is itself the beginning and end point--the alpha and omega--of the poem; Clarel and the other travelers circle back to disappointment in Jerusalem just as Melville circled back, in the decade before Clarel was written, to New York.

Melville was writing poetry even before he left Pittsfield and returned to New York in October 1863, even though none of it was published until Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War in 1866. He may have been thinking of Clarel and planning for it even in Massachusetts, but Walter Bezanson believes he did not begin writing it before 1867. Vincent Kenny believes he started writing it in 1870 or even later (51). By that time he had had several years to readjust to his native town and learn to live with the fact that, unlike the last time he lived there, he was nothing more than a rather obscure ordinary wage-earner, no longer the famous author or promising child of privilege. Disappointed in life's ambitions, he lived out his disappointment in New York; disillusioned in faith, he wrote out that disappointment against the backdrop of Jerusalem.

The opening canto of Clarel, titled "Jerusalem", set in the fallen, decrepit Holy

City, serves to introduce most of the characters who will make the Bethlehem circuit with *Clarel*. Through their perceptions it also introduces Jerusalem. And it is interesting but not surprising that in this introductory canto several characters and their situations echo the New York poems and stories of the 1850s. In that period, in self-exile in Massachusetts, Melville wrote the last of the works in which New York figures as setting, and of these works "*Bartleby*", *Pierre* and the Civil War poem "*The House-Top*" have specific elements in common with the first two cantos of *Clarel*. Another work of the Pittsfield period that is echoed here is Israel Potter, whose main character is exiled in London for forty years. And Melville's interest in the situation of the Jews in Palestine, exiled in their own country, is a reflection of his relationship to New York in the 1860s and '70s. During the Pittsfield period Melville was concerned as always with the themes of exile and failure, but in the urban works of that time it was a specifically urban exile, a particularly urban failure, and more often than not it centered on New York. Melville was still playing out his disappointment over his childhood exile from New York and his estrangement from its literary establishment, but he was also concerned that his city was leaving him behind while he lived in Massachusetts.

When he was finally able to return to New York, he found that this had actually happened. The city of his childhood was gone, forever changed by the forces of commerce and immigration; the city of the New York author period had also faded away. His old literary crowd was gone, dispersed if not dead. By the time he wrote *Clarel* the New York aristocrat turned New York author had been working for some time in the only type of job his greatly changed city could find for him, as a customs inspector. Even this is reflected briefly in *Clarel*, in the story of a twice-shipwrecked skeptic who ends up a "night patrolman on the quay/Watching the bales till morning hour/Through fair or foul. Never he smiled;/Call him and he would come; not sour/ In spirit, but meek and reconciled;/Patient he was, he none withstood;/ Oft on some secret thing would brood" (I.36.93-100).

So the poem opens with Clarel trying to come to terms with his disappointment. All his life Jerusalem has been the ideal of the spiritual city, the site of the great events in the history of salvation, and the promised site of glorious transformation at the end of the world. The actual sight of the city shocks Clarel, although he believed himself to be prepared: "'Why, well I knew/ Salem to be no Samarkand;/ 'Twas scarce surprise; and yet first view/ Brings this eclipse'" (I.1.62-65). Meditating on this physical sign of his inward collapse of faith, Melville has his protagonist do what he so often did during his travels: he sends Clarel up on the roof to contemplate the city from above.

Here begin the echoes of another poem of urban disillusionment, "The House-Top," in which Melville's speaker looks down from a Manhattan rooftop during the Draft Riots of July 13-16, 1863. Clarel goes to the rooftop at sunset this time, although subsequent housetop meditations take place at night, the same time the disgusted New Yorker of "The House-Top" ascends to watch his city descend into civil disorder. From the top of his hotel at sunset Clarel notes the landmarks of Jerusalem, and the general landscape of rooftops below: "Overlooked, the houses sloped from him--/ Terraced or domed, unchimnied, gray,/ All stone--a moor of roofs" (I.i.141-143), like the "roofy desert" that "spreads/ Vacant as Libya" (5-6) in "The House-Top". Throughout the long poem, Clarel's ascents to the roof show him a quiet city or a dead, rocky landscape, the lifeless, faithless reflection of his own despair. The New Yorker watching the riots feels something more acute than Clarel's chronic ache; the city he contemplates is not yet dead, after all, and he, from a safe distance, can hear the roar of the crowds and see the far-off fires. In both poems the city is failing the viewer on the roof, and this makes "The House-Top" a useful guide to certain aspects of Clarel's rooftop scenes. Later echoes of this poem, when the travelers reach the site of Sodom, provide clues to Melville's concern with urban destruction.

The second time Clarel contemplates the city from aloft--this time from the terrace off his room, and then later from the roof--he has several new acquaintances and

their stories to contemplate. His first view of the city from above occurs before he has met anyone in the city except his innkeeper, an Asian Jew named Abdon. By the time he sees the city from that vantage point again, he has begun to participate in its life. He has met Nehemiah, a self-appointed American missionary who has come to Jerusalem to await the Second Coming, the signs of which he sees in his ceaseless reading of scripture. With this literal-minded guide and his Bible Clarel has explored the city and heard the stories of some of its more interesting inhabitants. He has also encountered, although not formally met, someone he feels a sympathy with through exchanged glances, by whose story he is affected: Celio, a physically deformed and spiritually discouraged Catholic. He will feel a presentiment of Celio's death at the end of this second rooftop contemplation. He has also met, and learned a great deal about, an odd family of transplanted Americans: Nathan and Hagar, from Illinois, and their daughter Ruth, with whom he falls in love. Except for Nehemiah, who embarks on but does not complete the Bethlehem circuit, none of these characters figures among the band of pilgrim-discussants who represent various sides of the conscious, religio-philosophical problems in Melville's mind, but in their various relationships to Jerusalem they represent emotional currents that run beneath the debate. The key to this is the complex of resemblances between these characters and their situations and similar elements in the "urban exile" works of the 1850s.

Clarel's first encounter with Celio occurs in the course of his rambles around the city with Nehemiah. As they explore Lower Gihon, in the eleventh canto, they overhear Celio muttering to himself, see him, turn aside to avoid disturbing him, and then encounter him again. This time neither he nor Clarel says anything, but they silently understand each other: "Mutely for moment, face met face:/ But more perchance between the two/ Was interchanged than e'en may pass/ In many a worded interview" (I.11.53-56). Clarel feels he must get to know Celio, but, although they have another silent encounter, the meeting he wants does not come to pass.

In the twelfth canto Melville supplies us with Celio's story. A well-born Roman youth, very handsome but hunchbacked, he is staying with the Franciscan friars in Jerusalem, where he has come to try to discover some secret key to faith. Although he remains a practicing Catholic, he is only lukewarm in his observances, which does not escape the notice of the brothers among whom he lives. They indulge him, however, making allowances for his physical problems (I.12.26-39). Celio's purpose in coming to Jerusalem is to deal once and for all with his despair, and to do this he has turned his back on everything else in life which might be able to give him a little ease. In his painful doubt he tries to think what he has left, and he comes up with an answer that could just as well be Melville's own, or, up to the reference to his family, *Bartleby's*:

Since love, arms, courts, abjure--why then
Remaineth to me what? the pen?
Dead feather of ethereal life!
Nor efficacious much, save when
It makes some fallacy more rife.
My kin--I blame them not at heart--
Would have me act some routine part,
Subserving family, and dreams
Alien to me--illusive schemes (I.12.86-94).

Celio acts out his despair in pained apostrophes to Christ at the *Ecce Homo* Gate, after which he plunges desperately out of the city near sunset, despite the watchman's warning that the gates would soon close for the night. Predictably, he is locked out, fully aware of what that signifies: "A symbol is it? be it so" (I.14.17), and goes on to spend the night at St. James' grave. From there he sees a procession coming from the monastery and at first thinks they might be coming after him, but then realizes that they are visiting shrines as part of a Holy Week devotion. He flees the scene and spends the rest of the night waiting for dawn and the opening of St. Stephen's Gate, where he sees Clarel again

as the student and Nehemiah leave the city to continue their explorations. He and Clarel exchange looks again, and they seem once again to share an acknowledgment of each other's pain and doubt, and once again hesitate to meet other than silently: 'Ah, student, ill thy sort have sped:/ The instant proffer--it is fled!'" (I.15.79-80).

In the eighteenth canto, when Clarel contemplates the city from his terrace and then, a bit later, from the roof, he finds himself distracted from his thoughts of Ruth by thoughts of Celio: "But every thought/ Of Ruth was strangely underrun/ By Celio's image. Celio--sought/ Vainly in body--now appeared/ As in the spiritual part,/ Haunting the air, and in the heart" (I.19.51-56). This haunting happens on the terrace, sending Clarel back into his room.

Unable to sleep because of the persistence of thoughts of Celio, he goes to the roof, where he encounters Abdon at prayer. Tormented by a "shadow" (88), he asks Abdon not to leave him alone, but then hears a cry, which Abdon explains is "for some departed spirit--gone,/ Just gone. The custom of the town/ That cry is" (91-93). In the next canto we learn that Celio has died in a way that summons Bartleby to mind: "Celio had found withdrawn resort/ And lodging in the deeper town./ There, by a gasping ill distressed--/ Such as attacks the hump-bowed one--/ After three days his malady pressed:/ He knew it, knew his course was run,/ And, turning toward the wall, found rest" (I.19.10-16). The wall he turns to is in a Syrian area buried deep in the city, serving the same purpose for Celio as the Tombs serves for Bartleby: an enclosure within the larger enclosure of the city itself. Clarel's identification with Celio is more obvious--both to him and to the reader--than is the Master of Chancery's with Bartleby, but Celio and Bartleby inspire the same sort of disturbance, even as they die the same type of death in the same type of place. Having dealt with one melancholic and solitary individual dying with his face to the wall in the depths of New York, Melville confronts the same type here in Jerusalem, giving him the additional burden of a physical deformity, and the added dimension of a loss of religious faith--an ingredient far more dramatically treated

in the setting of Jerusalem.

The situation of Nathan, Agar and Ruth echoes another work of the 1850s that deals with urban imprisonment, Israel Potter. In that novel, Potter, the Revolutionary War fighter, is stranded in London, unable to return to his country for forty years. A combination of poverty and politics--expressions of the same factors that kept Melville in Pittsfield past the point of his need for it--make it impossible for Potter to return to his native place until it has changed almost beyond recognition, exactly what Melville feared he would find when he finally came back to New York. The situation of the Jewish family from Illinois is more complex, however. Nathan, a Gentile by birth, meets and marries Agar in America, after converting to Judaism. His conversion is not just a matter of marital convenience; he has been brought to the conviction that this precursor of the faith in which he was raised is in fact the faith in which he belongs. Like many another convert, he becomes more zealous in the practice of his faith than those who have been born into it, and before his family is even established he, full of Zionist fervor, transplants himself, Agar and two children to Palestine. There they settle in an outpost on the plain of Sharon, vulnerable to the attacks of the local Arabs.

Nathan sees himself as a new sort of pioneer, coming from the New World to "help renew--/ Help reinstate the Holy Land" (I.17.263-264). After their first robbery by wandering Arabs, he and three servants stay on the plain alone: "his heart exiled/ To abide the worst on Sharon's lea./ Himself and honest servants three/ Armed husbandmen became, as erst/ His sires in Pequod wilds immersed." He sends Agar and the children into Jerusalem for safety (I.17. 301-305). Agar pleads with him to give up the farm and come into the city to live with his family, but even after the death of the younger of his two children she cannot change Nathan's mind. For the time being, until other events occur within the time of the poem to change the family's situation, Nathan's fanatical plan still holds.

We learn this whole story in a long canto titled "Nathan," told from his point of

view. After the allusion to "Pequod wilds" (305), no reader would be surprised by other evidence of Melville's sympathy for Nathan. But when Melville describes the self-exile of this American Jewish family, he pays more than his usual degree of attention to the feelings of the woman in the story, Agar. He leads into her reactions by citing the Passover salute,

Next year in Jerusalem!
 Now Nathan turning unto her,
 Greeting his wife at morning ray,
 Those words breathed on the Passover;
 But she, who mutely startled lay,
 In the old phrase found import new
 In the blithe tone of bitter cheer
 That did the very speech subdue.
 She kenned her husband's mind austere,
 Had watched his reveries grave; he meant
 No flourish mere of sentiment.
 Withstand him? but she gently loved.
 And so with Agar here it proved,
 As oft it may, the hardy will
 Overpowered the deep monition still (I.17.269-285)

As subsequent events prove, Agar's misgivings are prophetic: nothing good happens to the family in the Holy Land, where Agar and Ruth live and die as American Jewish exiles in the land of their ancestors. What precipitates Clarel into the desert for the eight-day trip around the holy sites is his exclusion from Agar and Ruth's home during the official Jewish period of mourning following Nathan's death. He has finally been killed by Arab marauders, and when Clarel goes to pay his condolences he is told he must stay away for the ritual period. During the trip he is obsessed by the memory of an

Armenian funeral he has seen, and has forebodings of the death of Ruth. In fact, when he next returns to Jerusalem, he finds that she and Agar have both died of grief and are being buried secretly at night. But during the trip itself he looks forward to the fulfillment of the mourning period and his eventual return to Jerusalem and Ruth. The closer he comes to the city, the more this is on his mind, so that by the end of the last part of the poem, "Bethlehem," he is happily anticipating his return: "And Clarel felt in every vein--/ At last, Jerusalem! 'Twas thence/ They started--thither they return,/ Rounding the waste circumference" (IV.29.10-13). He fights a feeling of dread, preferring to encourage himself in happy anticipation, but even so, "Recurring one mute appeal of Ruth/ (Now first aright construed, he thought),/ She seemed to fear for him, and say:/ 'Ah, tread not, sweet, my father's way,/ In whom this evil spirit wrought/ And dragged us hither where we die!'" (IV.29.64-69).

He wants to rush to Jerusalem and rescue Agar and Ruth from the city: "quick depart/ With them and seek a happier sky" (73-74). When, after circling around the city to find an unobstructed way in, they finally regain Jerusalem--"Here the city old,/ Fast locked in torpor, fixed in blight,/ No hum sent forth, revealed no light:/ Though facing it, cliff-hung Siloam--/ Sepulchral hamlet--showed in tomb/ A twinkling lamp" (IV.29.143-148)--he feels again the presentiment that Jerusalem has become the scene and the cause of evil for Ruth and her mother, but turns it instead into a feeling of guilt: "It was but irritation, fret--/ Misgiving that the lines he writ/ Upon the eve before the start/ For Siddim, failed, or were unfit--/ Came short of the occasion's tone:/ To leave her, leave her in grief's smart:/ To leave her--her, the stricken one:/ Now first to feel full force of it!" (IV.30.19-26).

Then the travelers come across the secret night burial-party. In the inevitably melodramatic revelation scene Clarel rips the cloak from the corpse he suspects to be Ruth's, and gets verbal as well as visual proof of the dead woman's identity. He also, to his horror, finds out that the other corpse is Agar's, and that they have both died of either

fever or grief, "'Twere hard to tell; was no relief'" (89). Clarel lashes out against the Jews for enforcing the ban that "denied/ Me access to this virgin's side" (90-91), and he asks if Ruth left him any message. "For thee?" a member of the Jewish community replies; "no, none; the life was reft/ Sudden from Ruth; and Agar died/ Babbling of gulls and ocean wide--/ Out of her mind" (99-102).

Agar, the reluctant exile in the Holy Land, held for long years in Jerusalem in the same way that Israel Potter was held in London, has died with the ocean on her mind, like one of Melville's crazed sailors, and not like any of Melville's other women. His subtle identification with the exiled Agar--named for Hagar, Ishmael's mother--is signaled by these slight shifts in point of view and depth of expression. This choice of a name brings Melville's identification with this character to another level. Both Melville the author and Hagar the bondswoman gave birth to a wandering Ishmael.

There are a number of episodes in Clarel in which some character looks down from a height upon another, like Plotinus Plinlimmon looking down on Pierre from the tower of the Church of the Apostles; this is of particular interest when it happens in a city. The first such encounter is in the second part of the poem, titled "The Wilderness," and involves Vine, an American of unspecified background generally agreed to be a representative of Hawthorne, as Plotinus Plinlimmon is in *Pierre*. At Achor, where Nehemiah carefully and literally explains for the travelers the Old Testament events that happened there, Vine turns aside, wrapped as always in thoughts of his own, and looks up at the Quarantania, the hill on which Christ is supposed to have fasted forty days and nights. Vine looks upward as the rest of the party climb the hill, and is startled by a "form endued/ With living guise, from ledges dim/ Leans as if looking down toward him" (II.14.103-105).

Two cantos later we learn who this is: a Syrian monk who, feeling guilty about his doubts, has come to the mountain to keep a forty-day vigil himself. He has been rewarded with a vision of Christ and has been tempted, in a long dialogue, by Satan.

After the monk recounts the end of that argument with the devil: "[T]hought's extremes agree--/ The forethought clinched by afterthought,/ The firstling by finality" (II.18.141-143), a message the monk takes to have come from God, Rolfe, the character who voices most of Melville's own thinking in the poem, asks if "Peace--solace--was in the end conferred?" (151). The monk simply says goodbye and walks away. Vine characteristically says nothing at all.

A second evocation of Plinlimmon in his church tower comes in a later scene, by the river Jordan, when Clarel asks Vine's opinion of a Dominican priest who has encountered them by the river and engaged them in a discussion of Catholicism. Clarel turns to Vine and sees him, although on the same level, through slats, like those through which Plinlimmon looks at Pierre from the tower: "As were Venetian slats between,/ He espied him through a leafy screen,/ Luxurious there in umbrage thrown,/ Light sprays above his temples blown--" (II.27.11-14). This reverses the scheme of the scenes in *Pierre*, in which Pierre believes he sees Plinlimmon's face staring at him through the slits of a window Melville mistakenly puts in the back of the church tower. Here Clarel is doing the watching, and the Hawthorne figure seems unaware that he is being watched.

At this point Vine embarks upon the longest speeches he gets anywhere in the poem, to Clarel's fascination and delight, although even as he listens he yearns for a more intimate contact: "O, now but for communion true/ And close; let go each alien theme;/ Give me thyself!" (68-70). Later in the canto Clarel upbraids himself for wishing for such private contact: "How findest place within thy heart/ For such solitudes apart/ From Ruth?" (140-142). Clarel is giving voice to Melville's own early need for Hawthorne's guidance and approval, but plainly in the twenty-five years since their first meeting Melville's perspective on his need for Hawthorne changed. In *Pierre*, written in 1852, he situates the young author, his alter ego, in the city he himself was beginning to regret leaving, and there in that city he has a Hawthorne figure looking down through slats at him in his doubt, despair, hard work, crazed idealism and student-like need for

approval. Plinlimmon is silent. Pierre never gets his approval, nor, for that matter, the merest shred of guidance. On the contrary, Pierre seems to hear Plinlimmon's utter disapproval of his efforts. Melville got more of Hawthorne than Pierre gets from Plinlimmon, but he always wanted more. Twenty-five years later, back in New York to stay, having come to terms with Hawthorne's death, he had a different view of his need of years earlier, and it shows in the changed spatial relationships. Where it was Plinlimmon in New York looking down through slats at a crazed idealist who needed his approval, it is now, in Clarel, a monk in search of absolute faith, willing to bleed and fast in order to be absolved of the sin of doubt, who looks down on Vine from a height, and this time they both keep silence. Then it is the student Clarel, in search of everything spiritual and personal that Vine can give, looking at him through slats of leaves by the Jordan. Melville had had a lot of time to think about what Hawthorne really meant in his life, and the shift from an urban setting in which the Hawthorne character does all the looking to a Biblical setting in which split elements of student and idealist look at him, one from a height, the other through slats, indicates this shift of perspective and hints at why Melville felt he could utter, through Clarel, the moving self-revelation of the canto titled "Vine and Clarel."

Jerusalem was not, of course, the only Biblical city Melville had to confront in the Holy Land. Although not of the same all-encompassing importance as the City of David, the sites of Sodom and Gomorrah were of great interest. These cities stood for divine judgment and urban destruction, the consequences of great sin. But in Melville's time, as now, there were conflicting opinions about just what that sin had actually been, and there were similar disagreements about where the cities had actually been located. The Bible itself is clear, placing the cities at the north end of the Dead Sea. Later it came to be believed that they were situated at the south end of the Dead Sea. Another school of thought held that when these cities were destroyed they were submerged in the sea itself, and that on clear days their ruins could be seen through the water. Melville allows

some of this debate an airing in the several cantos that deal with the travelers' encounter with Sodom, the event that closes out the second part of the poem. The significance of Sodom for Melville has nothing to do with archaeological arguments and much to do with speculation on the exact nature of the Sodomites' sin and the horror of a city's destruction. He had imagined the impending destruction of New York during the Civil War, and here, contemplating the symbol of urban desolation, he often echoes "The House-Top," written over a decade earlier to express horror at the 1863 draft riots.

Three specific echoes of "The House-Top" reveal Melville's unconscious preoccupation with urban destruction. First, a politically embittered character makes remarks about human nature that recall the dire conclusions reached by the speaker of "The House-Top." Second, two cantos later, the same character begins, on the shores of the Dead Sea, to speculate on the sins that, whether resulting in divine retribution or not, were actually committed in Sodom, and much of his speculation is written in verse that consciously or otherwise sounds like parts of the earlier Civil War poem. Last, the fatal vision of Nehemiah, in which he sees the dead Sodom and the new Jerusalem in a hallucinatory dream, combines other elements of the earlier poem with a basically hopeful ending--hopeful at least for Nehemiah.

Mortmain, the Swede, is, in Walter Bezanson's words, "a self-exiled wanderer" (541), one of the poem's monomaniacs. After a career in Paris as a revolutionary leader, he has run away from the evil he sees as the inevitable result of radical politics. Through him, Melville voices his disgust for the frailties of human nature that masquerade, in much political radicalism, as noble characteristics and inborn virtues. These frailties lead, he insists along with Mortmain, to nothing but further evil. In desperation Mortmain has gone off on his own, apart from the rest of the travellers, for several days; he returns as they contemplate the Dead Sea and the site of Sodom. What he cries as he comes down to the beach to meet them is reminiscent of the second part of "The House-Top": "In pause of the artillery's boom,/ While now the armed world holds its own,/ The

comet peers, the star dips down;/ Flicker the lamps in Syria's tomb,/ While Anti-Christ and Atheist set/ On Anarch the red coronet!" (II.34.33-38). In "The House-Top" the speaker describes the scene: "the Atheist roar of riot./ Yonder, where parching Sirius set in drought,/ Balefully glares red Arson--there--and there" (8-10). New York is saved from the rioters by the artillery, in contrast to the scene Mortmain invokes: "Hail to the low dull rumble, dull and dead,/ And ponderous drag that jars the wall./ Wise Draco comes, deep in the midnight roll/ Of black artillery" (17-20). More striking is the narrator's introduction of Mortmain's speculations at the beginning of Canto xxxvi, "Sodom": "Full night. The moon has yet to rise;/ The air oppresses, and the skies/ Reveal beyond the lake afar/ One solitary tawny star--" (1-4). This is remarkably close to the opening of "The House-Top": "No sleep. The sultriness pervades the air/ And binds the brain--a dense oppression, such/ As tawny tigers feel in matted shades,/ Vexing their blood and making apt for ravage" (1-4). Corresponding to the 1863 poem's line describing "parching Sirius set in drought" (9) are lines discussing the "solitary tawny star" the travelers see over the Dead Sea. "'What star is yon?'" Mortmain asks rhetorically, and says, "'It is the star/ Called Wormwood'" (22-23), meaning the star that, according to Revelation, will fall upon a third of the earth's waters and turn them fatally bitter, as bitter as Mortmain discovers the waters of the Dead Sea to be when he impetuously stoops to taste them two cantos earlier.

In Mortmain's speculations on the sins of Sodom he seems to conclude that there was nothing extraordinary about these cities, nothing that would have called down divine wrath--after all, modern science had convincingly argued that the demise of these cities was the result of a natural upheaval, and not related at all to the perfectly ordinary conduct of their citizens. Nothing, Mortmain says, went on in Sodom that does not continue now: "'Tis thou who servedst Mannon's hate/ Or greed through forms which holy are--/ Black slaver steering by the star,/ 'Tis thou--and all like thee in state,/ Who knew the world, yet varnished it;/ Who traded on the coast of crime/ Though landing not"

(74-80). After reaching this conclusion Mortmain withdraws into a deeper despair, although he continues to sit there until he notices that everyone else has gone away from him during his monologue. At this point the narrator echoes "The House-Top" once again when he says "[M]uffled came the moan/ How multitudinous in sound,/ From Sodom's wave" (105-107). Here are literal sounds of water likened, through the use of "multitudinous," to the sounds of a crowd; in "The House-Top" a literal mob is likened to the sound of the ocean: "All is hushed near by./ Yet fitfully from far breaks a mixed surf/ Of muffled sound, the Atheist roar of riot" (6-9).

The last of the borrowings from "The House-Top" rings more faintly; after all, in Nehemiah's belief, urban destruction is merely temporal, a consequence of human sin that will all be washed away in the remaking of the world. In the thirty-eighth canto, "The Sleep-Walker," Nehemiah, who has spent most of the canto napping under a perilous overhanging rock (rather like Pierre under the Memnon Stone), finds himself unable to sleep, like the narrator of "The House-Top." He does not immediately get up, however. He is not puzzled by or curious about his surroundings and their meanings for him, as are the other characters and the speaker in New York. He knows exactly what Sodom means; his Bible has told him. He envisions a fusion of the crowd-as-water and water-as-crowd of the New Yorker's and Mortmain's experiences: "[H]e saw arcade and fane/ And people moving in the deep;/ Strange hum he heard and minstrel-sweep" (11-13). Soon he is synthesizing the destroyed and supposedly submerged Sodom and the resurrected Jerusalem: "Dream merged in dream: the city rose--/ Shrouded, it went up from the wave;/ Transfigured came down out of heaven/ Clad like a bride in splendor brave" (16-19). The watery sound in these streets is not a mob running loose in the distance but the river of the water of life that will flow through the New Jerusalem, according to Revelation 22:1, and it flows through streets made of precious stones, like the streets described by John: "There, through the streets, with purling sound/ Clear waters and clear agates lave,/ Opal and pearl in pebbles strown" (19-21). Here Nehemiah

sees Christ on his throne and hears him invite all the faithful into the New Jerusalem. He gets up and goes, in his sleep: "In sleep he rose, and none did wist/ When vanished this somnambulist" (49-50), says the narrator, the diction falling off as it so often does in *Clarel* from the highly charged, more thoughtfully economical expression of some of the shorter poems. Vine finds Nehemiah early the next morning. He is lying dead by the shore of the Dead Sea, and the second part of the poem ends with the burial service the travelers improvise for him.

These echoes of "The House-Top", a poem in which Melville explores a sense of horror at what was happening to his native city, reveal his feelings about the meaning of the destruction of Sodom. The questions about Sodom in the nineteenth century concerned where it was really located, what the inhabitants really did, and whether in fact the event that caused its destruction was of divine or merely geological origin. Margoth, the geologist on the trip (and apostate Jew), is convinced that everything is science, and whatever happened to the Cities of the Plain was certainly not divine but merely an accident of the earth. This is the stark, comfortless materialism that Melville cannot accept and searches always for a reason to contradict, even as he takes his usual care to represent it as truly as his honesty demands. Melville may not have been able to decide whether the destruction of these Biblical cities was an act of a problematical God or the result of capricious natural forces--if capricious behavior can be ascribed to natural forces without being anthropomorphic--but the complete destruction of any city for the sins of its inhabitants strikes home to other dwellers in cities. When Mortmain voices the echoes of the earlier poem, it gives Melville a chance to explore the relationship of radical politics, part of the impulse behind the Draft Riots, to the phenomenon of urban destruction and its larger meaning. When he transfers the echoes to Nehemiah, he explores something else, something closer to what Melville went to Jerusalem to confront: the relationship between a city's destruction and God's will.

By putting the last echoes in the fevered mind of Nehemiah, the fundamentalist,

and merging them with the vision of the merged Sodom and New Jerusalem, Melville leaves the question open. Fundamentalist beliefs about the end of the world, rife in nineteenth-century America as now, were not beliefs Melville ever could adopt. What he says in leaving the last echo to Nehemiah is that urban destruction and the New Jerusalem may well be part of divine activity and revelation, and then again, they may not.

In any case, the very idea of the destruction of a major city calls forth from him echoes of a poem that expressed his anguish over New York, the city he always used as his basis of urban experience. Even when confronting Jerusalem and Sodom, Melville saw their significance through the lens of what New York had always been to him. Back forever in the New Jerusalem's premier city, Melville wrote of the Holy Land's meaning, perhaps not at all consciously, in terms of his native place, New York.

IV

Offstage and Offshore

Throughout his career, at various periods and in a variety of works, Melville made use of urban metaphors to explain aspects of shipboard life, and made use of cities offstage for their influence on the narrative of shipboard events. In the early part of his career, he used both of these devices extensively in White-Jacket, completed in 1849, before he left New York for the second time. During the period of self-exile in Massachusetts he made further use of these devices in "Benito Cereno" and, more extensively, in The Confidence-Man. In the last three decades of his life, back home once and for all in a thoroughly different New York, he used these same devices in thoroughly different ways in his poetry and in his last prose work, Billy Budd. This indirect use of cities indicates how basic the urban element was in Melville's repertoire of fictional devices and how pervasively the city as metaphor figured in his thinking. And the ultimate change in his use of these metaphors reveals something of his final reconciliation with New York.

Melville completed White-Jacket at the end of his New York author period, which lasted roughly from the time of the completion of Typee in 1846 until his move to Massachusetts in 1850. He wrote it immediately after Redburn; it was ready for publication by the autumn of 1849. White-Jacket deals with the last stretch of the years Melville spent in the Pacific, when he resorted to signing on with a Navy man-of-war in order to make his way home. Life aboard this ship had its joys and pleasures as well as its pains and horrors. He saw practices that frightened and repelled him, knew people who typified the worst of human nature as well as individuals who became lifelong models of rectitude and friendship. The crowded conditions and human variety naturally brought to mind all the ways in which the ship resembled a city, particularly the port

cities he had come to know. And along the way, as he told the story of this city-on-the-sea, he also made use of the port cities offstage for the effect they could be made to have on the various doings on the ship.

The strain under which this novel was composed goes part of the way to explain its unusual organization. Melville seems to have made some peculiar choices in the details he presents and the ways he present them. For example, in the usual sea story, such as those by Captain Marryat or Fenimore Cooper that Melville enjoyed in his youth, a naval battle would have been an exciting, perhaps even a central, scene in a stimulating series of absorbing incidents, advancing a satisfyingly complex plot full of interesting characters. Melville's naval battle, far from being central or advancing the plot, is an anecdote tossed off by the much-admired Jack Chase in the course of a description of the battle of Navarino (317-321). This is in keeping with the facts on which White-Jacket is based: Melville did not experience much excitement, much less a battle, in the course of his cruise on the United States, so his narrator does not live through a battle on the Neversink.

It is also in keeping with the way Melville chose to organize the novel, which in fact has very little plot. White-Jacket is actually a series of incidents in the time of the narrative interspersed with insertions of other material that Melville found interesting in itself or as an excuse for polemical remarks of his own. Some of the incidents in the narrative lead into a series of chapters containing additional information and authorial comment. Such, for example, are the chapters devoted to the subject of flogging. An actual narrative-time flogging occupies Chapter 33 (134-138), followed by "Some of the Evils of Flogging" (139-142), "Flogging not Lawful" (143-146), and "Flogging not Necessary" (147-151).

The brevity of these chapters, and the lack of a plot, were obvious results of the circumstances of this work's composition: the summer of 1849 saw the production of both Redburn and White-Jacket, the fourth and fifth novels written in a headlong dash

since the earliest efforts to compose Typee a mere three years earlier. The Melville household at 104 Fourth Avenue was crowded and busy, and Herman and Elizabeth's newborn son Malcolm was a living reminder of his increased financial obligations. Clearly a novel made up of episodes interspersed with additional information and authorial comment was easier to produce than the more complex explorations and entertainments some of his readers might have expected.

The need to create a setting that made few demands for plot advancement while furnishing many opportunities for description, reflection, authorial opinion and other such non-narrative matters may have led Melville to expand the eight days that the United States spent in the port of Rio di Janeiro. According to Willard Thorpe's "Historical Note" in the Northwestern-Newberry edition of White-Jacket, Melville has the Neversink staying in Rio "more than one-fourth of the book," while the United States was in fact there only from August 16 through 24, 1844 (412). By prolonging the ship's stay in port Melville minimized the need to invent interesting incidents for the narrative and gained time to describe aspects of life on a naval ship, from grog-smuggling to amputation, that are interesting because of their unfamiliarity. Melville's method here is rather like that he employed in Typee and Omoo, where description and explanation of the exotic and unfamiliar took precedence over the construction of plots and sub-plots, which in any case was never Melville's strength.

One factual circumstance that made Melville keep the Neversink in port so long is that when the United States was in Rio it was one of a number of American vessels in port. While there the floating city was subject to the kind of population shifts it could not have experienced at sea, with the usual visitors from ashore, as well as teams of surgeons and various groups of officers coming aboard for visits and leaving again. Melville takes full advantage of this consequence of being not just near a port city but in the midst of a complex of small floating worlds, and maintains a very urban exchange among them for as long as possible.

A related question is why Melville had his ship stay so long in the harbor of a fascinating city without making more use of that city in his narrative, and the answer lies in the same concerns. What Melville saw of Rio during his time in port may not even have included what a carousing sailor could have managed to see during twenty-four hours' liberty, since there is no direct evidence that he ever got ashore (Howard 87-88). This would certainly explain the narrator's methodologically interesting assertion in Chapter 54, "'The People' are Given 'Liberty'":

With Jack Chase and a few other discreet and gentlemanly top-men, I went ashore on the first day, with the first quarter-watch. Our own little party had a charming time; we saw many fine sights; fell in as all sailors must--with dashing adventures. But, though not a few good chapters might be written on this head, I must again forbear; for in this book I have nothing to do with the shore further than to glance at it, now and then, from the later; my man-of-war world alone must supply me with the staple of my matter; I have taken an oath to keep afloat to the last letter of my narrative (226).

Leaving his "dashing adventures" unspecified and untold, and therefore, for the purposes of fiction, unexploited, is the act of a writer who does not want to stray too far from what he can accomplish with what little energy he has left. Another writer of sea stories might well have followed his characters ashore and devoted several chapters to wild and improbable episodes guaranteed to enlist the interest of readers eager for vicarious adventure. Instead, Melville shifts the focus and portrays the shipboard consequences of the offstage debauch. Of course Jack Chase, the exemplary captain of the main-top, gets his quarter-watch back from shore leave on time, but the rest of the crew is not so conscientious, giving Melville several opportunities to describe the various stages of intoxication and injury in which the crew reappears. He describes the shipboard

social customs that go along with shore leave in detail, recounting the tolerance the officers show to men just coming back from their leave and the advantage the men take of the situation to speak rather more freely to and about the officers than they would if they were not intoxicated, or presumed to be so. He describes the behavior, on shipboard during the leave, of everyone from the seasoned tar Mad Jack to the spoiled midshipmen, but leaves undescribed the city that causes the temporary disorder.

This is typical of Melville's treatment of cities as offshore causes of shipboard conditions. He makes a city offshore, in this work and in a number of others, serve as an almost cosmic influence on the events taking place in the small shipboard worlds that are the real focus and setting of these works. Melville notes his disillusionment with the indifference of nature to human events in Battle-Pieces and elsewhere, but this use of cities seems to provide an invisible urban substitute for the stars and elements in whose influence Melville could not believe. This is not surprising, since the influence of a city that was out of sight for most of his adolescence was a major element in his own early experience. The idea of New York has always exerted its force, especially for those living just beyond the sight of it, in the Hudson Valley. The physical influence of the city--trade up and down the Hudson River and through the Erie Canal, movement up the river of new populations, the connection New York provided the rest of the country with Europe and the rest of the world--certainly shaped Melville's thinking on the power of cities perceived but not seen, as did the immense cultural influence the city exerted. That Melville should find similar influences emanating from ports to which his fictional ships drew near seems a natural result of his times of exile from New York.

Just as Melville used urban metaphors to bring details of the South Seas to his readers in the West, he uses urban metaphors to show his readers on land the unfamiliar world of the man-of-war. After naming the various divisions to which the crew of the ship are assigned, he explains, "Were it not for these regulations a man-of-war's crew would be nothing but a mob, more ungovernable stripping the canvass in a gale than Lord

George Gordon's tearing down the lofty house of Lord Mansfield" (9). Describing the work of the "waisters," those whose duties keep them amidships, he brings aboard the urban element: "Inveterate 'sons-of-farmers,' with the hay-seed yet in their hair, they are consigned to the congenial superintendence of the chicken-coops, pig-pens, and potato-lockers. These are generally placed amidships, on the gun-deck of a frigate, between the fore and main hatches; and comprise so extensive an area, that it much resembles the market-place of a small town" (10). Speaking of the "holders," whose assignment is in the bottom of the ship and who are hardly ever seen during the course of a regular voyage, he invokes the French Revolution: "In time of tempests, when all hands are called to save ship, they issue forth into the gale, like the mysterious old men of Paris, during the massacre of the Three Days of September; every one marvels who they are, and whence they come; they disappear as mysteriously; and are seen no more, until another general commotion" (11).

Melville has the captain of the main-top, Jack Chase, voice his understanding of the status of whalers in terms of the status of urban centers: "[A] man-of-war is to whalemens, as a metropolis to shire-towns, and sequestered hamlets. Here's the place for life and commotion; here's the place to be gentlemanly and jolly" (16). Later Melville briefly notes, "[A] ship is a bit of terra firma cut off from the main; it is a state in itself, and the captain is its king" (23). All these urban and civic images serve to explain physical, social and legal aspects of the naval frigate by pointing out resemblances to cities ashore, and this is an efficient way to make clear how the ship is, as the novel's subtitle calls it, "The World in a Man-of-War." And of course, Melville's view of the world is so urban that his man-of-war world is most often portrayed as a city afloat.

Urban metaphors that specifically evoke New York are also no surprise. Describing the Ward-room ("In a frigate it comprises the after part of the berth-deck"), Melville says it "much resembles a long, wide corridor in a large hotel; numerous doors opening on both hands to the private apartments of the officers" (24). In the following

chapter, he uses a series of images from city life to depict the utter lack of privacy in the lives of common seamen in the navy:

[T]o a common sailor, the living on board a man-of-war is like living in a market; where you dress on the door-steps, and sleep in the cellar. No privacy can you have; hardly one moment's seclusion. It is almost a physical impossibility, that you can never be alone. You dine at a vast table d'hote; sleep in commons, and make your toilet when and where you can. There is no calling for a mutton chop and a pint of claret by yourself; no selecting of chambers for the night; no hanging of pantaloons over the back of a chair; no ringing your bell of a rainy morning, to take your coffee in bed. It is something like life in a large manufactory. The bell strikes to dinner, and hungry or not, you must dine (35).

In the course of descriptions of the various moods of the people on a navy ship and discussion of how to alter these moods for the better, he tosses off this reflection, couched in an urban stereotype: "Gossiping scenes breed gossips. Who so chatty as hotel-clerks, market-women, auctioneers, bar-keepers, apothecaries, newspaper-reporters, monthly-nurses, and all those who live in bustling crowds, or are present at scenes of chatty interest" (46). Even more specific reference to his native city occurs in the opening of the thirteenth chapter, where social relations among the men on the ship are shown to have the same basis as social relations in the city, and he does not keep his readers in suspense about where his streets were, or what city he thought of first when observing the interaction of his shipmates:

I had not been long on board ere I found that it would not do to be intimate with every body. An indiscriminate intimacy with all hands leads to sundry annoyances and scrapes, too often ending with a dozen at the gang-way. Though I was above a year in the frigate, there were scores of

men who to the last remained perfect strangers to me, whose very names I did not know, and whom I would hardly be able to recognize now should I happen to meet them in the streets.

In the dog-watches at sea, during the early part of the evening, the main-deck is generally filled with crowds of pedestrians, promenading up and down past the guns, like people taking the air in Broadway. At such times, it is curious to see men nodding to each other's recognitions (they might not have seen each other for a week); exchanging a pleasant word with a friend; making a hurried appointment to meet him somewhere aloft on the morrow, or passing group after group without deigning the slightest salutation. Indeed, I was not at all singular in having but comparatively few acquaintances on board, though certainly carrying my fastidiousness to an unusual extent (50).

Once again using the urban familiar to explain the exotic, this time to an audience for whom daily life in their own navy was as exotic as anything in the Marquesas, Melville draws parallel after parallel between city life and shipboard life. Explaining how tragic it was for the sailors that the ship's supply of grog had run out, he says, "No high-liver helping himself to Tokay off a well-polished side-board, smacks his lips with more mighty satisfaction than the sailor does over this tot," (53). Melville's description of the crew's reaction when the grog is actually stopped is characteristically urban: "The ship was like a great city, when some terrible calamity has overtaken it. The men stood apart, in groups, discussing their woes, and mutually condoling. No longer, of still moon-light nights, was the song heard from the giddy tops; and few and far between were the stories that were told" (54).

Another image of urban calamity occurs when the narrator tells how his pudding came out when it was his turn to cook for his mess: "Bim! it fell like a man shot down in a riot" (61). A fire drill, part of the general training on board, draws forth images of New

York's fires and those whose job it was to fight them: "Meantime, a loud cry is heard of 'Fire! fire! fire!' in the fore-top; and a regular engine, worked by a set of Bowery-boy tars, is forthwith set to playing streams of water aloft. And now it is 'Fire! fire! fire!' on the main-deck; and the entire ship is in as great a commotion as if a whole city ward were in a blaze" (67). In 1835 an entire city ward of New York was ablaze, and although Melville was not living there at the time, he would have felt the economic and social effects of this cataclysmic event in Albany; it might even have occasioned the kind of mutual condolence and commiseration in the smaller city that the grog shortage brought forth on the ship. It is possible, of course, that he saw other, smaller but similarly devastating conflagrations, which were common enough in New York while he was living there.

The image of the riot recurs during his description of the general training, in a way that gives more detail. After a real battle, not one of their sham training battles, "our bulwarks might look like the walls of the houses in West Broadway in New York, after being broken into and burned out by the Negro Mob" (69). He may have been thinking of the "anti-abolition riots" of 1834, in which black New Yorkers figured for the most part as victims; the Astor Place riots of May 1849, in which the central social issue was not race but class, and the question of American culture versus imitation of the British (Spann 235-251), would also have been in Melville's mind. In fact, Melville was one of the forty-seven prominent New Yorkers (Washington Irving was another) who signed a letter to the British actor William Macready intended to reassure the actor of the basic good sense and good intentions of the New York audience, despite the obstreperous behavior of some who were using Macready's performances of *Macbeth* as an occasion for the expression of anti-British, pro-native feeling (Cook 25). Macready was persuaded to give another performance, but it was after that performance that the worst of the violence took place, lasting two days and resulting in the loss of thirty-one lives (26-27).

The basic issue in this civil disturbance amounted to a test of the average

theatergoing New Yorker's willingness to extend freedom of speech to a British actor. In signing the letter Melville indicated his solidarity with literary New York against a mentality that put language used for propaganda ahead of language used for art. At issue was nothing more nor less than a British actor's right to perform Shakespeare unmolested--the same Shakespeare that Melville said he would have liked to see promenade in Broadway. The anti-British lines that pepper Macbeth were excuses for the New York audience to throw rotten vegetables and scream their agreement with the superficial content, and this reaction must naturally have given rise to speculation about what would have happened if anyone, particularly anyone British, had dared to voice any sentiments not overtly negative toward the British on a New York stage. Perhaps Melville thought of this as he listened to Emerson lecture on the British in early 1849.

Between these two major civil disturbances were others of varying degrees of seriousness; as Adrian Cook put it in his study of the 1863 Draft Riots, "Every summer weekend brought some kind of outburst . . . Elections and holidays--the Fourth of July, New Year's, or Saint Patrick's Day--were frequently accompanied by a riot" (19). Black rioters rescued a runaway slave and assaulted officials involved in the case in April 1837; Melville may well have heard or read about this (21). Whether Melville actually saw anyone shot in a riot is not certain, but he had many opportunities to think about it, and imagine it, if not to see it in fact. This reference to civil disorder comes shortly after a far more pacific allusion describing the way the "Powder-monkeys" bring cartridges to the gunners: "like eating-house waiters hurrying along with hot cakes for breakfast" (68).

The entire page and a half devoted to Chapter 18 deals head-on with the issue of the ship as city. The title, "A Man-of-war Full as a Nut," gives no immediate indication that the urban nature of shipboard life is its true subject, but this underlying metaphor soon becomes apparent. When the ship's cooper is lost overboard, thirteen other coopers volunteer for the job, "a circumstance illustrative of the fact," says Melville's narrator, "that many good handicraftsmen are lost to their trades and the world by serving in men-

of-war. Indeed, from a frigate's crew might be culled out men of all callings and vocations The Navy is the asylum for the perverse, the home of the unfortunate. Here the sons of adversity meet the children of calamity, and here the children of calamity meet the offspring of sin." After an evocative and representative list of the trades and professions formerly practiced by the typical navy crew, he concludes, "Wrecked on a desert shore, a man-of-war's crew could quickly found an Alexandria by themselves, and fill it with all the things which go to make up a capital."

A few lines later the comparison becomes as explicit as it can: "In truth, a man-of-war is a city afloat, with long avenues set out with guns instead of trees, and numerous shady lanes, courts, and by-ways" (50). The resemblances are so absorbing that he continues, with specific aspects of the ship calling up images of particular cities:

The quarter-deck is a grand square, park, or parade ground, with a great Pittsfield elm, in the shape of the main-mast, at one end, and fronted at the other by the palace of the Commodore's cabin.

Or, rather, a man-of-war is a lofty, walled, and garrisoned town, like Quebec, where the thoroughfares are mostly ramparts, and peaceable citizens meet armed sentries at every corner.

Or it is like the lodging-houses in Paris, turned upside-down; the first floor, or deck, being rented by a lord; the second, by a select club of gentlemen; the third, by crowds of artisans; and the fourth, by a whole rabble of common people. For even thus is it in a frigate, where the commander has a whole cabin to himself on the spar-deck, the lieutenants their ward-room underneath, and the mass of sailors swing their hammocks under all. And with its long rows of port-hole casements, each revealing the muzzle of a cannon, a man-of-war resembles a three-story house in a suspicious part of the town, with a basement of infinite depth,

and ugly-looking fellows gazing out at the windows (50-51)

After these extended comparisons Melville only occasionally reminds the reader of the ways that the ship is a city afloat, but the groundwork has been laid. "The Boatswain and his mates," he writes, "are the town-criers of a man-of-war" (102). Describing the scenes of fear and danger as the ship goes around Cape Horn, in the only truly dramatic episode in the novel, Melville uses more urban similes: "The occasional phosphorescence of the yeasting sea cast a glare upon their uplifted faces, as a night fire in a populous city lights up the panic-stricken crowd" (106) and the rolling of loose shot on the gun-deck "converted that part of the ship into an immense bowling-alley" (107). After a snowstorm, the captain of each gun is responsible for clearing his station; "accordingly . . . he proceeded to business, often quarreling with his next-door neighbors about their scraping their snow on his premises. It was like Broadway in winter, the morning after a storm, when rival shop-boys are at work cleaning the sidewalk" (117).

Some of these brief comparisons are very detailed indeed: the descriptions of the shipboard shops, library, hospital and barber shop in chapters 30, 41, 77 and 84 rely on explicit comparisons to those same establishments in any major port city. The ship's scuttlebutt is specifically referred to as its town-pump (283), the galley is "the grand centre of gossip and news among the sailors" (386), and the area around the main-mast "is the Police-office, Court-house, and yard of execution" (131).

The governance of the peacetime navy, though ostensibly martial, "may not improperly be deemed municipal. With its crew of 800 or 1000 men, a three-decker is a city on the sea" (144); this same peacetime navy is not a good place for ambitious young physicians, however, or so the ship's surgeon tells the Assistant Surgeons who come aboard to assist at an amputation. He tells them there are not enough cases for them to work on in the peacetime forces, and advises them, "'The town, the city, the metropolis, young gentlemen, is the place for you students; at least in these dull times of peace, when the army and navy furnish no inducements for a youth ambitious of rising in our

honorable profession" (257).

Noting the difficulty of finding people and keeping from getting lost in the huge ship, Melville's narrator notes: "I could not but regret that there was no public printed Directory for the Neversink, such as they have in large towns, containing an alphabetic list of all the crew, and where they might be found . . . I much lamented that no enterprising tar had yet thought of compiling a Hand-book of the Neversink, so that the tourist might have a reliable guide" (127). And in the course of a chapter explaining how the crew amused themselves while "killing time in harbor," full of urban allusions but without much allusion at all to the city in whose harbor they were killing time, we learn that the resemblance between the ship and other types of human habitations has struck at least one other member of the crew, a former inhabitant of Sing Sing Prison: "[H]e scandalously asserted [the man-of-war] to be a sort of State Prison afloat" (175). The author who made such extensive and effective use of urban metaphors to bring Western readers the sights and sounds of the South Seas here does the same thing to bring home the unfamiliar realities of navy life, with an important difference: where the early Pacific novels used urban metaphors as needed but not as part of an organized system, this novel includes them in the context of a larger conceit, the idea of the ship as a city afloat.

Writing in New York for an audience that had no trouble understanding urban phenomena, Melville grew in his metaphoric use of the city as he grew in stature and skill as a writer. To some extent every one of Melville's ships can be regarded as a floating city, even in works where he draws few or no explicit comparisons, and White-Jacket is the first work in which he explores the idea so purposefully, as he also makes specific use of the city offstage as a source of events on board the city-ship offshore. Later, during another period of intense productivity, this time in Massachusetts, he used both ideas again.

Melville felt the influence of an offstage city in his own life most keenly during his time in Massachusetts. During these thirteen years of legal residence in Pittsfield,

interrupted by extended trips to Europe and the Middle East and to the West Coast, as well as frequent visits to New York, Boston and other regional ports of call, Melville further explored the artistic possibilities the city represented. It was at this time that his own changing attitude toward his literary friends in New York, brought on by his geographic isolation and his disappointment with their seeming inability to understand Moby-Dick on any more than a superficial level, led to his use of New York and other cities in several works as a setting for scenes of exile and failure. It was also in this period that he looked once again at the possibilities inherent in the ideas of the city afloat and the city offstage in two very different works: "Benito Cereno," published in Putnam's Monthly Magazine in 1855 and the following year in The Piazza Tales, and The Confidence-Man, published in March 1857. "Benito Cereno," based closely on Captain Amasa Delano's Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, published in Boston in 1817, deals with a slave rebellion on board a ship Melville renames the San Dominick. As H. Bruce Franklin has noted (Wake of the Gods 145), Melville quite deliberately made the connection between this situation and the slave uprising led by Toussaint L'Ouverture in Hispaniola; Melville even moves the year of the incident back to 1799, the year of L'Ouverture's greatest successes. Although Melville makes no specific reference to any other racial conflict, the entire question was never far from the mind of any American in the 1850s, and the various racially motivated civil disorders that took place periodically in New York from the eighteenth century on would certainly have figured in Melville's thinking. The reference to the houses in West Broadway after attacks "by the Negro Mob" in White-Jacket indicates his awareness of and concern with this urban version of the slave revolt, as does his characterization of the area of the San Dominick occupied mainly by the rebelling slaves as "the belittered Ghetto, forward of the main-mast, wholly occupied by the blacks" (686; another reference to the "Ghetto" occurs on 702). In fact, figurative and indirect as it is, this use of "ghetto" to refer to a black area, aside from supplying one more facet of the urban

metaphor, occurs over a century before the earliest such reference cited in the OED.

He clearly identifies the ship with a city in distress. Describing Don Benito's general appearance, he finds "something so incongruous in the Spaniard's apparel, as almost to suggest the image of an invalid courtier tottering about London streets in the time of the plague" (686). Just as Melville alters the chronology of the narrative to allude to events in Santo Domingo, he also carefully avoids anachronism in his narrator's thoughts about cities while on board the *San Dominick*, sticking to the ghettos and plagues of the Old World that could have been in Amasa Delano's mind. These urban images do not, of course, occur in the original source, and Melville's use of them shows that the black areas of New York and the state his native city was in during and after riots and epidemics were certainly in his thoughts as he planned this work.

But far from being merely the drama of a slave revolt put down, which would have been just one more racist fable with a happy ending to satisfy nervous whites, the story is actually the portrayal of Captain Delano and his blindness to everything happening aboard the *San Dominick*. As Carolyn Karcher describes it, the story is "an exploration of the white racist mind and how it reacts in the face of a slave rebellion" (128). The blindness Delano displays in his interpretation of the interracial relations on board the captured ship stems from his Puritanical rectitude and paternalistic benevolence, and this makes the portrayal of it all the more chilling.

Cities offstage play a minor but sinister role in "Benito Cereno". Babo forces Cereno to lie to Delano about the city his ship has come from, and threatens, in a passage Melville lifts verbatim from the original, to kill all the Spaniards on board "the very moment he should perceive any city, town, or settlement of any kind on the shores to which they should be carried" (742). Both in the original and in Melville the two ships head off first to the port of Concepcion (which both the source and the story spell Conception) and then to Lima; in light of how long Melville allows Delano to remain in the dark about the true situation on the *San Dominick*, the name of their first stop was an

irresistible transfer from Delano. He adds another detail that Delano does not supply: before the ships reach Lima, Don Benito seems to recover, but he relapses as they approach the city, "finally becoming so reduced as to be carried ashore in arms" (738).

This occurs in Melville's story at the place where the original narrative becomes a complaint about the duplicity and meanspiritedness of Don Benito, who treated Amasa Delano "with dishonesty and ingratitude" (329) in ways he righteously forbears to specify, although he is quite explicit about the exact amounts of money Cereno tries to avoid paying him and quotes the viceroy's rebuke of Don Benito at some length. Melville leaves this offstage effect of Lima unelaborated, setting it in the pattern of ambiguities: the cities that could mean salvation for the whites on board the slave ship are actually to be the cause of their death if they so much as heave in sight; the city that means a final recovery of all Don Benito has lost (at least in any material way), and a final reckoning against those who have threatened his life and taken so many others, proves a drain of what little strength he has left. In Melville's version of the tale, Don Benito is carried ashore in one sentence and taken in by a religious order in the next, without any allusion to Benito Cereno's efforts to cheat Amasa Delano; the city, and the nearly fatal weakness it causes in Cereno, stands alone.

This use of the offstage city echoes what happens on the offshore city: the revolutionary upset of the expected order of things, blacks ruling the slave ship, captains forbidden from, terrified of or debilitated by their ports. It also echoes Melville's offstage feelings toward New York at this period of his life, self-exiled in Massachusetts yet needing the magazines of New York to publish the remarkable series of short pieces of the 1850s that included "Benito Cereno." This story, like "Bartleby," is a portrayal of a mind, and, as in "Bartleby," the mind portrayed is not that of the character named in the title; the title in each case is the name of the factor that disturbs the main character's mind and causes the events that allow its portrayal. Babo, Atufal and the other blacks on board the *San Dominick* are as incidental to this tale as Turkey, Nippers and Ginger-Nut

are to "Bartleby." Babo and his cohorts are as chilling as Turkey and the others are amusing, but the main purpose they serve is to reveal Amasa Delano's Revolutionary-era Puritan mind in confrontation with the kind of problem that strained the best minds of Melville's day--and our own. The cities offstage in this story are another chilling element of solidity and certainty turned upside-down, another indication, in the inversion of shipboard attitudes toward ports, that things are not as they should be and what one has relied on in the past, and should expect to rely on under normal circumstances, is in fact not what one thought it was at all in the circumstances that really obtain.

The circumstances of Melville's life were no better when he wrote his last novel and began to write poetry. While he was writing for magazines his family was trying to get him back to New York and, if possible, into a job in the Custom House, like the one his friend Hawthorne had had in Salem. When he went to the Middle East in 1856-57, the family efforts intensified, and with greater and greater justification. His granddaughter describes the situation, and quotes her great-aunt Augusta's opinions: "Herman had decided before he left home that the country was no place for a permanent residence. So while he was away his family's efforts took another direction, probably at his suggestion, for on his return, he reiterated his hopes for steady non-literary employment . . . [As Augusta Melville wrote to Peter Gansevoort on April 7, 1857,] 'Before he left home he was convinced that a residence in the country was not the thing for him, & could he have met with an opportunity of disposing of his place he would have done so'" (164). Eleanor Melville Metcalf further describes the various efforts her grandfather's uncle Peter made to get him something solid in New York, only to find that he met with opposition to his efforts on grounds that "Herman was not a citizen of the state of New York. Augusta used her good mind, and promptly collected plenty of evidence that this objection was unfounded. These facts she forwarded to her uncle, and continued: 'Now Herman by birth & from residence in the city of New York is known as a New Yorker; all his books are published in that city; all his interests are there except

the land in Massachusetts. Then it is well known that he has never voted in Mass., or taken any part in state matters . . .' (165).

That same year saw the publication of The Confidence-Man, another work that uses offstage cities, this time as stops along the path of a riverboat on the Mississippi. This was the only time Melville made extended use of that river, and the only time he made use of an inland ship as a setting. This was the last work of prose fiction he published during his lifetime, and it failed badly with critics and the public, although it is clearly one of his most carefully constructed novels. Certainly Melville's contemporary readers can be forgiven for not putting this novel's brilliance before its bleakness of outlook. By allowing absolutely no bubble of innocence or faith to remain unpunctured, Melville made it as difficult as possible for his contemporaries to enjoy his last novel. The constantly shifting identity of the Confidence Man allows few readers to identify him, much less identify with him, and there are no other sympathetic characters to hold onto, unless one's sympathies are aroused by the victims and the various unfortunate cases who appear in the anecdotes told along the way. Every seemingly hopeful sign is subverted and turned to a bitterness made sharper by the illusory hope that comes before it. Clearly Melville had lost none of his creative edge during the dark times of the mid-1850s, but he had gained a bite to his way of portraying the world that lost him the readership his magazine pieces had managed somewhat to recover for him.

The city serves both offstage and offshore purposes in this novel, and the way offstage cities function in this work is related to the role New York was playing in Melville's life at this time. As the riverboat Fidele makes its way down the Mississippi, it makes stops at major towns to pick up passengers and discharge others, making for a constant and very urban flux in the population on board. These cities, like New York for the Massachusetts-bound Melville, are mentioned, and certain aspects of them are described in passing by characters who mention them, but they are never directly portrayed. All action takes place on the Fidele, so no literal city is used as a setting. The

indirect effect of these cities and towns on the actual setting of the action, however, is akin to the indirect influence over his out-of-town life that Melville's native city exerted throughout the Massachusetts period. The offshore city is the riverboat itself, described throughout the novel in urban terms, and used for its alleyways, dark corners, multiple levels and various discrete settings in the same way that a city on land would be used.

Offstage cities figure in the beginning and central chapters. The opening scene takes place on the wharf in St. Louis, where the mute, the first manifestation of the Confidence Man, comes on board. For the first twenty-one chapters various other manifestations of this character come and go, enlisting the confidence of various other passengers by making them ashamed of their lack of confidence and then having them demonstrate their new-found trust by giving him money. In Chapter 21 the Fidele stops at Cape Girardeau (as Melville spells it, reflecting his Manhattan speech patterns by omitting the second, preconsonantal *r*); here the herb doctor supposedly gets off and the man with the brass plate gets on. At the end of the following chapter the boat stops at Cairo, where the man with the brass plate gets off. In Chapter 24 the philanthropist gets on, and various transactions between him and other characters continue until the twenty-fifth chapter, where the long conversation between Frank Goodman and Charlie Noble begins. From here on various new characters are introduced and others are allowed to fade away, but not by means of embarkation or debarkation. The new characters come up and insinuate themselves into ongoing conversations as they would in a scene set on a street or in a barroom.

Among these characters are Mark Winsome (identified as Emerson by Harrison Hayford in a 1959 article and in the Northwestern-Newberry edition's Historical Note) and his disciple Egbert, each of whom represents an exaggerated and commercialized Transcendentalism that allows Melville to reveal his own deep doubts about Emerson's thinking. This conversation is interrupted briefly by a beggar selling a wild tract, whom Hayford identifies as Poe and his Eureka. Melville has the Cosmopolitan engage Egbert

in role-playing, with himself as a friend in need of a loan, to reveal the basic heartlessness and lack of trust he perceived in popular Emersonianism. Through the *Cosmopolitan*, says Paul Smith (1962), Melville "could reaffirm the value of compassion . . ." and "dissociate himself from a sentimental or superficial view, for his cosmopolitan (and metropolitan) experience had taught him that man's credulity is not to be taken as a mark of virtue or innocence" (336).

The standard opinion of literary New York, articulated by the Duyckincks in reviews of Emerson's works in the Literary World, was that Emerson's doctrines were socially dangerous because inimical to orthodox Christianity. Evert Duyckinck recognized Emerson's importance to the new American literature of which he himself was a major proponent and critical supporter, and, as agent for Wiley and Putnam, negotiated with Emerson during the 1840s for New York publication of his essays and poems. Even so, the Transcendentalist mode of thinking was not much favored by New York's social establishment, and it was from this group that *Young America* emanated. The Duyckincks, as good New York Episcopalians, could not possibly see anything but a threat in Emerson's teachings, and they reacted against them in print for the same reasons that they tempered their enthusiasm for the works of their friend Melville when he seemed to espouse too latitudinarian a view, stopping just short of calling him a Transcendentalist, not a compliment in New York. Melville reveals his own attitude toward Emerson in letters, among them some correspondence with Evert Duyckinck, and in The Confidence-Man, where he spends very little time portraying Emerson himself, in the guise of Mark Winsome, but spends quite a bit longer portraying Egbert, the disciple, as he plays the role of someone asked for charity who uses every available casuistical device to keep from giving it.

Emerson impressed Melville in February 1849 when he first heard him lecture in Boston. Melville wrote Evert Duyckinck later that month, apparently referring to the standard New York opinion: "Say what they will, he's a great man" (Correspondence

119). Apparently this gently positive opinion brought forth objections from Duyckinck, in a letter that is now lost. At the beginning of March Melville, primed to see no more in Emerson than his New York friends, explains, "I was very disagreeably disappointed in Mr Emerson. I had heard of him as full of transcendentalisms, myths & oracular gibberish; I had only glanced at a book of his once in Putnam's store--that was all I knew of him, until I heard him lecture.--To my surprise, I found him quite intelligible, tho' to say the truth, they told me that that night he was unusually plain." He takes issue with one such New York opinion: "You complain that Emerson tho' a denizen of the land of gingerbread, is above munching a plain cake in company of jolly fellows, & swigging off his ale like you & me." He goes on to say that he agrees to an extent, having the impression himself that in Emerson's own opinion, "had he lived in those days when the world was made, he might have made some valuable suggestions. These men are all cracked right across the brow" (Correspondence 122). Melville's willingness to be impressed at all by Emerson ran against the anti-Emerson currents in Young America. Melville defends himself against an explicit or implied accusation that he is beginning to sound like an Emersonian: "Nay, I do not oscillate in Emerson's rainbow, but prefer rather to hang myself in mine own halter than swing in any other man's swing. Yet I think Emerson is more than a brilliant fellow. Be his stuff begged, borrowed, or stolen, or of his own domestic manufacture he is an uncommon man" Then comes a passage many readers have found interesting for its indication that a whale story was looming even this early: "I love all men who dive. Any fish can swim near the surface, but it takes a great whale to go downstairs five miles or more; & if he don't attain the bottom, why, all the lead in Galena can't fashion the plummet that will. I'm not talking of Mr Emerson now" (Correspondence 121).

Here is a whale, indicating that even this early--before Redburn and White-Jacket Melville was contemplating some form of the story that later became Moby-Dick. Here also, although entirely unnoticed by those looking for premature revelations about a work

that was actually three novels ahead of him, is another urban metaphor: the image of a whale going downstairs in a building with a five-mile-deep basement. And here is an interesting disclaimer about Emerson's stature in Melville's hierarchy of philosophical risk-takers. Melville then has to convince Duyckinck that his enthusiastic remarks about Shakespeare in the same letter do not make him just another Bardolator, expressing the wish along the way that Shakespeare "had lived later, & promenaded in Broadway" (Correspondence 122).

The lectures Emerson gave in Boston in February 1849 were on "Mind and Manners in the Nineteenth Century," later incorporated into English Traits. When Melville heard him lecture, Emerson was making favorable comments in public about a nationality that those interested in a distinctly American culture thought oppressive, and these sentiments would not have increased Emerson's popularity in New York. In New York City, whose resentment of the British dated from the times of Peter Stuyvesant, even a few pro-British speeches in a play, spoken by a British actor, were enough to raise the nativist element to riot, as Charles Macready discovered two months after Melville heard Emerson's English lectures in Boston (Cook 25). If the Astor Place riots could result from so seemingly innocent an exercise in freedom of speech, one wonders what the result would have been if Emerson had delivered these lectures on the British in New York. Perhaps he knew these views would be more calmly received in Boston.

The literary community's letter to Macready was a gesture of support, at least of his right to perform if not of what he said in the course of his performances. And certainly that community did not approve of the conduct of any mob, however just its cause. But the New York literary community was also far from sanguine about the New England Transcendentalists in general and Emerson in particular. As the 1849 exchange with Evert Duyckinck clearly shows, Melville was not always sure that his fellow New Yorkers' coldness was the best response. Later in 1849, before going to Europe, Melville wrote to Lemuel Shaw to ask him to get letters of introduction from Emerson to Carlyle

and others (I, 312-313). He was receptive to Emerson, although not willing or able to become one of his followers, and he was not willing to temper his admiration to suit the prevailing opinions of the New York literati. But the Emerson figure in The Confidence-Man shows clearly enough that Melville shared much of his fellow New Yorkers' skepticism about the actual effects of Transcendentalism. Mark Winsome comes on the scene with a warning to Frank Goodman not to trust Charlie Noble, and Egbert, Winsome's disciple, stays on to show that there is no way to get a friendly loan from a Transcendentalist, no matter how great the need.

For all their insistence on trust in the great natural forces in the universe, and for all their reliance on one's own discovery of one's ultimate identity in the course of an enlightened life, the Transcendentalists on the Fidele seem not to trust or care much for their fellow human beings. Melville found it difficult to reconcile the popular Emersonian impulse to improve human life by spreading the Transcendental gospel with the uncharitable behavior of these same Emersonians and their heartlessness toward those in need. This was the same reaction he had had to the supposedly charitable efforts of the missionaries who brought an unnecessary western gospel to the South Sea islanders, but usually despised, distrusted or, at best, condescended to the very souls they went there to save. Melville was horrified by the disease, poverty and oppression that these evangelists brought to their unsuspecting though unredeemed brethren across the seas, and he was dismayed and disappointed by the unwillingness of Transcendental reformers in America to deal with the concrete social problems that were all too evident to him.

His own financial problems and the many gifts and loans that had helped him and his family remain solvent over the years certainly played a part in Melville's choice of the friendly loan as the issue on which to hang his disagreements with the Emersonians. Some readers have identified Egbert, Winsome's disciple, as Thoreau, while others see him as a representative of a generic Emersonian, ready to use every device of high-

minded transcendental sophistry to deny a hypothetical loan to a hypothetical friend. Egbert is described as "a well-dressed, commercial-looking gentleman of about thirty" (197), which, except for the age, hardly sounds like Thoreau. Winsome introduces Egbert as "the first among mankind to reduce to practice the principles of Mark Winsome--principles previously accounted as less adapted to life than the closet." Melville's respect for Emerson but basic distrust of his followers is revealed once again when his narrator says, "[N]o trace of self-complacency was perceptible in the speaker's manner, which throughout was plain, unassuming, dignified, and manly; the teacher and prophet seemed to lurk more in the idea, so to speak, than in the mere bearing of him who was the bearer of it" (198). Emerson himself, Melville says here, is not the humbug, but in his ideas he was something quite different.

The cosmopolitan admits to surprise that Winsome's philosophy can be reduced to practical terms: "[I]t would seem to be natural to surmise that, if you are the originator of any philosophy, it must needs so partake of the abstruse, as to exalt it above the comparatively vile uses of life," to which Winsome replies, "Mystery is in the morning, and mystery in the night, and the beauty of mystery is everywhere; but still, the plain truth remains, that mouth and purse must be filled," and goes on to invoke a trio of Emerson's favorite figures, with Melville's own epithets subjoined: Seneca the usurer, Bacon the courtier, and Swedenborg, who "with one eye invisible, did he not keep the other on the main chance?" Egbert is, he says, a "thriving young merchant, a practical poet in the West India trade" (198-199). Egbert is Winsome's poem, the practical embodiment of his ideas.

In this guise the practical embodiment of Transcendentalism, as New Yorkers saw it practiced by Emersonians in their midst, is shown up for its social unacceptability. But this is a different type of social unacceptability from what New York's social establishment had in mind, and different also from what the younger generation, the members of Young America in Literature, had in mind. They saw the revolutionary

consequences of the implementation of Emerson's thought all too clearly, and felt imperiled by this alien New Englander, descendant of the Puritans--foreign enough from the established ethnic stock of New York on those grounds alone--who said one should rely on one's own perceptions of the ultimate.

Melville had been relying on his own perceptions of eternal matters for quite some time, and had suffered the critical consequences of going beyond his literary community's willingness to venture outward and do the same. For Melville, the social unacceptability of popular Emersonianism lay in its utter disregard of the basic injustices and inequities of society. At best, the purest of Transcendentalists could not account for everyday evil and ignored the basic problems of life, choosing instead to concentrate their intense and well-educated minds on the great beyond. But this is only a more spiritually adventurous version of any good New York Episcopalian's quarrel with Emerson. Melville's rejection of Transcendentalism as a movement lay in its extravagant promises, which seemed to him like the promises of every other religious body or movement that invited people's serious consideration. The Transcendentalists were promising instant individual access to the divine, the latest and easiest variety of antinomianism, and to Melville's skeptical mind nothing presented a greater potential for commercial exploitation and abuse. Melville's judgment of this abuse was the same as Martin Luther's about the selling of indulgences: popular transcendentalism was too often nothing more than exploitation of the sacred, and robbery of the poor souls who chose to believe.

Against this background of internal exploration and external disapproval Melville drew his acerbic picture of Emerson and his generic disciple, placing them in the gallery of humbugs he attacks throughout the novel. The convoluted arguments he gives Egbert in his role as the friend refusing a loan to another friend, and the story of China Aster that Egbert uses as a warning to himself, sound horribly mean, difficult to accept from the reader's image of Emerson or Thoreau. In fact, however, the warning in the story of

China Aster is very close to the counsel in Emerson's "Self-Reliance," in which Emerson disclaims responsibility for the poor: "Are they my poor? . . . [T]hough I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar which by-and-by I shall have the manhood to withhold" (43). Giving literal or metaphorical charity to the unworthy was as spiritually debilitating, for Emerson, as being in debt, a condition with which Melville was all too well acquainted. But the statements that expressed a spiritual truth for Emerson had an additional hard-hearted resonance for Melville, and whatever he knew of Emerson's work at that point, he had heard enough to feel justified in portraying Mark Winsome and Egbert as transcendently heartless. In sum, then, Melville had parted company with his New York compatriots on the issue of Emerson's social danger and philosophical outrageousness, following many of the same self-reliant paths in Moby-Dick and taking the expected criticism from the much safer New York literary establishment. But while he admired Emerson, his admiration was never unreserved. The very lack of conviviality that Evert Duyckinck found so annoying in Emerson translated for Melville into a deeper coldness that could manifest itself in an utter lack of human charity. The smugness that Melville saw in Emerson, insinuating that he "might have offered some valuable suggestions" at the Creation, translates into the self-satisfied Egbert's rationalizations of distrust and refusal to give--or even lend.

By 1855 the New York literati were still worried by Emerson's unorthodoxy, but not even his old friends from the Knights of the Round Table, as the Duyckincks and their drinking circle called themselves, were concerned any longer with what Melville thought of Emerson. The Duyckincks had gone public with their disapproval of Melville's "transcendentalisms" in their review of Moby-Dick, and Melville's frustration with their unwillingness to see the true significance of his achievement had led to their genteel estrangement. New York was no longer interested in Melville's opinions of Emerson, or of anything else, for that matter. But from his farm in Massachusetts, in the last novel he saw published, Melville still carried on the old arguments and debated the

old questions. It is no surprise that Melville was no longer so sanguine about Emerson. The Sage of Concord and the farm in Pittsfield were both barriers between him and New York.

Melville originally intended his move to the Berkshires to improve his life as a writer and head of a family. When he planned the move in 1850, he looked forward to a bigger house, some healthy outdoor activity, and the quiet and concentration that were rare commodities in Manhattan. The immediate vicinity was familiar to him from childhood visits to his uncle Thomas Melvill, who owned the adjoining farm until he moved to Illinois. And, since this area of Massachusetts was already a summer resort for New York and Boston writers, it was perfectly natural for Melville to expect the kinds of visits from his New York friends that did in fact take place during his first and second summers in Pittsfield. An additional and unanticipated benefit was his friendship with Nathaniel Hawthorne, which enriched his artistic and personal life and added new depths to Moby-Dick, which he had begun working on in New York.

But certain other equally unanticipated elements that began to combine in the early 1850s changed the whole nature of this Massachusetts sojourn. When the Hawthornes left the area in late 1851, Melville felt the loss. Within a month, his friends in New York were taking him to task for irreverence and transcendental leanings in Moby-Dick, leading to a cooling of relations. This clearly contributed to the sense of estrangement from New York, and the sense of having been abandoned and misunderstood by those he looked up to, that permeates *Pierre* and the magazine stories of the 1850s. And the tremendous productivity of these years was hardly the result of the peace and quiet a harried New York writer hopes for in the Berkshires. It was just as much a product of the same financial situation that had plagued him in New York. As he worked out his bitterness and disappointment with the New York literary scene, his sense of abandonment by Hawthorne, and the oppressive suspicion that the faith his century

sought was not possible to find, he also wrote stories that paid the bills.

By 1855 Melville's condition was low enough so that various members of his family were moving to get him a government job in New York; failing that, they were willing to settle for a foreign consulate. The trip to Europe and the Holy Land in 1856-57 was another stopgap remedy to what the family had come to see as a dangerous depression. Within five years of moving there, the Melvilles' transplantation to Massachusetts had turned into a self-imposed exile. And this New England captivity was, like Herman's adolescence in the upper Hudson Valley, caused by economic problems, although this time they were Melville's own.

This situation kept Melville's New York offshore and offstage for more years than he would have liked. Melville already knew the skepticism and disillusionment that the Civil War brought to many other American artists for the first time; while the rest of Young America came of age in this deadly conflict of convictions, Melville merely found confirmation of what he had already sadly accepted. When he became absorbed in the war's events and began to use them as subjects for poems, he was as interested in the evidence of human depravity, the indifference of nature to human emotions and actions, the seeming impossibility of faith or hope, as he was in the mechanical horrors of battle.

Melville set several of these poems in his offstage native city, including a poem or two that deal with events he could not have seen. He had not yet returned to live in New York when the draft riots of 1863 broke out, but he was nonetheless horrified by the prospect of the breakdown of social order in his native city. Riots were nothing new in New York, but in the context of the Civil War, the violence of Irish immigrants toward black New Yorkers--caused by a draft law that permitted the rich to pay surrogates to take their places in the ranks--took on other dimensions. Melville's poem makes no mention of the draft law, the groups involved, or any of the other social issues and historical particulars. It never even names the city. Instead, it focuses on the eternal implications of this civil disturbance: confirmation of "Calvin's creed" (total depravity),

the "Atheist roar of riot," the "grimy slur" on the nation's basic belief in the inherent goodness and nobility of humankind. As always in Melville's life, events in New York provided him with graphic contradiction of the happy, semi-official optimism of much of the rest of America, even when those events were taking place offstage.

By October 1863 Melville and his family were back in Manhattan to stay, and he explored the implications of the rest of the war from East 26th Street. Throughout Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War, his first published book of poetry (1866), Melville consistently espouses a charitable attitude toward the defeated Confederacy. He deplores their secession and their slaveholding, but frankly admires their courage and urges, in piece after piece, that the North not waste any more blood taking revenge on the rebels but allow the Union to heal. He makes the same plea again in a prose afterword. And having just returned from a less ominous and onerous exile of his own, he must have looked with special compassion on the many Confederate soldiers stranded in New York. The poem "The Released Rebel Prisoner (June 1865)" could very well commemorate an encounter in the street with a destitute veteran. Melville's sympathy for the soldier and his situation is evident from the first lines, which show us the city from the viewpoint of a bewildered Southerner unaccustomed to crowds other than those he has seen on the battlefield: "Armies he's seen--the herds of war,/ But never such swarms of men/ As now in the Nineveh of the North--" (1-3). To live in the midst of the swarming population of New York, larger in the 1860s than ever before, was almost as new an experience for Melville as for his released prisoner. Like Melville recently released from Pittsfield, the released prisoner finds it hard to adjust to the northern city. The "herds" and "swarms" of the first lines, and the "wasted fields" of line 22, are images that come from the mind of a rural Southerner but evoke just as well the rural New England Melville had recently left behind.

Other things point to Melville's identification with this transplanted Southerner. The fourth stanza, for example, could be both an external and an internal description of

either of them: "His face is hidden in his beard,/ But his heart peers out at eye--/ And such a heart! like a mountain pool/ Where no man passes by" (13-16). Melville also uses a pervasive but subtle pattern of doubling. Consonant sounds are repeated in some lines, internal rhymes occur in others, and there is outright repetition of words in the last three stanzas, starting with one that applies as well to Melville's psychic distance from his much-changed native city as to the emotions of the displaced Southerner: "Home, home-- his heart is full of it;/ But home he never shall see,/ Even should he stand upon the spot:/ 'Tis gone!--where his brothers be" (29-32). Melville's Manhattan had been his brothers' place before it was his in the 1840s, the decade of his initial success; one of these brothers was now dead and the other had traded places with him and was now in Pittsfield. And the city to which he returned had fulfilled the prophecies of his urban fiction of the previous decade: it was changed, and the actual places he had known were gone, replaced by a city of which he had as yet had no experience as a resident. The sad repetition of "Home, home" says it once for the Southerner stranded in New York and once again for the New Yorker returned to a city that no longer seemed like home.

This was not, of course, the first time Melville used a Southerner's situation to express his own feelings. Just before he purchased his farmhouse in the Berkshires, he wrote "Hawthorne and His Mosses" in the voice of a Virginian spending the summer in New England. Now in 1865, as he tried to reaccustom himself to his native city after his protracted New England stay, he has yet another Southerner voice his sense of displacement. Melville's uses of these Southern personae bracket the New England period, and the differences between them are representative of the differences between the Melville who moved to Pittsfield in 1850 and the one who made a final re-entry into a greatly changed New York in the mid-1860s. The Virginian of the Hawthorne essay is well-educated, well enough off to take extended holidays in the north, full of lively opinions about literature and America's place in the literary enterprise. These opinions, and the Virginian's adulation of Hawthorne, are clearly entirely Melville's, and reflect

the healthy exuberance and general professional success of this period of Melville's life. The subject of the 1865 poem is quite different. Unlike the well-off Virginian sojourning in New England, the released prisoner has no money to return home to the south, so, like Melville himself during so many periods of his life, he is economically exiled in an alien place. Since the prisoner represents all of the defeated Confederacy, Melville names no particular state as his home; rather, he emphasizes this Southerner's defeated, demoralized state and his sense of displacement.

Melville himself was not depressed or dispirited to this degree when he came back to New York for the last time, but the youthful enthusiasm that characterized so much of his writing before 1852 was gone by 1863 when he made his return. By 1865, when he wrote this poem, he was older, quieter, less likely to express the kind of energy and enthusiasm that had come easily to him a decade and a half earlier. But compassion had not deserted him as he moved into middle age, and it was this that gave him access to the experience of a derelict Confederate veteran, and gave him a point of intersection with the current experience of the city where he had to reestablish himself. As the nation sought ways to heal itself from the horrors of internal war, Melville sought to heal his long separation from New York.

In 1866 Melville began to work as a customs inspector, a job he kept for twenty years. He worked on the piers during the day, in the type of job his family had tried for so long to get for him throughout the 1850s, and came home to write at night. The main product of the postwar decade was Clarel, privately printed in 1877; after that, there were only a collection or two of small poems, none of them printed during Melville's lifetime, and Billy Budd. But once Melville was involved again in the daily life of his city, New York dropped from his work. After his return from Massachusetts he felt no need to explore further his relationship to his native city, since he was living there again, and doing so on altered terms. He was not part of the same social group he had spent his time with in the 1840s; his occupation was no longer that of famous popular author--in fact,

few remembered that he had been a widely read author at all. Thirty years after Typee made him famous in his city, his city no longer remembered him, and he had to negotiate a new life with New York.

In this last phase of Melville's life as a New Yorker he was no longer interested in trying to recover the city he had lost in his childhood, but he was not finished with his explorations of family relationships. In the title piece of his last group of poems, Timoleon (1891), he reopened his discussion of his relationship with his brother Gansevoort, who died in 1846, but at over four decades' distance he did not tell the story directly, and the classical source he used to reexplore their sibling differences places as much emphasis on the city they belong to as it does to the different positions of the brothers.

Melville's source for this poem is Plutarch, and, as Robert Shulman suggests, probably the John and William Langhorne translation, used when Melville was in school and widely available in several editions throughout his life (352). In Plutarch's narrative Timoleon is called out of civic obscurity to lead the armies of Corinth in the liberation of Sicily, and the story of his conflict with and assassination of his brother Timophanes, then tyrant of Corinth, is told to explain the obscurity in which Timoleon has been living. For Plutarch this is an instance of Timoleon's willingness to put the civic good above the claims of blood, and sets a pattern that continues in the narrative of Timoleon's victories over tyrants and tyrannical institutions throughout Sicily. Melville spends only a few lines on this glorious sequence of campaigns and reforms, concentrating instead on the brothers, the assassination, and Timoleon's changed relationship to his city.

In both Plutarch's narrative and Melville's, Timoleon saves Timophanes' life in battle. Melville ends this part of his poem with the thought that this gave the innate differences between the two brothers a chance to develop to a great political and moral climax. The poem's third section introduces the cause of the differences in the brothers: their mother. Out of her own social ambitions she has set Timophanes up as her male

alter ego, as Mary Glendinning does with her son Pierre, and as Maria Gansevoort Melville seemed to do with Herman's older brother Gansevoort.

The politically and socially successful Gansevoort Melville was very active in the reform wing of the Democratic party in the 1830s and '40s, and it was to this that he owed the appointment as secretary to the American legation in London that he occupied when he died. Herman's comparative indifference to politics and to the workings of the political machine that dominated the 1840s and '50s prevented him later on in life from getting any more interesting government appointment than that of Customs Inspector, even after many years of trying. This partly explains Melville's attraction to the figure of Timoleon, who places devotion to democracy and love of his city above the quest for political power. In the same way, Melville's own political concerns had more to do with ultimate issues of justice, democracy and the extirpation of tyranny than with the conventional practice of law, the Democratic party and the trading of political favors. In the waning years of his life Melville may have seen his own refusal to embrace the political opportunities his brother profited from as a milder and quieter version of Timoleon's campaign against tyranny.

After Timophanes' assassination and Timoleon's consequent rejection by his mother, an event both Plutarch and Melville use, Timoleon goes into a self-imposed rural exile. Twenty years later he is recalled from this exile to lead Corinth's cause in Sicily. There are obvious parallels here to the first three phases of Melville's life. Herman's success and recall to his native city came when he re-emerged in New York as a popular author with the publication of Typee in 1847, a year after his brother Gansevoort's death. Although Gansevoort was no tyrant and Herman no assassin, it was not until the brilliant and promising Gansevoort was out of the picture that the younger brother had any success. Of course, Herman's success was not the direct consequence of his brother's death. If anything, Gansevoort had been substantially helpful to Herman in getting Typee noticed in New York and, later, published in Britain. But the sequence of events in the

source and the poem is interestingly close to that in Melville's life.

Melville condenses Timoleon's Sicilian campaigns into four lines, after which comes Timoleon's second summons to Corinth. Timoleon refuses. Melville's second recall to New York came in 1863, and, having sought it so long, he did not refuse. But there are ways in which this poem is a speculation on what could have been if he had had the kind of success during his years in Massachusetts that Timoleon had during his time in Sicily. According to Plutarch's account, such was Timoleon's glory and his comfort in his adopted land that he was able to refuse the proffered tribute of his native city. Perhaps by the mid-1880s Melville wished he had been in a financial and emotional position to refuse to return to his city in 1863.

It may also be that the interest some young British and American readers were beginning to show in Melville's work, after so many years of public and critical indifference (*Log II*, 785ff., Howard 316), felt enough like his old success to put him in mind of Corinth's second summons to Timoleon and his luxurious refusal. Robert Shulman suggests that Melville refused New York's summons in the 1880s because he knew that by 1886 (which Shulman points to as the most likely date of composition) "his city was not eagerly waiting, but he was aware that he, too, could say no. And he did. And then sat down and wrote a story, which is the artist's way of saying yes" (360). Whether the invitation to return was the combination of economic and psychic exigencies of the 1860s or the renewed readership of the 1880s, it is certain that New York never beckoned to Melville in the lavish terms in which Corinth beckons to Melville's Timoleon: "Eager for thee thy City waits:/ Return! with bays we dress your door" (VIII, ll. 185-186).

In any case, even though "Timoleon" re-explores an old sibling problem and some basic moral and social issues, it involves New York only indirectly. The biographical events and issues Melville deals with in this poem were all in fact based for him in New York, but he explores them by way of a Greek hero's relationship to his native Corinth.

This is typical of the way Melville treated his native city in the works of his last years. The more engaged his everyday life was in the fact of New York, the less the idea of New York engaged him.

Along with the classical Corinth of "Timoleon," Melville wrote about other cities in the poems of his last years. The section of Timoleon titled "Fruits of Travel Long Ago" includes a series of postcard--like glimpses of Italian cities Melville visited in the 1850s. Each of these poems is a sketch, an episode, a brief glance at some feature of a city: a window in Venice, the tower of Pisa, a church in Padua, Milan's cathedral, the Parthenon. The first of these poems couples a city with a South Seas phenomenon, but not in the same way these elements were coupled in earlier works. In the second is an echo of an image he used before, in *Pierre*, but again with a different slant. Apart from these echoes of earlier urban elements, each of these poems is self-contained, unconcerned with the city as anything more than setting for the event or feature described.

The first poem, "Venice," reverses a technique common in Melville's early works, where he used urban comparisons to describe unfamiliar tropical phenomena. Here he spends the first eight lines of a twelve-line poem describing the wonderful complexity of coral in the South Seas, "[e]vincing what a worm can do" (l. 8). The last four lines compare this to the construction of Venice, "in reefs of palaces" (l. 12). A South Seas image here describes a city, reversing the method of such imagery in Typee, Omoo, Mardi and other early works. The second of these postcard-poems, "In a Bye-Canal," describes the effect on the speaker of a glimpse of a woman's eyes through a latticed window in Venice during siesta time. The glance is more powerful than the "portents in nature and perils in man" (l. 16), including the terrors of whaling and war, and induces the speaker to decide it is no "shame to run" since "flee them did divine Ulysses,/ Brave, wise, and Venus' son" (ll. 32-34). This pair of Venetian eyes, "[b]etween the slats, mute summoning me,/ What loveliest eyes of scintillation,/ What basilisk glance of

conjunction!" (ll. 12-14), glance powerfully through slats as does Plinlimmon in *Pierre*. But aside from the power of the glance, nothing reminiscent of that old scene in New York intrudes. The power of this glance through the slats in Venice results in an otherwise brave man's flight from the blandishments of the opposite sex, and the gondola pulls away. "Pisa's Leaning Tower" personifies the sloping building as "[a] would-be suicide" "shivering on the verge" (ll. 10-11), unable to decide whether to take the plunge. Pisa is merely the tower's location, and in no way figures in the poem. "In a Church of Padua" describes a confessional and compares it to a "diving-bell" in which the priest sounds the consciences of penitents, putting a sea image to work in a different setting. Once again, the location of the confessional is given postcard-fashion and not because it makes a difference to the poem. Finally, "Milan Cathedral" describes the architectural phenomenon of the cathedral and its purpose: "to signify the host of heaven" (l. 15). Except for the evocation of the surrounding countryside, "[t]he fat old plain of Lombardy" above which "[t]he White Cathedral shows" (ll. 3,4), no setting figures at all. The same is true of "The Parthenon," three poems later in the section. Melville's speaker addresses the temple directly in the first two stanzas, imagines the mood of the sculptors of the frieze in the third, and in the last stanza evokes the universal stillness and reverence that he imagines must have accompanied the temple's completion. The city that surrounds it never enters the picture.

Although many of these pictures are set in cities that, during the actual period of "travel long ago," Melville described in detail in his journal, each of them focuses so intently on a particular attraction that the setting, urban or otherwise, is lost. This could reflect Melville's acceptance of the city as a basic fact of existence, not an exotic phenomenon that merits attention apart from isolated features that catch the eye in ways of their own. Some major shift in Melville's relationship to the city led to a corresponding shift in his use of urban images both in these late poems and in his last prose work, Billy Budd.

This change involves not only Melville's treatment--or neglect--of New York but of the urban element in general. Forty years earlier, in White-Jacket and other shipboard works, Melville frequently pointed out similarities between shipboard and city life, and gave a special place in the action to the cities offstage. In Billy Budd he often uses the city to the opposite purpose. Only once are the sailors of the Bellipotent compared explicitly to villagers, and that comparison is at odds with the rest of the urban references in the work. Most of the urban references in Billy Budd contrast urban life to shipboard life, or introduce relevant information. In any case, they are carefully chosen, designed for other work than that done by the urban references in the earlier works.

The urban references in Billy Budd are generally of two types: references to actual cities, and metaphors that refer to urban phenomena. The first type occurs whenever Melville mentions a port, as he does in the second paragraph when he explains the phenomenon of the "Handsome Sailor." He shows us such a sailor with his companions "[i]n Liverpool, now half a century ago . . ." (43). These glancing references to actual ports--and New York is never among them--are basically no different from similar references in other works from other periods of his career. The second type is used very differently here from the way it figures in other works. In this last work, Melville does not put forth explicit city/ship comparisons. Urban references are often either mentioned neutrally or as points of outright contrast. The first of these is submerged, a passing reference to the "miscellaneous multitude" in the Bellipotent (50). The interesting aspect of this is that this is the type of reference that Melville would have allowed, in earlier works, to develop into further urban associations. After all, the mention of a "miscellaneous multitude" naturally calls to mind the population of a port city, and the increasingly miscellaneous multitude that constituted the newest of Melville's fellow New Yorkers in the last stage of his New York life. But he leaves all this unsaid, and deflects the reader's thoughts from urban associations by an immediate evocation of military life: "Among her miscellaneous multitude, the Bellipotent mustered

several individuals . . . more signally susceptible of that air which continuous martial discipline and repeated presence in battle can . . . impart even to the average man" (50). Another urban image is reflected in the next sentence: "As the Handsome Sailor, Billy Budd's position aboard the seventy-four was something analagous to that of a rustic beauty transplanted from the provinces and brought into competition with the highborn dames of the court" (50-51). Rather than characterize the competition Billy faces as merely urban, which he might have done four decades earlier, Melville focuses on that specific part of the city's life that not only sustains the aristocratic image of the exceptional sailors described in the previous sentence but also evokes the centralized political power that later makes Billy's execution inevitable.

Melville is equally careful to specify how much of the city Billy is aware of: "little more of the land than as a beach, or, rather, that portion of the terraqueous globe providentially set apart for dance-houses, doxies, and tapsters, in short what sailors call a 'fiddler's green'" (52). Having evoked the specific seamy side of every port on earth, Melville then generalizes to comment on "Cain's city and citified man" (53), emblems of the civilization and insincerity that "corroborate the doctrine of man's Fall" (52). Billy's innocence, Melville insists, is so fundamental a part of his nature that he seems to come from a pre-lapsarian, and therefore pre-urban, time. This effectively conveys Billy's innocence, but it also raises the question of why Melville suddenly uses the image of Cain's city. Surely he was concerned throughout his life with the significance of the doctrine of the Fall and the origin of Original Sin, and if humanity's innate sinfulness is associated with Cain's city, it is remarkable that he does not use this where one would expect it, in the theological explorations of *Clarel*. The explanation may lie in Melville's final acceptance of the urban condition, in all its postlapsarian complexity, as the human condition, even as he accepted life in New York as his own proper life, however short of his ideals his actual life may have fallen.

In an artistic effort to avoid potentially distracting anachronisms and unexpected

juxtapositions of unusual geographic images, Melville carefully chose his urban metaphors for their appropriateness to the rest of the story. Thus, when he explains the potential effects of the mutinies of 1797 on Britain, he chooses the greatest British city in distress: "To the British Empire the Nore Mutiny was what a strike in the fire brigade would be to London threatened by general arson" (54). If he had had to make this comparison in an earlier work he might very well have chosen his own fire-prone city as the source of the image. Later, explaining Billy's reaction to the evil that confronts him on the ship, Melville seems to stay with the British countryside: "Billy Budd was like a young horse fresh from the pasture suddenly inhaling a vile whiff from some chemical factory, and by repeated snortings trying to get it out of his nostrils and lungs" (84).

And then there is the sixteenth chapter, which reconsiders the notion of the difference between fallen, civilized, complex, dissimulating, game-playing, urban humankind and the straightforward, naive, prelapsarian innocence of Billy Budd. In general, says Melville, explaining why Billy's lifelong association with sailors would have taught him very little about human nature, "[t]he sailor is frankness, the landsman is finesse [The sailor's] life afloat is externally ruled for him; he is not brought into that promiscuous commerce with mankind where unobstructed free agency on equal terms--equal superficiality, at least--soon teaches one that unless upon occasion he exercise a distrust keen in proportion to the fairness of the appearance, some foul turn may be served him" (87). The urban person develops a "ruled undemonstrative distrustfulness" as a habit of mind, but it is unconscious: "[S]ome of them would very likely feel real surprise at being charged with it as one of their general characteristics" (87). This is the argument of The Confidence-Man, but where Melville had to turn a city into a riverboat to comment on urban psychological defenses in 1855, he could do it more directly in 1886 and thereafter.

Only two explicitly urban metaphors remain, and they are typical of the way Melville was using the city as metaphor at the end of his life. The first describes the

quick progress of rumor aboard the Bellipotent, "the people of a great warship being in one respect like villagers, taking microscopic note of every outward movement or non-movement going on" (116). Interesting here is the restriction, which Melville would not typically have put on a ship/city comparison in a work like White-Jacket: the sailors are like the city people in only one respect, and that is their attention to the goings on around them. This simile is remarkable for its careful and sparing application of one village phenomenon to one shipboard phenomenon. The reader is not invited to draw further parallels.

The second of these urban references, the last such reference in this inside narrative, occurs after Billy's execution. Just before he is hanged Billy cries, "God bless Captain Vere!" and this is echoed by the crowd of men assembled on the deck. Then comes a moment of silence, and a murmur that Melville characterizes as "dubious in significance further than it seemed to indicate some capricious revulsion of thought or feeling such as mobs ashore are liable to . . ." (126). Here is a familiar image: "mobs ashore" occur in many contexts in Melville's work, but once again he narrows the focus to one aspect of one sound made by the crowd. Based on Melville's careful phrasing, nothing else about that crowd of sailors is to be understood as being in any way similar to "mobs ashore."

Throughout Melville's career he used various metaphors of the city to explain aspects of shipboard life, and made special use of offstage cities ashore to influence action on shipboard. But this treatment of cities took various forms at various times in his career, depending on his relationship to the City of New York. In his earliest books, at the same time he was routinely using urban images to clarify exotic phenomena, ship/city comparisons came just as routinely, and probably with the same intention: to make clear to a largely urban audience the maritime esoterica with which they were not likely to be familiar from their own experience.

Later, during his Massachusetts period, he wrote most concentratedly about his

native city, which was also, in a sense, offshore for him; he also used more extended metaphors of ship-as-city, in "Benito Cereno" and The Confidence-Man. In each of these works he dealt with problems that went far beyond the stories being told. The black presence in America on the verge of the Civil War was transposed to a pair of ships in "Benito Cereno," and, while considering many aspects of civilized urban deceit on the city-as-riverboat in The Confidence-Man, he reexplored the issue of Transcendentalism and the question, crucial to the New York literary community, of how much real trust could be placed in the philosophy of self-reliance.

Finally in his later poetry and his last work of fiction, Melville's handling of the urban metaphor became more focused and subtle. At the end of his life he no longer seemed to see everything in urban terms, as he had when he first started writing, and even when he dealt with specifically New York events, as in "Timoleon," he set them in ancient times and a faraway city. The explicit comparisons of city to ship, the action on shipboard directed by the presence of a city offstage, are almost entirely absent from his last shipboard story.

There are several possible explanations for this change in the prevalence and relative importance of this kind of metaphor. First, by the 1880s Melville was entirely re-rooted in the city he first left as a child fifty years earlier. His childhood exile was lifted in 1847, when he came back to Manhattan and began his life as a famous New York author; the unfortunately prolonged Massachusetts episode came to an end in 1863. After dealing with the archetypal and actual Jerusalem in Clarel in 1877, Melville allowed the city to fade in importance. As his daily life merged with that of his city once again, for the first time since his childhood, the city itself was no longer an issue; he could treat it as background for the other parts of his life.

Another explanation for the less frequent and less extensive use of ship-as-city metaphors in the later work has to do with Melville's audience. The works in which he used these metaphors most frequently were written for publication, with the hope of

making money; one in particular, White-Jacket, was by Melville's own admission aimed more at popular and financial rather than artistic success. The late poems, however, were privately printed in small editions, and *Billy Budd* was an ongoing project of his last years but no plans had been made for publication by the time Melville died. His artistic control in this work was such that he allowed nothing to lead him into the slightest excess, and if the use of urban metaphors had been an old, ingrained habit, he would surely have thrown more of them into that narrative. Instead, his use of those devices, as we have seen, was restrained, careful, parsimonious. Clearly he no longer had to explain unfamiliar phenomena in terms of the more familiar; he also did not have to use imagery that would make an urban audience feel more at home in his work. He had no one to please but himself as an artist, and his readers were close enough to him either to understand and appreciate or not, but he was not dependent for his livelihood upon their opinion.

In the closing three decades of his life New York became for Melville what it always is for so many natives who are never exiled from it except by choice: a basic condition of life, a fundamental fact of existence, no more to be loved or hated than an element of nature. The childhood years had imbued him with images, metaphors, scenes, stories and even speech patterns, and the time away from his city in the Hudson Valley, served only to make his awareness of his exile sharper. When he came back from his time at sea with fascinating stories of exotic places and peoples, he told those stories to his fellow New Yorkers and others in terms of the world they had in common.

During the most productive period of his career, the years in self-exile in Massachusetts, he had other issues to work out with his native city. Moving from a state in which he had no argument with his old literary associates to a state of disappointment and resentment, he carried out his arguments with New York in the series of works he set there or devoted part of to the old issues. New York itself became an issue at this period in Melville's life, all the more as he began to wonder whether he would ever be able to

return from Massachusetts.

When the thirteen years in Pittsfield came to an end and he was again able to participate in the daily life of his city, the urban element began slowly to fade from his work. He no longer saw himself as part of a vital Young America, out to define the cultural life of the nation by their literary work in New York, and in any case, even though he published a little poetry, he supported himself through his work as a customs inspector, supplemented by bequests to him and his wife. His granddaughter attests that he was involved in the natural life of the city, riding the ferries back and forth across the harbor, bringing his granddaughters for walks in Madison Square and Central Park (Metcalf 259, 281-282). He was not involved in the life of New York society, although he lived a few blocks away from the neighborhood that had become its center. Over the last twenty-eight years of his life he seems to have made a quiet, private peace with the city. After the return from Pittsfield he never contemplated another move, so, with the anxiety of another ill-advised separation removed, he was finally able to deal with this much-changed New York on its own terms, as the basic ground of life from then on. Having met it on those terms, he let it pass from his writing; it was no longer an issue to be dealt with, merely an all-pervasive reality to be accepted.

Melville's relationship to New York was, after all, lifelong, longer than any other relationship he had with anyone or anything in his life. Having been born in and shaped by the city, he was a New Yorker wherever he sailed or wherever he lived, and in whatever he wrote. In this last long phase of his life as New Yorker and artist, his final willingness to let the active presence of New York trail out of his work like a mist reveals how solid a ground it truly was for him.

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