

Myth in the Novels of Herman Melville

A Study of the Functions of the Myths
of Eden, the Golden Age, and Hero and Dragon
in Three Novels of Herman Melville--
Typee, Moby-Dick, and Billy Budd, Sailor

by Harold Paul Maltz

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Abstract

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In Typee, Melville evokes myths of Eden and the Golden Age to present a critique of civilization. This thesis focusses on the presence and function of contrasting elements of these myths--Eden and the Fallen World, the Golden Age and Age of Iron--in the novel. These myths facilitate assessment of civilization, and heighten the significance of Tom and Toby's escape from the Dolly and their longings for the island's delights. These myths also link the primitive Typees and the Dolly's sailors, and enhance the significance of the young sailors' escape from Typee.

In Moby-Dick, Melville again presents a critique of civilization, again exploiting contrasting elements of the Eden myth. This myth provides an interpretative framework for specific sets of contrasting symbols (some encountered in Typee), and for the contrasted fates of Ahab and Ishmael--fates made possible owing to Melville's conception of human nature, in Moby-Dick more complex than in Typee.

Melville exploits further mythical material in

investigating man's confrontation with evil. The prediction in Genesis of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent serves several functions: it illuminates Ahab's sense of Moby Dick as Evil incarnate and Ahab's consequent adoption of a mythical role in hunting Moby Dick, while Christian interpretation of the prediction affords grounds for an ironic judgement of Ahab. Allusions to myths of Hero and Dragon encourage the reader to assess critically Ahab, Moby Dick, and the hunt.

In Billy Budd, Sailor, the bipartite structure of the novel determines a use of myth in the first part different from that in the second. In the first part, Melville coalesces an element of the Eden myth--the confrontation of Adam and the Serpent--with the outcome of the confrontations in the myths of Hero and Dragon. In the second part, the expectations raised by the patterning of this composite myth are dashed, thereby exacerbating the poignancy of Billy's fate. The Eden myth also provides an interpretative framework for specific sets of contrasting symbols, thereby enabling Melville to present a critique of civilization--a study of man's condition in the Fallen World.

Except for the quotations specifically indicated in the text, and such help as I have acknowledged, this thesis is wholly my own work.

H. P. Maltz

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"Winding far down from within the very heart of this spiked Hotel de Cluny where we here stand--however grand and wonderful, now quit it;--and take your way, ye nobler, sadder souls, to those vast Roman halls of Thermes; where far beneath the fantastic towers of man's upper earth, his root of grandeur, his whole awful essence sits in bearded state; an antique buried beneath antiquities, and throned on torsoes!" (Herman Melville (ed. Hayford, Moby-Dick 161)).

". . . Melville considered all recorded history but a fraction of the past, and the cultivated intellect only a part of consciousness. The unexplored regions of the individual and of the racial mind, reaching back into prehistoric mists, beckoned him" (Nathalia Wright (Melville's Use of the Bible 182)).

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Preface

The myth that envisages the New World as the new Eden and the American as the unfallen Adam has long been recognized as central to nineteenth century American fiction, as has the particular significance of the Eden myth in the novels of Herman Melville. Yet it should be emphasized that the Eden myth, so pervasive in Typee, Moby-Dick, and Billy Budd, Sailor, has functions in these novels different from what many critics have taken them to be. Furthermore, it has not generally been recognized that the myths of the Golden Age and of Hero and Dragon are central to some of these novels: the one has been discussed only cursorily, the other largely ignored, and their functions have not been adequately analysed. Insufficient attention has also been paid to Melville's treatment of the mythical archetypes of Eden, the Golden Age, and Hero and Dragon as Melville incorporates, combines, transforms and extends them.

No innovations in methodology were necessary in order to ascertain the use of these myths in the three novels discussed in this thesis--Typee, Moby-Dick, and Billy Budd, Sailor. However, a number of assumptions have been made about myths and the way they are used in literature. One such assumption is that myths may be broken down into a number of components or basic elements. Even so well-known a myth as that of Eden is complex,

for it is composed of a number of disparate elements separable by analysis. A corollary of this notion is that a writer may choose whatever elements of a myth he pleases, selecting those that are important for his purposes and alluding, if he so wishes, to only one element of a myth. Another assumption about myths is that each element is "myth-laden," carrying with it the "philosophy," assumptions, and values implicit in the myth of which it is an integral part.

Writers not only narrate myths: they may enrich, even change them. For centuries writers have coalesced elements of disparate myths, and it will be seen that Melville does so in Typee. Moreover, writers may devise composite myths, as Melville does in Billy Budd, Sailor. Finally, writers may imbue the features of the everyday world with mythic significance so that they become "myth-laden" symbols: both myths and the world are thereby transformed, and myths reconciled with reality.

Chapter 1.

Type

Herman Melville was passionately concerned with the human condition, and had an abiding commitment to its investigation. In Typee, he presents a critique of the civilized condition and civilization in general and, in order to do so, he adopts the mode of contrast by evoking myths which celebrate ideal and primordially innocent states of being--the myths of Eden and the Golden Age. Accordingly, in discussing the novel, I focus on the effective presence and function of these two myths in it.¹

The myth of Eden postulates both the Garden and its contrast, the Fallen World, the world in which men of historical time have always lived. Similarly, the myth of the Golden Age postulates not only the Golden Age but its contrast, the Age of Iron, the age in which the inhabitants of the Greco-Roman world found themselves, for the intervening Ages of Silver and Bronze had, like the Golden Age itself, passed away (Graves, Greek 1:35-36).² The foreshortening of the intervening ages, in accordance with Ovid's fourfold scheme, emphasizes ". . . the polar opposition between what is respectively symbolized by gold and by iron" (Levin, Myth 22). The myths of Eden and the Golden Age portray similar settings--idyllic landscapes--and similar pristine states of being--happy and harmonious, if not always "innocent." Further, both myths postulate similar times--the distant past when mankind first trod upon the earth--and both postulate the occurrence of a change in the course of time, maintaining that the original "unfallen" or "golden" condition of man

contrasts sadly with his corrupt condition in historical time. Life in the Fallen World thus has much in common with that of the Age of Iron, for in both men must till the earth for food, live in crowded cities, and endure tyranny, pain, suffering and eventual death. That presentations of Eden and the Golden Age should be so similar is a matter of no little interest, and more so than ever since myths of vanished golden ages are widely diffused (Levin, Myth 10-11). To the Jungian, the resemblance points to an archetypal pattern in the human mind, while to others it suggests evidence of cross-cultural influence. Whatever the explanation, the two myths have often been blended in literature (Levin, Myth 177)³ and are once again coalesced in Typee: in the valley is found "the green Eden of the Golden Age," as D.H. Lawrence puts it (1034).

It must be borne in mind that the myth of Eden in particular is enormously rich, embodying as it does many symbolically significant elements, and one should avoid over-simplifying it. Yet the contrasts it and the myth of the Golden Age postulate--those between Eden and the Fallen World, the Golden Age and the Age of Iron--suggest that both myths are, in general, aetiological, attempting to account for mankind's present corruption, ills and evils.⁴ In literature these myths have been recalled, as Milton recalls them in Paradise Lost, to serve such a purpose but, in Typee, as will be argued, Melville evokes them to serve other functions.

In order to establish the presence and examine the function in Typee of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age, it is necessary to clarify the symbolic significance firstly, of the island and the ship, and secondly, of primitive society and civilized society.

Two contrasting worlds are presented in Typee, that of the island valley of Typee lying secluded, mysterious and unknown in the Marquesan island of Nukuheva, and that of the ship, the Dolly, which has sailed from far across the seas. Both a spatial and temporal gulf separate the two. Spatially, the island valley and the ship are distant: Typee valley, remote from Nukuheva harbour, is barely accessible, being surrounded by almost impassable barriers except on its far side where it borders on the sea; the Dolly roams far and wide upon the vast oceans. Temporally, the island valley and the ship are millenia apart: Typee valley has lain unchanged since the beginning of time, or at least for as long as it has been known to history, while the Dolly represents an evolved culture. An "immeasurable distance" separates the representative inhabitants of these two worlds: "In the one is shown the result of long centuries of progressive civilization and refinement . . . while the other, after the lapse of the same period, has not advanced one step . . ." (ed. Hayford, Typee 29).⁵ The character of life in the valley and aboard ship also differ: the island valley connotes

stasis, rest and lazy dalliance, while the ship in its voyaging connotes change and restless energy and, even when at anchor, ceaseless movement ("Poor old ship! . . . rolling and pitching about, never for one moment at rest" (5)).

Life aboard the Dolly is harsh and depressing: the ship's hold is black (44) and the sailors suffer from heat and thirst (28). They are constantly hungry and such food as they are doled out is scarcely edible: the meat is tough and salty, the bread hard as rocks and the water stale (21). The depressed condition of the sailors is epitomized by the cock, once dapper and gay, but now "moping all day long" and turning with disgust from his food, which is "mouldy" and "brackish" (4). The dilapidated state of the ship suggests the hardships that the sailors have also endured: she appears "deplorably" and is "burnt" and "cracked" (4-5).

In general, life at sea is presented as dreary and hopeless; it is a "dismal prospect" and a period of "servitude" which has to be "endured" (21). The harsh conditions--neglect of the sick, inadequate food, unendurably long voyages--are viewed as the direct responsibility of the captain: he is the "author of these abuses" (21). Yet the sailors have no alternative but to endure his tyranny, and though his conduct is "arbitrary and violent in the extreme," for a member of the crew to stand up against the captain was "mere madness" (21). Those who oppose him are punished with no recourse to justice: "To whom could we apply for redress?" (21). The vessel

itself is "detested," a prison-like place of "narrow decks and gloomy forecastle" (31). Such is their hatred of the ship that the sailors are absolutely set in their determination to take shore leave, even if, as one of them says, ". . . the cannibals stood ready to broil me on landing" (35).

Small wonder, then, that steering towards the island is thought of as the signal for "deliverance" (4). The very news that they are to head for land evokes great excitement: the sailors look forward in imagination to a feast of food and sex. When land is at last sighted --a "glad announcement" (10)--there is even greater excitement, accompanied by a great deal of bustle on the part of all, from the captain down to the cook and the dog.⁶

It is only in contrast to the deprivations and hardships aboard the Dolly that the qualities of life in Typee valley acquire their true significance. The ship and the island-valley represent ways of life poles apart: whatever the sailors are deprived of at sea, whatever they yearn for, is found in profusion on the paradisaical island. Indeed, life in Typee valley realizes all the sailors' day-dreams: at sea the sailors are hot and thirsty, while the valley is cool and well-watered; at sea they are hungry, dreaming of "glorious" and "delicious" fruit (3), while the trees of the valley groan with fruit; at sea they yearn for the fresh greenery of land, for the "refreshing glimpse of one blade of grass" (3)--even "the old ship herself longs to look out upon the land . . ." (4)--

while the valley has a carpet of green. The sailors are depressed, weak and ill, while the natives of Typee are happy, cheerful and splendidly healthy. There are no women aboard ship whereas Typee swarms with voluptuous maidens. The sailors have scant rest from hard work while the natives of Typee can hardly be said to work at all. The sailors have to endure the tyranny and injustice of the captain while in Typee the hand of authority is so light that it is scarcely felt. In short, Typee valley has the sensuous character of life in the Garden of Eden or the Golden Age--a blissful life of abundant food, endless pleasure and no work. "The garden Tommo has discovered is a primitive, prelapsarian garden . . ." in the words of Leo Marx (283).⁷ By contrast, life aboard ship represents the condition of man in the Fallen World or Age of Iron--an endless duration of hunger, misery, pain, enforced celibacy, work and injustice. Milton Stern makes a similar observation when he suggests that ". . . man's present condition . . . for Melville is symbolized by the concept of the Fall . . . Melville uses Original Sin as a metaphor for the nature of reality . . ." (Steel 21).

Even before landing on Nukuheva the sailors aboard the Dolly had an intimation of the idyllic life of the island. Indeed, for several weeks, while the ship was slowly heading for the Marquesan Islands, an atmosphere of languor overtook it. It was a "delightful, lazy,

languid time," with the ship "gliding" along effortlessly while no work required to be done (9). The members of the crew "slept, ate and lounged" under an awning the whole day long (9). The very air exercised a "narcotic" influence and the general languor of the atmosphere acted like a "spell" (9-10). Reports of travellers who had seen Nukuheva all emphasized its great beauty which seemed to be indescribable (12). The green and sloping hills of the island rise to majestic heights enclosing romantic glens down which streams cascade. Its harbour is a vast natural amphitheatre overgrown with vines, an "enchanted" scene causing Tom to be "lost in admiration" at its beauty (24) whenever he saw it even in his mind's eye. While the Dolly was still entering Nukuheva Bay, cocoa-nut sellers approached the ship, giving a foretaste of the island's superabundant food. Soon afterwards the sensual luxury of the island is manifest as a bevy of young girls swim out to welcome the ship and proceed to swarm aboard. Beautiful, spontaneous and natural, they seem like "mermaids" and "swimming nymphs" (14). "Sparkling with savage vivacity," they dance with an erotic "wild grace" and "abandoned voluptuousness" before the sailors so that their arrival initiates scenes of riot and debauchery as the sailors give vent to their long pent-up passions (14-15).

Of all the striking features of the valley of Typee, what in particular attracts Tom's attention is ". . . the lavish abundance with which it produced all manner of

luxuriant fruits . . ." (102).⁸ While wandering hungry and thirsty through the dangerous jungly terrain of the uninhabited part of Nukuheva, the thought of the cornucopia to be discovered spurs on Tom and Toby:

" ' . . . such forests of bread-fruit trees--such groves of cocoa-nut--such wildernesses of guava-bushes! . . . I am dying to be at them' " (57). When Tom and Toby at last succeed in reaching the valley and are brought "starving" to the chiefs, their craving for food is gratified almost immediately and they are lavishly fed (73). The same hospitality is the hallmark of the household of Maryeho to which Tom is assigned during his stay in the valley. The members of the household ply him with food constantly and gratify his every culinary whim. The amount of food consumed in Maryeho's household is so vast that once Tom saw a group of at least twelve men approach, bearing gifts of food. When a ship approaches the seashore, a whole procession of natives laden with "every variety of fruit" rushes down to barter their surplus produce (107). On such an occasion Tom saw bunches of bananas so huge that two men were needed to carry one between them, reminding him of the bunch of grapes carried by the Hebrew spies from the Promised Land. On another occasion, after a fishing expedition, Tom witnessed packages of fish so heavy that they too required two men to carry them. As far as Tom can tell, there had never been any shortage of food, for Typee valley had had "a long prosperity of bread-

fruit and cocoa-nuts" (179). At harvest time, when the fruit hung in "golden spheres" from every branch in the hundred groves of the valley, the trees were stripped of their "nodding burdens" and the food stored against a possible though unlikely time of shortage (116). Food in Typee is to be had for the plucking from the branches of every tree. The natives point this fact out to Tom and Toby: " ' . . . no danger of starving here . . . plenty of everything!--ah! heaps, heaps heaps!' " (103). The supply of sacrificial food is lavish while most sumptuous of all is the "Feast of the Calabashes" which lasts for no less than three whole days: canoe-shaped vessels twenty feet in length are used to serve "poee-poee," green bread-fruit is heaped up in pyramids, and the meat of numerous slain hogs is consumed. By comparison, ". . . Warwick feasting his retainers with beef and ale was a niggard . . ." (163).

What makes the abundance of food in Typee valley all the more remarkable is the fact that ". . . not a single atom of the soil was under any other cultivation than that of shower and sunshine" (165). Nature produces the natives' food without their having to work for it: "The penalty of the Fall presses very lightly upon the valley of Typee . . . I scarcely saw any piece of work performed there which caused the sweat to stand upon a single brow. . . . the idle savage stretches forth his hand, and satisfies his appetite" (195).

Typee is a "paradisaical abode" in which ". . . the whole existence of the inhabitants of the valley seemed to pass away exempt from toil . . ." (195,147). Since the fruits of the earth are "spontaneous" the men can afford to be "too indolent to cultivate the ground" (196,192). The women, too, are idle, their sole tasks being light household duties. As for the young girls, ". . . these wilful care-killing damsels were averse to all useful employment.

. . . their days [are] one merry round of thoughtless happiness" (204). The ease of life is such that "a gentleman of Typee can bring up a numerous family of children . . . with infinitely less toil and anxiety than he expends in the simple process of striking a light . . ." (112). Indeed, during the entire duration of Tom's stay, the only type of "hard work" he ever witnessed was that involved in striking a light. The only person in the valley described as "industrious" is the mother of Kory-Kory, and she "works" not from necessity, but only on "some irresistible impulse" (85).

The beauty of the landscape which Tom had seen from afar while approaching the island did not prove illusory when he landed. On the contrary, his senses are ravished. Almost as soon as he, hot and thirsty, sets foot ashore, he plunges into the shade of a grove and there experiences a "delightful sensation . . . as if floating," while all sorts of "liquid sounds" fall upon his ear (28). While he stands in the Glen of Tior beneath the cocoa-nut trees, he takes pleasure in the

scenic beauty surrounding him; as he looks upward he sees a "fret-work of interlacing boughs, nearly hidden . . . by masses of leafy verdure," while the grove itself is "draperied with vines" (28). As he penetrates the grove, it widens into "the loveliest vale eye ever beheld" (28). Yet the valley of Typee is lovelier still, for it is the crowning glory of the island. On first glimpsing it, Tom is "transfixed with surprise and delight" as he looks down upon the vast valley sweeping towards the distant shore (49). Numerous rivulets cascade from the heights. The houses of the natives, with golden bamboo sides and white palmetto thatch, stand on the banks of winding streams and glisten in the sun, forming a "beautiful contrast" to the "perpetual verdure" (194). Tom is entranced by the sight: "Had a glimpse of the gardens of Paradise been revealed to me I could scarcely have been more ravished . . ." (49).

The beauty of the natives of the valley proves to be no less astounding to Tom, surpassing anything he has ever seen. In Tom's eyes, the most beautiful of all the girls is the sylphlike Fayaway who is "the very perfection of female grace and beauty" (85). Her olive-complexioned face is oval, her teeth dazzlingly white, her hands soft and her skin amazingly smooth; her strange blue eyes, at times unfathomable, at others, beam like stars. As for her apparel, she generally sports ". . . the primitive and summer garb of Eden. . . . It showed her fine figure to the best possible

advantage . . ." (87). She is a "child of nature . . . breathing from infancy an atmosphere of perpetual summer" (86); the source of her beauty lies in her superb health; her loveliness reflects the easy and luxurious life of the islanders. In the valley, not a single instance of deformity is to be seen and sickness is virtually unknown. Death itself leaves no signs of its presence: during Tom's stay in Typee he sees no traces of a burial-place. Thus, perfect as Fayaway is, she is not unique: she epitomizes the beauty of the young women of the valley. Although Tom is infatuated with her, he is objective enough to recognize that his description of her could apply to nearly all the maidens of Typee. To heighten their beauty, the girls never weary of decorating themselves with jewel-like flowers, of which they are passionately fond. The inhabitants of Typee are, in general, models of physical strength and beauty. Apart from some men with war-scars, everybody is without blemish: ". . . nearly every individual of their number might have been taken for a sculptor's model" (180). Outstanding among the men is Marnoo, a native of the island who, although not born in Typee valley, is nevertheless allowed in freely on grounds of his being taboo. Marnoo is "one of the most striking specimens of humanity" that Tom has ever beheld (135). His form has a "matchless symmetry" and his figure an "elegant outline"; the regularity of his every feature is reminiscent of an "antique bust" and he could pose for a statue of the

Polynesian Apollo (135). In Tom's eyes, there are several people in the valley who are, like Marnoo, "in every respect models of beauty" (184). He adds that his descriptions of the beauty of the people of Typee are not without parallel in the reports of travellers to the Marquesan islands.

With such abundance of food available so effortlessly and with such beautiful people inhabiting so lovely a landscape, small wonder that life in Typee proves to be paradisaical. The very first persons that Tom and Toby spy when entering the valley are an idyllic couple: a young boy and girl--slender, graceful, and naked but for slight girdles--stand protectively together, holding hands. The valley of Typee is a "secluded abode of happiness" where "mirth, fun, and high good humor" prevail (126). Children frolic the livelong day and girls spend hours reclining in beautiful groves and weaving garlands: ". . . one would have thought that all the train of Flora had gathered together to keep a festival in honor of their mistress" (127). The sunshine and warmth of the valley is endless: ". . . the whole year is one long tropical month of June just melting into July" (213). The animals of the valley, chiefly lizards and birds, are remarkably beautiful and live in harmony with the happy people; they are so tame as to be quite fearless, having complete faith in the kindness of the Typees. Neither predators nor venomous insects or snakes are to be found in the valley.

In the mornings the natives bathe in the pool; the first time Tom witnesses the exuberant scene he bursts into admiration. The Typees were sliding down large stones into the water and there was a great deal of ducking and diving in all directions. The naked girls, bouyant as "river-nymphs" or "a shoal of dolphins," swam or pranced about and sprang into the air ". . . with their long tresses dancing about their shoulders, their eyes sparkling like drops of dew in the sun, and their gay laughter pealing forth at every frolicsome incident" (13,132,90). Tom spends much time bathing in company with troops of girls: it is one of his chief sources of enjoyment. In the evenings, Tom's whole body is massaged by "the soft palms of sweet nymphs, whose bright eyes are beaming . . . with kindness" (110). At times Tom watches the girls dancing by moonlight in front of their dwellings: bedecked with plumes and flowers, they seem to him like "a band of olive-colored Sylphides on the point of taking wing" as they "sway their floating forms, arch their necks, toss aloft their naked arms, and glide, and swim, and whirl" (152). Nothing, however, brings Tom greater happiness than the idyllic hours he spends in the company of the beautiful Fayaway. Since Tom's ailing leg causes him difficulty in walking, Kory-Kory, his faithful attendant, carries him to a stretch of the stream where the beauty of the scene soothes his mind. Here Tom reclines for hours on a bed of freshly gathered leaves while Fayaway waves aside the insects with a fan.

His eye, meanwhile, wanders along the "romantic stream" and absorbs the "tranquillizing influences of beautiful scenery" (110). After special dispensation has been obtained for Fayaway to enter a canoe (usually taboo to women), Tom frequently spends the heat of the day boating with her on a cool lake. Kory-Kory paddles the canoe while Tom and Fayaway recline in mutual embrace. In this way they float for several hours, Tom gazing at the "bewitching scenery around" and then "up to the warm, glowing, tropical sky, and then down into the transparent depths below" (134). For Tom, these times are magical.

Life in Typee is not only idyllic but also ideal: the way of life in the valley achieves the general felicity for which many societies strive but which few attain.⁹ Tom feels when in Typee that he is in the "Happy Valley" beyond whose heights "there was naught but a world of care and anxiety" (124). In the valley, people live "in clover": "There seemed to be no cares, griefs, troubles, or vexations, in all Typee" (57,126). There are no bills, debts, lawyers, poor relations, destitute widows with starving children, beggars, nor money with its manifold curses, and the inhabitants of the valley are not cross, nor quarrelsome, nor cruel, nor sour, nor frustrated: life is a succession of "tranquil day[s] of ease and happiness" (149). An average Typee morning begins late with a swim, followed by a smoke after breakfast (for the men) and then rounds of social visits or other pleasures. The noonday siesta precedes a late

lunch and amiable conversation, and watching dancing-girls brings the day to a close. Tom has the impression that everybody belongs to one household, so widespread is the general love; people are kindly to one another, proffering help when the need arises, and women are treated with every consideration--an indication of the prevailing "refinement" (204). Distinctions of wealth hardly exist and padlocked doors are unknown. Theft and murder too are unheard of. In a Polynesian version of the Biblical ideal, "Each islander reposed beneath his own palmetto thatching, or sat under his own bread-fruit-tree, with none to molest or alarm him" (201). The authority of the chiefs is scarcely apparent and it is only after the Feast of the Calabashes that Tom realizes that Mehevi is King of Typee. During Tom's stay in the valley, nobody is arrested, charged before a court of law, or punished: nonetheless, life in the valley proceeds with "harmony and smoothness" (200). After several weeks in the valley, Tom has a higher opinion of mankind than he has ever had before.

To sum up, then, the very thought of the island inspires paradisaical visions, while in the valley itself food is wonderfully abundant, yet is produced without any effort on the part of man; the landscape--pastoral and garden-like--is spectacularly beautiful and the climate is that of eternal summer; the inhabitants are comely and the animals tame; life is idyllic and endlessly pleasurable, and manifests the harmony of the ideal

happy society. The claim, then, that life in the valley of Typee has the character of life in Eden or the Golden Age has been more than vindicated.

Richard Chase presents an opposite point of view, arguing that "the hazardous and painful descent of Toby and the hero into the Valley of Typee symbolizes the Fall, a descent from the sunlit mountain peaks into the recesses of the valley, from light to dark . . ." (Study 35). Richard Chase overlooks the fact that the Eden myth postulates not only the Fallen World but the Garden--the unfallen state without which the concept of the Fall is vacuous: to Chase, civilization represents "the adult level of the fallen world" and Typee valley "the preadult level . . . or fallen Eden" (Study 32). Civilization and the valley are the sole ways of life portrayed in the novel, and Tom and Toby escape from the one to the other, but the mountain top, from which Chase suggests the young men "fall," is not associated with either way of life, nor with Tom and Toby who happen, briefly, to be on the mountain top when escaping from the Dolly to the valley; the significance of the mountain top is not developed in the novel. It is true that mountain top and valley imply geographical height and fall and perhaps for this reason Chase takes geographical analogy as central to the Eden myth: as he argues, ". . . the crude necessity is to be able to symbolize Up and Down" (Study 35). However, the Eden myth has nothing to do with a literal fall, and

Chase's geographical analogy leads him to distort the significance of the Eden myth to Typee.

Milton Stern suggests a modification of Chase's argument:

There have been attempts to interpret Tommo's and Toby's literal descent and final fall into the valley as a parallel to the Fall from grace. Actually the parallel exists as a condensation of Tommo's entire voyage, the plunge from the world and time of civilization to the world and time of unconsciousness (Steel 60).

However, Stern finds this suggestion unacceptable--"It is a plunge that can no longer be accepted in terms of the Christian concept of the Fall from grace" (Steel 60)-- and explains why (Steel 60-61).

The myths of Eden and the Golden Age, then, are at the very heart of Typee and are woven into its fabric-- yet they are alluded to only obliquely. Such sparseness of allusion may be thought unusual, considering the importance of these myths in the novel: neither myth is recounted and, although the terms "Eden" and "the Fall" are mentioned, there is no thematically significant Adamic figure, nor are there such figures of Eve or the Serpent. However, the novel does contrast the idyllic life in Typee valley with the unhappy lot of the sailors aboard ship in such a manner that it is inevitable that the contrast between Eden and the post-lapsarian world, or between the Golden Age and the Age of Iron, should spring to mind and that the reader should realize that

Melville is presenting more than a simple tale of travel and adventure. In the nineteenth century, familiarity with the myths of Eden and the Golden Age, which could be acquired from biblical, Greco-Roman or pastoral literature, or from Paradise Lost, could be assumed and Melville, relying on this assumption, gives the novel a mythical dimension or level, and does this most economically, for the reader himself provides the mythical perspective.

It should be noted that the importance of the Eden myth to the novel is in no way diminished by the fact that Melville uses only one element or part of it, choosing not to refer, for example, to any of the main personages--God, the Serpent, Adam, Eve--nor to the dramatic events in which they are involved. The element of the myth on which he focusses is the Garden of Eden itself, yet, since the Eden myth is so rich, reference to the Garden alone is no less important for the mythical dimension of the novel than is reference to the myth of the Golden Age. As has been mentioned, the settings and the conditions of man are remarkably similar in both myths; and in Typee, the setting Melville portrays and the way of life he describes are deliberately evocative of life in the Garden of Eden or the Golden Age. It is then but a short step to seeing Typee valley as a symbol of the Garden of Eden or the Golden Age. Correspondingly, the ship, the Dolly, at first evokes life in the Fallen World or the Age of Iron and then becomes a symbol of

that World or that Age.

The setting of an island valley as a symbol of the Garden of Eden or the Golden Age has its origin in myth and literature. It will be recalled that Typee valley is not only located on an island but is also partially walled around by a range of high mountains, thus making it virtually inaccessible from the interior, and hence it is doubly protected from the rest of the world. Its inaccessibility is reminiscent of that of Eden in Paradise Lost; according to Milton, the Garden was an "enclosure green" surrounded by

. . . a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
Access denied . . . (4:133,135-37).

Both islands and valleys are variations of the "walled garden" or "paradise garden." According to Cavendish, when the Old Testament was translated into Greek in the third century B.C., the "Garden of Eden" was translated as "paradeisos tes truphes," a paradise of delight; the term "paradise," a term derived from the Old Persian word for enclosure, was conceived of as a luxurious enclosed park: "A paradise or a garden is an enclave of contented leisure, beauty, freedom and security, separated from the surrounding countryside" (36,37,40). According to Robert Graves, all neolithic and Bronze Age paradises

were "orchard-islands" (Greek 1:21); Harry Levin makes a similar claim: "Every culture harbors a longing of its own for a great good place, an island of the blest or happy valley . . ." (Myth 171). In some traditions, the original Garden of Eden was itself located on an island, or at least surrounded by the ocean:

. . . certain Authors . . . say, that the Terrestrial Paradise was separated from our world by the Ocean, and that Adam, being driven out of this Paradise, cross'd the Sea . . . to come into our World . . . (ed. Des Maizeaux note 1, 103).

(Melville was later, in the summer of 1849, to become familiar with this work, as he reveals in a letter to Duyckinck, dated 5 April, 1849 (ed. Davis 83).)

Classical poets such as Pindar, Horace and Lucian speak of idyllic islands where the Golden Age appeared to linger on.¹⁰ They speak of the Isles of the Blessed or the Fortunate Isles, alternative names for Elysium or the Elysian Fields, that Homeric paradise far away on the edge of the world where, in the words of Richard Cavendish, ". . . life is easy, where there are no storms, no rain and no snow, and the west wind blows gently every day" (45). Thus Pindar, in the sixth century B.C., describes life on the Isles of the Blessed, where ". . . the winds / Of ocean play, and the golden blossoms burn," and where the inhabitants

. . . tax not the soil
 With the strength of their hands, nor the
 broad sea
 For a poor living, but enjoy a life
 That knows no toil . . .
 ("Olympian Ode II" trans. Conway 14-15).

In similar vein Horace, in the first century B.C., spoke wistfully of the Fortunate Isles where "the corn grows by itself . . . the fig needs no grafting, vines are always in flower and olives in shoot, honey drips from the oaks and water splashes down the mountain sides" (Cavendish 49). According to Harry Levin, the influence of Horace was particularly important: "Horace had suggested an escape from history to geography, when he proposed that the faithful should leave strife-torn Rome and seek the Islands of the Blest. There, according to Hesiodic tradition, the golden age continued to exist" (Myth 58). Lucian of Samosata, in the second century A.D., spoke in an extravagant tone of the delights of the Isles of the Blessed. According to him, "the grapes ripen every month and the trees yield crops of pomegranates, apples and other fruit thirteen times a year" (Cavendish 49). Lucian adds that the inhabitants in the meadow of the Elysian fields drink from the springs of laughter and pleasure and "then they loll on beds of flowers while nightingales rain petals down on them, scent falls from the sky like dew, and the surrounding trees magically supply glasses of wine" (Cavendish 49). In addition, free love abounds and couples make love in public.

Another paradise-island of the classical world, also reminiscent of the bliss of the Golden Age, is the Isle of Venus--Cythera--which was conceived of as "an erotic paradise, a place of perfect natural harmony and love," portrayed in art by painters such as Giorgione in Le Concert Champêtre and Watteau in L'Embarquement pour Cythere (Cavendish 46,84-85).¹¹ The Island of the Lotos-Eaters is a somnolent version of the paradise-island, as may be seen in the "Choric Song" of Tennyson's "The Lotos-Eaters": "There is sweet music that softer falls / Than petals from blown roses on the grass / . . . / Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies" (ed. Ricks 431-32). In "Morte d'Arthur," Tennyson again writes in the tradition of the paradise-island when he alludes to

. . . the island-valley of Avilion;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
 Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
 And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea . . .
 (ed. Ricks 596).

The ship sailing the seas as a symbol of the Age of Iron also has its origins in myth and literature. In the Golden Age, according to Ovid, ships did not ply the seas: "Never yet had any pine tree, cut down from its home on the mountains, been launched on ocean's waves, to visit foreign lands; men knew only their own shores" (trans. Innes 31). It was characteristic of the Age of Iron that ships plied the seas: "Now sailors spread their

canvas to the winds . . . and trees which had once clothed the high mountains were fashioned into ships, and tossed upon the ocean waves, far removed from their own element" (trans. Innes 32).¹² Indeed it was Prometheus who taught mankind the use of ships, as he claims in Aeschylus's Prometheus Bound: "And no one else but I discovered for sailors / The sea-wandering vessels with their canvas wings" (Grant 180). By analogy with the Age of Iron, it may be argued that the Fallen World is also symbolized by the ship. In addition, as will be argued, the sea itself is a symbol of the Fallen World,¹³ and hence, by extension, so too is the ship.¹⁴

In Typee, then, the image of the secluded island valley stands in opposition to that of the ship sailing the seas: these images symbolize the contrasted settings found in the myths of Eden and the Golden Age--the Garden and the Golden Age on the one hand, the Fallen World and Age of Iron on the other. I consider next a parallel set of symbols of the contrasted settings found in both the myth of Eden and the Golden Age.

Thus far the island valley and a ship sailing the seas have represented the contrasted settings of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age. However, these are not the sole juxtapositions in Typee: even on a cursory reading of the novel, the contrast between primitive and

civilized society is evident. These two sets of contrasts are associated with each other and are in fact separable only by abstraction: thus the island is a microcosm of primitive society, while the ship is a microcosm of civilized society.¹⁵ Commenting on the ship in Typee, Leo Marx observes that it is "an extension of Western civilization" (282), and James E. Miller that ". . . civilization . . . is represented in miniature in the world of the ship" (Guide 6). Leo Marx adds that the ship in Moby-Dick is a "mobile replica of a technically advanced, complex society," a "social microcosm" (285-86). In similar vein, Harry Levin declares of White Jacket that "Melville . . . discovered the potentialities of the ship as a . . . working model of society . . ." (Power 181). Owing to their association with island and ship, primitive and civilized society respectively, standing in opposition to each other, also come to symbolize the contrasted settings found in the myths of Eden and the Golden Age. Thus both primitive society and the island are parallel symbols of the Garden or the Golden Age--a concatenation of concepts mirrored in the lines from one of Melville's poems: "Marquesas and glenned isles that be / Authentic Edens in a Pagan sea." In the same way, both civilized society and a ship at sea are parallel symbols of the Fallen World or the Age of Iron.

Melville's choice of a primitive society--that of a

specific South Sea island--to symbolize life in the Garden or the Golden Age probably owes a good deal (as many critics have recognized) to the influence of Montaigne and to Rousseau's theory of the "noble savage" --the natural, unspoilt, "original" man easily equated in the popular mind to the figure of the equally natural and innocent Adam.¹⁶ It should be noted that the myths of Eden and the Golden Age and Rousseau's theory are similar in structure, in that all involve a contrast between the pure, ideal, "original" state of mankind and the later corrupt and unhappy condition: the two myths hark back to the lost pristine condition of man, while Rousseau's theory recalls the noble savage uncorrupted by civilization. As Lawrence Thompson puts it, Rousseau ". . . worked out the foundation stone of his thinking in terms of the Garden of Eden trope" (33). Like the two myths, Rousseau's theory may also be seen as aetiological, in that it attempts to account for mankind's corruption, for which Rousseau holds the advent of civilization to be responsible. Unlike the poets of pastoral literature who write about a vanished Eden or Golden Age, Melville selects an actually existing place for Tom's and Toby's escapade, and a South Sea island was a plausible as well as symbolically significant choice. There are numerous precedents for likening Noble Savages--generally in the Caribbean islands and the Americas--to men of the Golden Age (Levin, Myth 60-65,83).

Civilized society as a symbol of the Fallen World or the Age of Iron has its roots in the Bible and in myth. According to Genesis, the city--inseparable from civilized society--is a creation of the Fallen World: after Adam and Eve left Eden, Cain is reputed to have founded the first city (4:17), and in Jewish legend Cain is known as a "builder of cities" (Ginzberg, Legends 60). Indeed, the notion of the city as the vehicle of civilization is established etymologically in the English and other European languages.¹⁷ As there was no city in Eden, so there was none in the Golden Age. In which of the subsequent ages cities first appeared is not clear, but even in the second age, that of Silver, it is doubtful if they existed, at least in the view of Ovid: "It was in those days that men first sought covered dwelling places: they made their homes in caves and thick shrubberies, or bound branches together with bark" (trans. Innes 32). Certainly cities were a feature of the Age of Iron, the age affording the greatest contrast to the Golden Age.

The presence of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age have been shown to be clearly discernible in Typee and in these myths it is the element of contrast that is focussed upon--the natural settings that are so striking a feature of both. These contrasting settings are, as has been argued, symbolized by sets of parallel symbols: the island and primitive society are parallel symbols of

the Garden or the Golden Age; the ship and civilized society are parallel symbols of the Fallen World or the Age of Iron. Having established the presence in Typee of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age, I next consider their functions in the novel.

If, as has been suggested, Melville's concern in Typee is indeed to present a critique of civilization and to explore the civilized condition, then he has chosen aptly in selecting the myths of Eden and the Golden Age, for they are well-suited to the diverse functions he has them serve. One of the functions of these myths in the novel is to afford a touchstone for the assessment of civilized society.

His encounter with primitive South Sea Island society proved to be invaluable to the young Melville: it initiated his life-long interest in the human condition in general, and in civilization in particular. The sub-title of the novel, A Peep at Polynesian Life, suggests that its subject-matter is the primitive society of the South Sea islands, and the novel presents this society as interesting in its own right and as worthy of having its minutest details recorded. The reader unfamiliar with primitive life may see for himself its manifold features and activities presented dramatically. Yet although much attention is devoted to this

topic, and although the major part of the novel is set in the island valley, Melville's interest in Typee is not only in portraying primitive life: the capacity of primitive society to symbolize Eden and the Golden Age makes it an excellent touchstone for the assessment of civilized society. In using the myths of Eden and the Golden Age for this purpose, the novel may be seen as related to the tradition of pastoral literature, where such procedure is common practice.¹⁸

To view primitive society as a symbol of Eden or the Golden Age, and civilized society as symbol of the Fallen World or Age of Iron is not merely to make a comparison of two forms of society. The myths of Eden and the Golden Age do not merely describe the Garden or the Golden Age but rather postulate ethical and social ideals, and the Eden myth a religious ideal as well. These myths have built into them a whole system of values and a philosophy of human existence from which may be extracted criteria for judging society. These myths embody not only the concept of ideal life but also the notion of falling off from that ideal. Hence to view primitive society as a symbol of Eden or the Golden Age, and civilized society as a symbol of the Fallen World or Age of Iron, is to reveal the ways in which civilized society falls short of ideals which lie deeply rooted in both the Bible and Greco-Roman myth. As Harry Levin puts it, ". . . the praise of times past, its laus temporis

acti, is an implicit critique of nowadays"; ". . . to praise the virtues of the Golden Age is to deplore the vices of subsequent ages, the deterioration of man and nature" (Myth 5,173).

Melville's assessment of civilized society is voiced by Tom, the narrator. He is completely unambivalent about it; not once does he praise it but, on the contrary, criticizes it extensively. At most he concedes that, theoretically, civilization could confer benefits upon "savages." In practice, as he points out, ". . . she has scattered her vices, and withheld her blessings" (198). Whereas the narrator presents primitive life dramatically throughout most of the novel, focussing on the valley of Typee, civilization is presented dramatically only in the scenes aboard the Dolly and in the harbour of Nukuheva. After their flight from the ship, the captain threatening punishment, Tom and Toby are the sole representatives of civilization and accordingly it is presented largely in terms of Tom's recollections and comments, which contrast it with primitive society, or in his reflections on the corruption and degradation of the South Sea Islanders by colonialism.

The keynote of Tom's attitude is sounded in the opening pages of the novel in his description of his experiences while aboard the Dolly. As has been suggested, the ship may be viewed as a microcosm of civilized society. Although the ship sailing the great oceans

was one of the proudest achievements of Western technology in the nineteenth century, disseminator, world-wide, of civilization, the life of the common sailor was one of unrelieved misery. The narrator emphasizes the hardships and privations that the sailors on the Dolly were forced to endure, and their consequent sufferings: hungry, depressed, weak and ill, they were further burdened with a brutal and tyrannical captain and were completely at the mercy of his violence and his injustice.

The reader's sense of civilized life is sharpened by the comparisons, both direct and implied, which Tom draws between civilization and primitive society: "Civilization does not engross all the virtues of humanity: she has not even her full share of them. They flourish in greater abundance and attain greater strength among many barbarous people" (202). After witnessing the simple happiness of the Typees, Tom reflects on the unhappiness of people in civilized countries: ". . . Civilization, for every advantage she imparts, holds a hundred evils in reserve;--the heart burnings, the jealousies, the social rivalries, the family dissensions, and the thousand self-inflicted discomforts of refined life . . . are unknown among these unsophisticated people" (124-25). In Typee, "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 mort-

gages . . . no debts of honor . . . no poor relations . . . no destitute widows . . . no beggars; no debtors' prisons . . . no Money! That 'root of all evil' was not to be found in the valley" (126). Again, the natives of Typee rejoice in an abundance of food for all, while the poor working-man of Europe is ever "put to his wits' end" to provide for his starving children (112). Civilized men can only envy the peace and security of life in Typee for, in the valley, there are no thefts, danger, assassination--hazards of living all too common, by implication, in their own countries. Worst of all the features of civilization is the cruelty of man towards his fellows: ". . . vices, cruelties, and enormities of every kind . . . spring up in the tainted atmosphere of a feverish civilization . . ." (125). The brutal methods of punishing prisoners and of executing criminals are among the worst examples of "our endless catalogue of civilized crimes" (126). Like all civilized men, Tom apparently takes for granted a repressive legal system and police force. Consequently, he finds it an "enigma" that, during his sojourn in the valley, ". . . no one was ever put upon his trial for any offence against the public. To all appearances there were no courts of law or equity. There was no municipal police . . . And yet everything went on in the valley with a harmony and smoothness unparalleled . . ." (200). In the place of enforced morality, the people of Typee have "an inherent principle of honesty and charity towards each other"

(201). When it comes to warfare, civilized man's record of "fiend-like skill" and "vindictiveness" leads Tom to reflect that the white civilized man is "the most ferocious animal on the face of the earth" (125).

Tom's revulsion against civilization is reinforced by the evidence he has seen of the cruel encounter of civilized men and primitive islanders. According to Levi-Strauss, civilized man's destruction of primitive societies is partially motivated by the envy and despair of those who have been excluded from the Garden.¹⁹ Typee documents instances of their encounter in the South Seas. To the natives, civilization first appears in the guise of "intruding" white conqueror and the invariable consequence of introducing civilized ways to primitive people is widespread vice and misery (205). Sailors from visiting vessels and the "dissolute" resident foreigners with their "demoralising influence" are prime spreaders of corruption: their example is "polluting" and contact with them "contaminating," bringing as it did moral degeneration and disease (198,15). The scenes of debauchery and riot aboard the Dolly when she arrived in the bay of Nukuheva are clearly typical of many such encounters between the "artless" girls of the islands and hardened sailors insisting on the "unlimited gratification" of their "unholy passions" (15). As Tom puts it, "The grossest licentiousness and the most shameful inebriety prevailed . . . the poor savages . . . are easily led into every vice, and humanity weeps over

the ruin thus remorselessly inflicted upon them by their European civilizers" (15). Among the consequences of the natives' contact with the sailors was the spread of venereal disease--"one of the most dreadful curses under which humanity labors"--which had already left its mark on the natives of Nukuheva and was rife in the Sandwich Islands and Tahiti (131). The trust and innocence of the natives made them easy victims. Like the girls who swim out to the ships to welcome the sailors, the natives would rush to the beach when Europeans arrive and "with open arms stand ready to embrace the strangers," but the embrace proves to be "fatal": "They fold to their bosoms the vipers whose sting is destined to poison all their joys . . ." (26). The treachery of the European invader is hidden under a refined and polished exterior: the French, for instance, ". . . have ever plumed themselves upon being the most humane and polished of nations" (17). However, as Tom reflects, "A high degree of refinement . . . does not seem to subdue our wicked propensities so much after all . . ." (17).

Hand in hand with the white conquerors' corruption and treachery goes his vicious and wanton destructiveness, symbolized by warships which are particularly alien, ugly, and repulsive when seen against the lyrical beauty of Nukuheva Bay:

. . . six vessels, whose black hulls and
bristling broadsides proclaimed their war-
like character . . . were floating in that
lovely bay, the green eminences of the shore

looking down so tranquilly upon them, as if rebuking the sternness of their aspect. To my eye nothing could be more out of keeping than the presence of these vessels . . . (12).

The civilized conqueror has a long history of destruction in the South Seas: his soldiers "burn, slaughter, and destroy," leaving behind scenes of "devastation" (27). Tahiti was the victim of "outrages" and "massacres," while Typee itself had suffered "unprovoked atrocities" when invading soldiers set fire to the houses and temples of the valley in the course of an abortive invasion (18,26). After that attack, ". . . a long line of smoking ruins defaced the once-smiling bosom of the valley, and proclaimed to its pagan inhabitants the spirit that reigned in the breasts of Christian soldiers" (26). In those South Sea islands conquered and settled by white colonists, the whole fabric of the original primitive society is destroyed and the aboriginal population eventually wiped out. The "rapacious hordes" of colonists appropriate the land and build themselves fine new homes, ". . . while the poor savage soon finds himself an interloper in the country of his fathers . . ." (195). The newcomers seize the natives' groves and orchards and leave the dispossessed populace to work for them or starve. The consequences are disastrous for the natives:

. . . to no fine gentleman born to hereditary opulence does manual labor come more unkindly than to the luxurious Indian when thus robbed of the bounty of Heaven. Habituated to a life of indolence, he cannot and will not exert himself; and want, disease, and vice, all evils of

foreign growth, soon terminate his miserable existence" (196).

Not least amongst those responsible for the destruction of the fabric of Polynesian society are the missionaries who flock to the islands in the wake of the conquering soldiers: "Among the islands of Polynesia, no sooner are the images overturned, the temples demolished, and the idolators converted into nominal Christians, than disease, vice, and premature death make their appearance" (195). The impoverished natives are cruelly exploited; they are "civilized into draught horses, and evangelized into beasts of burden" (196). Tom cites the case of a missionary's wife who took daily rides in a little cart drawn by two islanders, one young and the other, who did all the work, old and grey: it was a shameful sight he would never forget, and he frequently saw, also in Honolulu, "a score or two of little wagons" drawn up outside the American chapel, ". . . with two squalid native footmen in the livery of nakedness standing by each . . ." (197). Having weighed civilized society in the balance and found it lamentably wanting, Tom's attitude to it is one of sardonic revulsion.

R.W.B.Lewis surely does Typee an injustice when he finds it "corresponding in mood to the morning spirit," defined as ". . . an empty innocence, a tenacious ignorance of evil, which, granted the tough nature of reality, must be either immaturity or spiritual cowardice" (134, 132). Lewis overlooks the fact that the Edenic or

Golden Age world is set not in America but elsewhere: civilized America is not immune from the vices and evils which beset the Fallen World of which Melville is all too conscious in this novel. As Harry Levin points out, it was not Melville but Emerson who regarded America as the Garden of Eden: "Such optimism was negated by Herman Melville; his vision of his country is iron in its grimness; but his ideals of felicity are voiced in his reminiscences of the South Seas. The happy valley of Typee . . . represents the antipodes of the pressure and the constraint . . . that he felt in bourgeois society . . ." (Myth 68). Leo Marx makes a similar point about Melville's attitude to America when he observes that Tom ". . . sounds less like a hopeful Emersonian Young American than like a fugitive from a highly developed, not to say over-developed, civilization" (284).

If one of the functions of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age in the novel is to afford a touchstone for assessing civilized society, another purpose these myths serve is to aggrandize to universal significance Tom and Toby's desire to escape from the Dolly, and their longings for the delights of the island.

Tom and Toby, being young men of energetic and adventurous disposition, respond actively to life: they take fate into their own hands and flee from situations they find intolerable. Their desertion from the

Dolly is the culmination in action of what they feel, and so is their, later, escape from the island valley. Both escapes, then, dramatize crises, and the significance of escape in the novel thus warrants analysis.

The characteristic movement of Typee is one of escape from one world to another. Tom and Toby begin their adventures aboard the Dolly, escape from the ship to Typee valley and then escape again, this time (for Tom) from the valley to a ship of rescue. (Toby's fate following his departure from the valley remains a mystery in Typee; his adventures are recorded in The Story of Toby, A Sequel to Typee.) The exploits of the young men provide the link between the two worlds of the novel and thereby help unify it. Their escape from the Dolly, and Tom's later escape from Typee, also determine the novel's structure and time scheme, making it neatly divisible into three parts--a brief beginning aboard the Dolly, an extensive middle part in Typee valley which is the major portion of the novel, and a brief end when Tom boards the rescuing vessel. The novel's structure may be looked upon as dialectically spiral rather than circular in form, owing (as will be shown) to Tom's development between the time of his initial, and that of his subsequent, escape: Tom flees to the rescuing ship a sadder but wiser young man.

In their flight from the Dolly may be seen the young sailors' response to civilized society: since the ship is a microcosm of that society, their rejection of the one

signifies their rejection of the other. Tom and Toby's escape from the Dolly is the culmination of their desire to flee from an intolerable situation. As Tom puts it, "I chose rather to risk my fortunes among the savages of the island than to endure another voyage on board the Dolly" (20). He sees his reasons for resolving to run away as "numerous and weighty" (20). They are basically twofold and interconnected--the harsh conditions aboard ship for which the captain was held responsible, and the captain's failure to fulfil his part of the contract. Like the other sailors, Tom and Toby had signed the ship's articles as a matter of course and were bound to carry out their agreed duties, but since the captain had evaded his responsibilities, the young sailors regard their obligation to continue serving on the ship as virtually null and void: ". . . in all contracts, if one party fail to perform his share of the compact, is not the other virtually absolved from his liability?" (20). As a consequence, they feel justified in deserting. Tom feels that there is "little to encourage one in looking forward to the future" since there is "no prospect of matters mending" (23). Even if it should be thought dishonourable to abscond without redressing the wrongs done him, he feels that this action is the "only alternative" left (23). Tom and Toby are well aware of the threats posed, both by the natives of the island and by the "fatherly anxiety" of the captain, who would be sure to offer a reward for the capture of any defecting sailor (30). Nonetheless, they decide to escape from

the Dolly, thinking that anything would be preferable to continued existence within such an environment.

Balanced in emotional import with Tom's and Toby's unhappiness aboard ship is their longing for the delights of the island. However, it must be borne in mind that when they deserted the Dolly for the island, their prime motive was to escape from the ship: the world-weary monologue of the opening paragraphs of the novel takes place on the open ocean. When the captain decides to steer for land, probably to replenish supplies, the ship headed, as chance would have it, for the Marquesan Islands. It was only when in Nukuheva harbour that the young sailors' unhappiness precipitates the idea of escape. Besides, they never intended their sojourn on the island to extend beyond the duration of the Dolly's stay in Nukuheva harbour.

Tom and Toby have but vague ideas, compounded of hearsay and daydreams, of the Marquesan island on which they pland to abscond. The Marquesas suggest to Tom a mixture of delights and dangers and his expectations of what he would find there are ambivalent and "strangely jumbled": intermingled with visions of "naked houris . . . groves of cocoa-nut--coral reefs . . . sunny valleys planted with bread-fruit trees--carved canoes dancing on the flashing blue waters . . ." are "strange visions of outlandish things . . . cannibal banquets . . . tatoed chiefs--and bamboo temples . . . savage woodlands guarded by horrible idols--heathenish rites

and human sacrifices" (5). At other times Nukuheva exercises a positive attraction for Tom, for he contemplates it in a steady romantic light as an island whose features will compensate for the deprivations of ship life:

. . . how delightful it would be to look down upon the detested old vessel from the height of some thousand feet, and contrast the verdant scenery about me with the recollection of her narrow decks and gloomy fore-castle! Why it was really refreshing even to think of it; and so I straightway fell to picturing myself seated beneath a cocoa-nut tree on the brow of the mountain, with a cluster of plantains within easy reach . . ."

(31).

In his daydreaming, Tom is representative of his fellow sailors.

Correlative to Tom's longings is his delight in the joys of life in Typee valley. When Tom escaped from the Dolly he did not hope to discover an earthly paradise: his sights were set on simpler things. Yet, like Saul who set out to find his asses and instead, found a kingdom, Tom found more in the island than cocoa-nuts and plantains. In the material aspects of everyday life, Typee not only lived up to Tom's hopes but, in the vivid contrast to conditions aboard the Dolly, far surpassed them. Reality outran imagination: the young sailors find in abundance what they have been deprived of and have longed for aboard ship, and Tom revels in the luxury and sensuality. They also find the idyllic and harmonious life of the valley a delight after their wretched

and sordid existence on the Dolly.

At times Tom has the impression that his sojourn on the island is a beautiful dream, which implies his disbelief in the reality of such intense delight. He has such a feeling on first glimpsing the valley: "Over all the landscape there reigned the most hushed repose, which I almost feared to break lest, like the enchanted gardens in the fairy tale, a single syllable might dissolve the spell" (49). Again, in an interlude of blissful happiness in the arms of Fayaway, Tom has a similar sense: ". . . I thought I had been transported to some fairy region, so unreal did everything appear" (134). Tom attained the acme of delight when, on the lake with his lover and Kory-Kory, he watched while Fayaway disengaged her robe and ". . . stood erect with upraised arms in the head of the canoe. . . . In a moment the tappa was distended by the breeze--the long brown tresses of Fayaway streamed in the air--and the canoe glided rapidly through the water . . ." (134). The idyllic setting, the sense of freedom and pleasure, the presence of heart-warming friendship and the love of an exquisite beauty, all here combine in an epiphany of ideal life.

On a realistic level, the desire of the sailors to escape from the Dolly and their longings for the delights of the island, may be seen simply as consequences of their wretched life aboard ship, but at the same time, evocation of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age in the

novel serves to give universal significance to their feelings. From the perspective afforded by these myths, the unhappiness of the sailors aboard ship, culminating in their desire to escape from it, is analogous to the ultimate unhappiness of mankind in the Fallen World or Age of Iron; it is the lowest form of "divine discontent." By the same token, the sailors' longings for the island and their dreams of its delights, express the longings, dreams and hopes of mankind in the Fallen World or Age of Iron for the conditions of Eden or the Golden Age. In the words of James E. Miller, Typee ". . . dramatizes the protagonist's search for an innocent and untouched Garden of Eden" (Guide 21).

Dreams of Eden and the Golden Age are ancient. If the evidence of pastoral poetry, Messianism and Utopianism provides a basis for judgement, much of mankind has mourned the passing of the long-vanished prelapsarian delights and has craved their re-establishment in the present or future. As Ian Tod and Michael Wheeler put it in Utopia, "Ever since Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden, people have dreamt of utopia.

. . . the dream of individual happiness keeps on emerging. It is with the the earliest form of this dream--the search for an earthly paradise--that the story of utopia begins" (9). When Tom and Toby escape from the Dolly, they do what pastoral poets and utopian dreamers have often said they long to do--flee to a lost, a hidden world where they may find the bliss of Eden, of the Golden Age.

It has been argued that the island valley of Typee, microcosm of primitive society, is a symbol of Eden or the Golden Age in the novel. Yet at the same time, Typee valley is, according to the narrator, who is insistent upon the point, a real place which may be located on a map of the world. He did not purport to write a fantastic tale about a visit to magical lands but rather a true account of a visit to a specific island of the Marquesas group inhabited by primitive tribes.²⁰ Thus Typee valley is at times viewed symbolically and at other times treated on a literal level, for Melville is also interested in primitive society in its own right. In presenting the primitive culture of the South Seas, he has focussed on the valley of Typee, perhaps because the isolation of the valley enabled it to preserve its way of life in an unadulterated form, unlike other South Sea islands which, as has been seen, had been ravaged by invaders. It may have been fortuitous that the captain of the Dolly decided to land at Nukuheva; it is no less fortuitous that Tom and Toby stray into the valley of the Typees rather than into that of the Happers: these facts are part of the *donné* of the novel. Nonetheless, there is a strong link between the primitive inhabitants of the island valley of Typee and the sailors of the Dolly, that microcosm of civilized society. One of the

functions of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age in the novel is to reveal the nature of this link.²¹

The two contrasted societies are indeed related to each other: insofar as primitive Typee represents Eden or the Golden Age and the civilized Dolly represents the Fallen World or Age of Iron, the myths postulate that primitive society represents a mode of life from which civilized man has evolved and which he has long since left behind in his journey through time. As Milton Stern expresses it, ". . . the two worlds are contrasted . . . as levels of development in man's history" (Steel 20). T. Walter Herbert, Jr., argues that in nineteenth century America the term "civilization" implied an ascending scale of societal development, and signified a state of society that stood at the head of a procession of societies (Encounters 4-5,78).²² Hence "the Marquesans were seen by their American visitors as earlier forms of what the Americans themselves represented" (Encounters 125). In Typee Melville presents "A Peep at Polynesian Life" but, by virtue of his evocation of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age, his novel acquires more than anthropological interest, for it permits the civilized reader to behold the paradise he has lost. In the words of James E. Miller, "The Garden of Eden metaphor . . . in Typee . . . impl[ies] that the idyllic state enjoyed by the natives was once possessed and lost by 'civilized' man" (Guide 28). Is the loss irrevocable? James Baird, following the teaching of Mircea Eliade, argues that it is not: ". . . modern man is not, in time, a separate

creature; archaic man, whether vestigial or dominant, is preserved in him" (7). It thus becomes a poignant experience for civilized men to encounter primitive society: the reflection "we were once like that" could lead to the thought that such a way of life could be adopted again. A South Sea island primitive society may well afford a viable alternative to civilization, as indeed the Typees assume, since they endeavour to persuade Tom to become initiated into their tribe. Thus his encounter with a primitive society reveals what is potentially for Tom a new--yet at the same time a very old--way of life, and opens up possibilities that are both challenging and frightening.

Much of the drama of the novel springs from the very real challenge that primitive society presents for Tom. It is a challenge that takes several forms. On the one hand primitive society represents a charming and seductive way of life having, as Tom acknowledges, many praiseworthy features and indeed, when contrasted to civilization, proves to be superior. On the other hand, the attractiveness of primitive society is counteracted by its dangers which threaten Tom's mental, even physical, survival. Tom's instinctive fears are aroused by primitive customs which civilized men find repulsive--cannibalism, tattooing and the taboo. The seductiveness of primitive society and its repulsive practices are seen to be inextricably linked; alarmingly, both are portrayed as essential to primitive life.

Cannibalism is presented as the most repulsive and

fearsome aspect of primitive society. The Marquesan Islanders were supposedly cannibals, but even they seemed to be inspired with "unspeakable terrors" by the "peculiar ferocity" of the Typees, who were reputed to be "inveterate gormandizers of human flesh" and enjoyed a "prodigious notoriety" all over the Marquesan Islands (24-25). Indeed, the word "Typee" means a lover of human flesh. White men seldom ventured inland on Nukuheva or mixed with the local population owing to fear of the natives, for many had suffered a "dreadful fate" at the islanders' hands (6). "Revolting stories" of the Typees' cruelty and treachery were told: they are reputed to have murdered every man aboard an English vessel that put into their "fatal bay" (25). While yet aboard the Dolly, Tom's shipmate, Ned, muses as he looks at the island: "'Oh, the bloody cannibals, what a meal they'd make of us if we were to take it into our heads to land!'" (25-26). Prior to their taking shore leave, the captain of the Dolly strongly urges the sailors to ". . . keep out of the way of the bloody cannibals altogether. . . . Plenty of white men have gone ashore here and never been seen anymore. . . . you need not blame me if the islanders make a meal of you" (34-35). Thus from the first Tom and Toby cannot overcome their dread at the thought of "that fearful death . . . under all these smiling appearances" and they never discard their suspicions of the Typees' intentions (97).

When reflecting coolly, Tom is well aware of the

tendency of Europeans to exaggerate when it comes to the subject of cannibalism in primitive societies. Books written on the subject are, he claims, frequently ill-informed, sensational and quite out of touch with the true state of affairs. These books leave the reader with the impression that in primitive societies ". . . human victims are daily cooked and served up upon the altars; that heathenish cruelties of every description are continually practised . . .'" (170). According to Tom, it is no more than a grotesque fiction to think that unfortunate sailors are "served up without any preliminary dressing" and "eaten alive like so many dainty joints by the uncivil inhabitants" (205). He acknowledges that cannibalism is indeed practised by the Typees, but argues that this is the "only enormity" in their character and that cannibalism is "not half so horrible as is it usually described" (205): the truth is that it is practised only on the bodies of slain enemies. Tom asserts further that, however horrible one may think the practice to be, "those who indulge in it are in other respects humane and virtuous" (205). Then again, when it comes to their supposed treachery towards Europeans, Tom sees the South Sea Islanders as acting in self-defence and as more sinned against than sinning. Europeans are primarily guilty, rather than the South Sea Islanders:

How often is the term "savages" incorrectly applied! None really deserving of it were ever yet discovered by voyagers or by travellers. They have discovered heathens and barbarians, whom by horrible cruelties they have exasper-

ated into savages. . . . in all the cases of outrages committed by Polynesians, Europeans have at some time or other been the aggressors . . . the cruel and bloodthirsty disposition of some of the islanders is mainly to be ascribed to the influence of such examples (27).

However, the view that the horrors of cannibalism have been exaggerated by Europeans probably reflects Tom's thoughts when looking in retrospect upon his time in Typee. During his actual stay in the valley, when he is at the mercy of the Typees, he is unable to preserve this cool and detached view of the matter: on certain, albeit infrequent, occasions he fears for his life at the hands of his kindly hosts. Thus he spends his first night among the Typees lying "restlessly" on his couch and has fearful "forebodings" of "some perfidious design . . . some horrible catastrophe": "What might not be our fearful destiny? . . . what dependence could be placed upon the fickle passions which sway the bosom of a savage? His inconstancy and treachery are proverbial" (76). One evening, when Tom and Toby spend the night in the Ti, or palace, they fear that the Typees will kill and eat them. Toby asserts: "' . . . for what do you suppose the devils have been feeding us up in this kind of style during the last three days . . . just in the way they treat swine before they kill them? . . . we will be eaten this blessed night . . .'" (94). On another occasion, Tom comes across gruesome evidence of fearful butchery, probably involving cannibalism, when he discovers the members of the household with whom he lives inspecting the contents of various packages suspended

from the ceiling.²³ Worse was yet to come for, after a skirmish between the Typees and their neighbouring Happar tribesmen, Tom discovers proof of a cannibal feast in the Ti. The horrid sight confirms reports of "the diabolical malice with which [the Typees] glutted their revenge upon the inanimate forms of the slain . . ." (128). For Tom, "the last horrid revelation had now been made . . ." (238).

Another aspect of primitive society repulsive and frightening to Tom was the practice of tattooing. The captain of the Dolly, in a warning speech to the sailors before they set out on shore leave, cites the instance of a sailor who managed to escape from the natives of Nukuheva after a week of captivity but, when he eventually returned to his ship, his face was seen to be "damaged for life, for the cursed heathens [had] tattooed a broad patch clean across his figurehead" (34). The warning is ominous for Tom, but only after he has been in the valley for some time, for he happens one day to chance upon Karky, the tattoo-artist of the valley, busy at his craft. Karky seizes hold of Tom excitedly, eager to begin tattooing immediately. Tom, however, is "horrified," regarding the proposition as "outrageous" (218). He shudders at the "ruin" to be worked upon his face, and his "flesh fairly crawl[s] upon [his] bones" but eventually, "half wild with terror and indignation," he succeeds in fleeing from the artist (219). For some time afterwards, Tom is plagued by the attempts of Karky

and his fellow craftsmen to persuade him to undergo tattooing, until he is fairly "driven to despair" (220). Considerable pressure was brought to bear to make him submit to the tattooing operation and he felt that he would not be able to resist forever the importunities of those who constantly tried to persuade him. As a compromise, Tom reluctantly agreed to be tattooed on the arms, only to be told that his face must first undergo the operation. His horror of tattooing reaches such proportions that it makes his further stay in the valley intolerable: ". . . at last my existence became a burden to me; the pleasures I had previously enjoyed no longer afforded me delight, and all my former desire to escape from the valley now revived with additional force" (220). Mehevi, the king of the valley, also initially attempted to persuade Tom, but ceased his importunities when faced with Tom's "unconquerable repugnance" to the measure (220).

To the Typees, and to the world at large, tattooing signifies membership of a specific society. If practised on a white man, it is clear that he has been accepted by the society and has in turn accepted its rules. Indeed, Tom discovers that the attempt to tattoo his face is motivated by hopes of winning him over to the Typee way of life: ". . . tattooing was, I found, connected with their religion . . . they were resolved to make a convert of me" (220). Being tattooed thus indicates allegiance to a culture alien to civilization

and therefore signifies rejection of civilized values. (It is possible, though not certain, that membership of Typee society implies participation in the rite of cannibalism.) The tattooed person is branded with an irremovable sign--the sign of a step that no civilized person may take unless he determines to "go native." Tom felt that if he were to be tattooed, shame alone would prevent his return to civilization: "I should be disfigured in such a manner as never more to have the face to return to my countrymen, even should an opportunity offer" (219).²⁴

Prior to his escape to the island, Tom knew of cannibalism and tattooing. He was, however, ignorant of the operation of taboo. During his sojourn in the valley, taboo is a matter of interest and frequent mystification to Tom, but it did not affect him personally as far as he was aware. Yet, unknown to him at the time, he was considered taboo and therefore sacrosanct in terms of the religion of the valley. Soon after Toby's disappearance, King Mehevi pronounced Tom taboo in a ceremony in which a wreath of leaves was braided about his wrist (222). This ceremony has extremely important consequences for Tom: in addition to accounting for the sanctity of his person and his possessions, the taboo is sufficiently powerful to account for the special privileges he enjoys and the kindness with which he is treated. It further transpires in the course of time that the taboo is the true reason for Tom's otherwise inexplicably

extended captivity in the valley.

Tom suspects that he is being held captive before he has positive proof; his suspicions are confirmed when he is forbidden to set out for the bay upon the approach of ships. He is "overwhelmed" by the confirmation of his "worst fears": "No language can describe the wretchedness which I felt . . . I was fairly knocked down by this last misfortune, which, much as I had feared it, I had never before had the courage calmly to contemplate" (120). He is convinced that in future "from some reason or other," the natives would put "every possible obstacle" in the way of his departure; he is never allowed to remain alone and is expressly barred from going in the direction of the sea (119). Marnoo, whose English facilitates communication with Tom, informs him that the Typees will never let him go, but adopts a "mysterious tone" when asked what motives they had for continuing to hold him prisoner (141). Tom himself was quite unable to account for his captivity: "A thousand times I endeavored to account for the mysterious conduct of the natives. For what conceivable purpose did they thus retain me a captive?" (239). He tried again and again to find an answer to the disturbing question, but all answers eluded him: "In vain I racked my invention to find out some motive for the strange desire these people manifested to retain me among them, but I could discover none" (144). All that Tom sees clearly in this respect is "how strongly rooted" his captors' "determination" must be

to keep him prisoner: Marnoo's appeal for Tom's release provokes the Typees' extreme annoyance, chills the atmosphere for Tom, and even endangers Marnoo's personal safety (143).

Only after Tom has been living on the island for many months--in fact, only towards the end of his stay-- does he actually discover, to his great shock, the tremendous impact upon his life of the taboo. It is Marnoo who, in conversation with Tom, reveals to him the strange and fearful truth: "'Kannaka [the islanders] no let you go no where . . . you taboo'" (241). If the taboo confers sanctity upon Tom in the eyes of the Typees, it also makes them determined to detain his sacred person.

Life in the valley of Typee, microcosm of primitive society, is thus seen to have a double nature and Tom's attitude to it is consequently thoroughly ambivalent.²⁵ The valley's delights, like those of Eden and the Golden Age, charm and attract Tom yet its fearful and dangerous aspects chill and repel him. Tom experiences this strange amalgam at first hand, an amalgam as "strangely jumbled" as were his expectations of primitive society and, as his fear and revulsion cannot be quietened no matter how intense the delights, his instinctive response is, therefore, to escape. However, another possibility is thrust upon him: the Typees wish Tom to continue living in the valley and to become one of themselves. Their kindness to him was partially motivated to this end, but so too was their use of taboo as an instrument

of coercion, and their increasing insistence that he submit to tattooing.

Had Tom yielded to their insistence--had he decided to spend his life in the valley and accept initiation as a Typee--some of the alarming aspects of primitive society would have lost their horror for him. Thus the fear of being a victim of cannibalism would have fallen away: cannibalism was practised on the bodies of slain enemies, not on converts to the Typee religion and way of life. Again, at least some of the horror of being tattooed would have vanished: being tattooed would be physically painful, but the anguish and mortification precipitated by the fear of being tattooed would be experienced only if Tom were to return to civilized society. Were Tom never to return to civilization, no mental suffering would be incurred by the tattoo, since civilized men would never see, with horror, his face. The taboo imposed upon Tom would also have ceased to cause him anguish should he have decided to live his life on the island, since its restricting effect would then be impertinent, and in other ways the taboo conferred on him privileges.

In his encounter with primitive society, then, Tom is confronted with a choice: he can do as his instincts dictate and try to escape from the valley, or he can try to overcome his instinctive fears--fears instinctive only to aliens among the Typees--by ceasing to be an alien and becoming a Typee. At one stroke Tom would

thereby mitigate the fearful aspects of cannibalism, tattoo and taboo. Yet if the myths of Eden and the Golden Age reveal the significance of the possibility of Tom's becoming a Typee and returning to the distant past of civilized man, they also throw light on the significance of his refusal to do so, as will be seen.

As the young sailors' escape from their ship to the island is of great importance in the novel, and the myths of Eden and the Golden Age are evoked to heighten its significance, so their escape from the island back to civilized society is important, and here too these myths enhance its significance.

To the Typees, "repulsive" primitive customs such as cannibalism, tattooing and the taboo are as "natural" as its beauties and charms. In contrast, Tom is terrified of the primitive customs but for a while he revels in the beauty and charm, knowing well that a permanent stay in the valley would mean acceptance of its horrors. Yet the repulsive rites terrify Tom only because he is civilized, alien; the Typees themselves did not appear to find the rites repulsive. Therefore the degree to which Tom accepts these rites and the Typee way of life, or finds them intolerable, becomes the measure of his identity as a civilized being: Tom's escape from the valley points to the gap--for him, unbridgable--between its primitive way of life and that of his own society.²⁶

One of the functions of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age in Typee is to give significance to Tom's sense of his civilized identity.

Tom did indeed take several steps in the direction of conformity and assimilation to primitive society, at least in his outward circumstances, by his adoption of some Typee customs:

. . . being in Typee I made a point of doing as the Typees did. Thus I ate pooo-pooo as they did; I walked about in a garb striking for its simplicity; and I reposed on a community of couches; besides doing many other things in conformity with their peculiar habits; but the farthest I ever went in the way of conformity, was on several occasions to regale myself with raw fish. . . . and after a few trials I positively began to relish them . . . (209).

These steps were taken partly from necessity and partly from a desire to please his captors: Tom adopted native costume, suitably adapted to his own sense of modesty, knowing that he "could not delight the savages more than by conforming to their style of dress" (161).

Yet although outwardly Tom may appear to conform to the Typee way of life, he never seriously contemplates the possibility of choosing to remain in the valley for life. Indeed, within no more than one week of his and Toby's arrival there, their urge to escape and their desperate longing to return to civilization are as powerful as their earlier passionate wish to flee from the Dolly. Later they prepare to risk their lives in an attempt to escape from the island and are willing to face the dire consequences awaiting them in the event of

recapture--punishment for their desertion. The young sailors' eventual escape from the valley back to the ships dramatizes what is a deliberate and fully conscious act of choice, yet one which accords with their deepest instincts.

Losing no time, Tom and Toby proceed to make elaborate and risk-laden plans to escape from Typee, although owing to his lameness Tom is in no condition to undertake the arduous effort necessary for such an attempt. It is significant that throughout his stay in the valley Tom's leg injury remains a source of trouble; Tom cannot be whole for the injury will not heal. Therefore, instead of Tom and Toby's making a joint attempt to escape, they evolve a confused and unlikely plan whereby Toby is to leave the valley to obtain medicines for Tom from the French garrison while a detachment of French soldiers comes to Tom's rescue. The plan depends upon Toby's making his way to the bay of Nukuheva, and the Typees finally permit Toby to leave on the understanding that he will return within three days with the medicines. Toby, attacked and wounded, is carried back to the valley and on recovering sets out once again, this time vanishing for good.

Since Toby fails to return and hope of rescue by French soldiers fades, Tom has perforce to remain alone for many months. At the suggestion of Marnoo, an islander visting the valley to whom he appealed for help, Tom tries slipping away by night, but the ruse is discovered

each time. Tom eventually effects his escape as a consequence of receiving the news--later proved erroneous--that Toby has returned. He is given permission to approach the bay on so extraordinary an occasion and in the confusion and indecisiveness attending the event at last succeeds in getting away.

In the course of their sojourn in Typee valley--for Tom, a period of four months--the young sailors never change their hostile attitude to civilized society. Neither Tom nor Toby comes to romanticize or idealize the quality of life aboard ship, or to see through rose-coloured spectacles the civilization of which the ship is microcosm. Owing to their first-hand experience they harbour no illusions about the life to which they choose to return, never losing sight of its misery, cruelty, corruption and hypocrisy. Life aboard the Dolly made Tom see the island swathed in romantic daydreams; life in Typee evokes in him no corresponding wishful fantasies about civilized society. When the young men escape to civilization, they have a full understanding of the life that they can expect to find. Nevertheless the note of celebration is struck when Tom sees the sea again for the first time since his arrival in the valley. The sight brings with it a concomitant feeling of release and a new-found sense of freedom, signalling the end of Tom's detention in the valley, and elicits his expression of a new attitude to the sea on which the ships of civilization sail:

. . . never shall I forget the extacy I felt when I first heard the roar of the surf breaking upon the beach. Before long I saw the flashing billows themselves through the opening between the trees. Oh glorious sight and sound of ocean! with what rapture did I hail you as familiar friends! (248).

Notwithstanding the attractions of the island, then, his confrontation with primitive society arouses Tom's fears of the possibility of losing his identity as a civilized man in the event of his remaining alive. He cannot accept primitive life as a viable alternative for himself: it entails an order and values different from and alien to his own. Even with the threat of physical death removed, life for Tom among the Typees would invite a form of spiritual death, a denial of being, akin to that which assails Ulysses' sailors on the Island of the Lotos-Eaters. For Typees' inhabitants, life in the valley is death's second self--a pleasant, painless, untroubled feast of sleep: ". . . they slumber through the hours of the night, and recline luxuriously during the greater part of the day" (82); "With the Marquesans [sleep] might almost be styled the great business of life, for they pass a large portion of their time in the arms of Somnus. . . . To many of them, indeed, life is little else than an often interrupted and luxurious nap" (152). As F. O. Matthiessen puts it, to dwell in Typee "would mean denial of the mind, and consequently . . . a retrogression to an immature state" (407).²⁷ Harry

Levin probably speaks for the majority of readers in remarking that ". . . most of us would be reluctant to exchange our lot for the kind of society . . .

[studied by] anthropology. Yet we carry a heavy burden of misgivings" (Myth 31). In the words of Merlin Bowen, the threat facing Tom is "the absorption of his personality into [the] universal blank of savagery" (16).

While living in the valley Tom has a strong sense of his separateness and difference from the natives. At least some of the time he manages to keep alive the hope that he will be rescued one day. Where adoption of native customs (such as tattooing) would interfere with his return to, and reintegration with, civilized society, he is adamant in resisting all pressures to conform. Again, when he adopts native costume, what initially persuaded him to take such a step was the notion of saving his own clothing against the time when he would be able to leave the valley for ever.

Tom's determination to preserve his civilized identity, as well as his sense of his distinction from the natives, results in his feeling alienated from the people of the valley. His low spirits begin with Toby's departure; no sooner is Toby out of sight than Tom is "oppressed . . . with melancholy" and throws himself, despairing, upon the floor (99). He frequently feels lonely and depressed, forgets the days of the week, and at times remains deeply apathetic. He endures "long days of suffering and sorrow" and feels "buried" and "hemmed in," fearing for the future (243,124). No real commun-

ication is possible with the Typees and Tom must bear his sufferings alone. The beautiful but silent birds of the valley always oppress Tom with melancholy. They seem to offer him solace in his loneliness and isolation; their silence, he feels, is like his own.

The Typees cannot understand why the young sailors should wish to leave their valley. Marnoo declares to Tom: "Why you no like to stay? Plenty moee-moee (sleep) --plenty kiki (eat)--plenty whihenee (young girls)--Oh, very good place Typee!" (241). The Typees are evidently happy with their lot and Tom agrees that for them, as for other South Sea Islanders, it is better to remain as they are than to turn towards civilization: "Thrice happy are they who, inhabiting some yet undiscovered island in the midst of the ocean, have never been brought into contaminating contact with the white man" (15); ". . . it would seem perhaps better for what we call the barbarous part of the world to remain unchanged" (17). However, Tom and Toby are not Typees and so find it intolerable to live indefinitely in their valley.

His encounter with primitive society, then, issues in a challenge which Tom rejects, a challenge to become a Typee and thereby to return, as it were, to the distant past of mankind. Tom's attempt, such as it was, to "return" is a dismal failure. D. H. Lawrence, commenting on Typee (and identifying Tom with Melville), states this idea as follows:

The truth of the matter is, one cannot go back. Some men can: renegade. But Melville couldn't go back . . . Back towards the past, savage life. One cannot go back. It is one's destiny inside one (1036).

Instead, Tom's encounter with primitive society precipitates his choice, at once instinctive and deliberate, to return at all costs to the life of his immediate past, to ships and civilization. In making this choice, Tom comes to "find himself"; between the time of his escape from the Dolly and the day he leaves the island, important truths are revealed to him about his identity. He discovers, what he had not been aware of previously, the degree to which being civilized is essential to his being and determines his destiny; he bears the stamp of civilization upon his nature. Tom discovers, too, the strength of his urge, issuing from the depths of his being, to resume civilized life since he fears that his civilized identity is incapable of surviving in Typee:²⁸ to remain in the valley is to accept death of self and the brand of the tattoo. As Milton R. Stern says, ". . . [Tom] discovers that . . . individual identity is contingent upon the individual's place in the human community of his own history" (Steel 37). It follows, hence, that Tom is desperate to escape from the valley. In spite of the horrors of ship and civilization, Tom can continue to be himself only by escaping to that world from which he had earlier fled, for that is where he belongs. T. Walter Herbert, Jr., argues that the notion of belonging is central to Typee

--a notion which he refers to as a "drama of self-definition" of the civilized identity: "The dynamic structure of the self becomes visible at its borders, where limits are fixed that mark it off from the not-self. For the civilized self, that border is occupied by the savage . . ." (Encounters 199). Hence the importance of Tom's adventure lies in its being "the embracing dramatic gesture of going to the boundary of the civilized world, encountering there the anti-type of the civilized self, and returning to tell the story . . ." (Herbert, Encounters 194). Civilization with its multitudinous faults may have brought Tom endless trouble and hardship, and it may well--as symbol of the Fallen World--be accursed, but if so, to be accursed is Tom's inevitable fate as well.

Tom's flight from the Dolly was an act of escapism: in it he denies the values of life in civilized society. During his sojourn in Typee, however, he "grows up."²⁹ His flight to the rescuing ship signifies a mature acceptance of reality and a new understanding of his identity. As Harry Levin puts it, "To learn to live with frustrations and disquietudes, to weather and sublimate them, to transform them on occasion into accomplishments, may well be a precondition of maturity" (Myth 165). In returning to a ship, Tom affirms the values of civilized life, coming to an awareness and acceptance of the heritage which he had previously rejected. Thus Typee presents both a powerful critique of, and a conscious reconciliation to, civilization.

One may therefore view Typee as a Bildungsroman, not in the sense that Tom sets out upon a journey in search of truths, but in the sense that he does in fact discover truths in the course of his journey--truths about himself as a son of civilization.

Tom's experience in the valley and his response to his predicament raise questions about his "true" identity, and these questions give the novel an existential dimension. Tom suffers an identity crisis and discovers his "authentic self," making a choice to live in accordance with it, but he cannot act upon his choice, for the Typees prevent him from returning to where he belongs. He discovers his "authentic self" not on a quest to do so, but in the course of his experiences, during which the truth about himself is brought home to him. The Typees attempt to persuade him to adopt their way of life, for him "inauthentic," although often attractive and appealing. For Tom to become a Typee would result in alienation from self, which he feared consequence accounts for his refusal to undergo the initiatory tattoo. Instead he is alienated from the Typees and suffers anguish and morbid depression from which he is released only by escaping from the island.

The final function the myths of Eden and the Golden Age serve in the novel is, then, to add a mythical dimension to Tom's sense of his identity as a civilized man, a man of the Fallen World or Age of Iron. The myths evoke the ideal way of life in Eden and the Golden Age and postulate, as has been seen, that

although the ancestors of modern man had once lived thus in the remote past, civilized man can not do so. For Tom there is thus no "going back." If Tom may be treated as a representative figure, the novel suggests that civilized man cannot choose to return to the primitive state any more than, on the mythical level, Fallen or Iron Age man can choose to return to Eden or the Golden Age. In escaping back to the civilized world and its ships, then, Tom accepts the burden of being a Fallen or Iron Age man.³⁰

Tom's experience thus throws light on the human condition partly like and partly different from that afforded by pastoral poetry. The "truth" that Melville presents in Typee is that civilized man longs to escape the rigours of civilization and hankers to "return" to a primitive state and primitive conditions; insofar as primitive society is a symbol of Eden and the Golden Age, this "truth" about human nature is in conformity with that revealed by pastoral poetry. However, Typee explores the longing for the primitive in greater depth and portrays Tom as not being able to find fulfilment in primitive society and being, in significant regards, out of harmony with its mode of existence. Civilized man in the novel is shown to be a lost and divided creature: he yearns for Eden and the Golden Age but, even when in a position to satisfy his yearning, he chooses to return to the Fallen World or Age of Iron, there to remain forever in a state of longing. In the words of D. H. Lawrence, "The past, the Golden Age of the past--

what a nostalgia we all feel for it. Yet we don't want it when we get it. Try the South Seas" (1040). Richard Ruland makes a similar observation: Typee's ". . . insulation and Edenic innocence make it an impossible place for men to live and still remain men" (323).

It will thus be seen that the ultimate statement of the novel gives secular and sadly-resigned expression to the doctrine of the Fortunate Fall. Civilization and its microcosm, the ship sailing the seas, are viewed as the consequences of the Fall, and it is on the civilized ship that Tom, for better or worse, belongs. There is to be achieved the true realization of his inner self; only there may be found scope for his destiny. The symbol of Tom's identity is not the island with its Edenic and Golden Age beauty and charm--and its primitive customs--but the ship sailing the sea, notwithstanding its horrors. Life aboard ship is unpleasant, troubled, painful and never restful. Yet its ceaseless movement, equating that of the sea, corresponds to the restlessness in Tom's soul. The sights of civilized man --of Fallen and Iron Age man--like the sights of Tennyson's Ulysses, are set on the stars and the endless horizons of the sea; his is the life of the seafarer. Life in the island garden is static and confined, circumscribed within narrow limits.

The dilemma that confronts Tom in the valley--the choice of initiation into primitive society or escape back to civilization--springs from the terms in which Melville, in Typee, conceives of human nature. In this novel, the nature of primitive man, representative of human nature in Eden or the Golden Age, is viewed as different from that of civilized man, who represents human nature in the Fallen World or Age of Iron. It will be recalled that the myths of Eden and the Golden Age reveal the link between primitive and civilized societies, inasmuch as primitive society is viewed as symbolizing the primordial and ideal society from which civilization has evolved. Yet notwithstanding this link, the view operative in the novel is that the natures of primitive and civilized men are irreconcilably in opposition to each other. This polarity of conception is reflected in the spatial--geographical--opposition implicit in the imagery of South Sea Island valley and North American ship sailing the seas. Tom first escapes from the ship to the island valley and then escapes back again; he is conceived of as belonging either to civilization or to primitive society. In Typee, Melville's exclusivist and disjunctive conception of human nature, epitomized by the initiatory tattoo, permits no blending of the natures of civilized and primitive men, of the contemporary and the archaic. No synthesis is possible --indeed, it is virtually inconceivable--given the compartmentalized concepts of the novel.

In Typee, the closest approach to synthesis of the

two natures of mankind is achieved in the scene in which Tom sails in the canoe--a form of ship--on the island lake (a diminutive sea) with Kory-Kory and Fayaway, a paradisaal woman. It will be recalled that canoes were strictly taboo to women, and that Fayaway had to be granted special permission to enter one. So ecstatic an experience is, by its very nature, ephemeral, as impermanent as a dream which at times Tom senses is emblematic of his sojourn in the valley. In the view of human nature advanced in the novel, happiness for Tom must always be fleeting and dreamlike and is dependent on his temporary oblivion of his civilized nature when, in imagination, he is transformed into a Typee.

The concept of human nature in the novel assumes that it is possible to change one's nature and therefore for Tom to become initiated into primitive society, that is to say, for him to renounce his civilized nature and assume the primitive, or, as Melville in Omoo terms the process, to "renegade." This possibility must exist within the framework of the novel, otherwise the Typees would not have tried to persuade Tom to become one of them, and he would not have reacted with such horror to the prospect of being initiated. Before him are clear-cut alternatives: he must either go completely "native" and become a full Typee, which is what the Typees want him to do, or he must leave the island and return to civilization, which is what he and Toby want to do. Tom's choice of action shows that no advantage that would

accrue from becoming a Typee is great enough to induce him to do so, since it would mean his changing his very nature and the destruction of his identity. This accounts for the horror with which he contemplates the initiatory tattooing, and the reader realizes that even had Tom elected to submit to it (and stay in the valley forever), the physical pain he would have had to endure would be the counterpart of the anguish of loss of identity, of death of self.

In Typee, the polarity of the two natures of mankind --the primitive archaic and the civilized modern--is indicative of the young Melville's relatively simple view of man. In this novel, the myths of Eden and the Golden Age do afford a link between the two natures, but there is as yet no more than an embryonic awareness of their potential synthesis. Unfortunately, as Milton Stern points out, ". . . neither Typee alone nor the Dolly alone provide the necessary fullness for complete, correct human behavior" (Steel 44). Stern goes on to argue that "Tommo's plight sounds the first note in Melville's thematic call to integration and completion" (Steel 49). For the synthesis of man's two natures to be consciously realized, Melville had to achieve the more mature conception of human nature which he exhibits in Moby-Dick.

Chapter 2.

Moby-Dick

In this chapter I discuss some of the functions of myth in Moby-Dick, a work rich in mythical allusion, and focus on the myths of Eden, and Hero and Dragon, both of which are central to the interpretation of the novel.

In Moby-Dick, as in Typee, Melville presents a critique of the civilized condition and civilization in general and, again, he uses the Eden myth in doing so. In the first half of this chapter, I advance two hypotheses concerning the functions of this myth in Moby-Dick. The first is that it provides an interpretative framework for specific sets of contrasting symbols, that is to say, certain images and concepts which have become so "myth-laden" as to merit the status of symbols. Some of these symbols, such as the island and the ship at sea, and primitive and civilized societies, were encountered in Typee; others, such as land and sea, and primitive and civilized aspects of human nature within the individual, were not.

The second hypothesis is that this same myth also provides an interpretative framework for the contrasted fates of the dominant figures figures of the novel--the protagonist Ahab and the narrator Ishmael. I argue that, by the time Melville wrote Moby-Dick, his conception of human nature had become subtle and complex: whereas Tom in Typee--a travel-adventure novel--has simply to choose between two mutually exclusive futures, Ahab's and Ishmael's choice of development involves the possibility of compromise and synthesis. Ahab rejects both, and he, who monomaniacally pursues his course, is

killed while Ishmael, who is prepared to change and to learn, survives. The nature of the contrasted choices and fates of Ahab and Ishmael is emphasized by the two genres Melville exploits in telling their stories: the presentation of Ahab's may be, loosely, termed a tragedy, and Ishmael's, also loosely, an autobiographical Bildungsroman.

If it is true that in both Typee and Moby-Dick Melville investigates the condition of civilized man, it is also true that in Moby-Dick he probes more deeply, probing with passionate concern the nature of the eternal human predicament. Ahab pursuing Moby-Dick--to him the incarnation of evil--attains a dimension beyond that of a representative of civilization: he is a man opposing the outrageousness at the centre of things.

In order thus to deepen the import of his enquiry, Melville brings further mythical material to bear. In the second half of this chapter I demonstrate his evocation of a hitherto unexploited element of the Eden myth, and his introduction of the myths of Hero and Dragon. The third hypothesis of this chapter is that the prediction in Genesis of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent is recalled to serve several functions. The most important is to illuminate Ahab's sense of Moby Dick as evil incarnate and, perhaps accounting for his motive, his consequent adoption of a mythical role in his attack on the White Whale. At the same time, evocation of this fresh element in the Eden myth affords, in accordance with the Christian

interpretation of the prediction, grounds for an ironic judgement of Ahab.

The last hypothesis advanced in this chapter posits that the myths of Hero and Dragon, to which the narrator explicitly refers, mainly enable the reader to see the chase in a critical perspective and help him draw his own conclusions about the significance of both *Moby Dick* and Ahab. These myths may also illuminate Ahab's sense of the justice and heroic nature of his hunt--but this is a matter for debate.

1 The Symbols of the Novel

The first hypothesis posited is that one of the functions of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age is to provide an interpretative framework for sets of myth-laden symbols in the novel. After having read Typee, the reader of Moby-Dick experiences a sense of familiarity encountering some of them. Thus, Typee is set in the South Sea island, Typee; in Moby-Dick, Queequeg is a native of Kokovoko, another South Sea island, albeit "one not down in any map; true places never are" (ed. Hayford, Moby-Dick 56).¹ In Typee the island valley is a microcosm of primitive society; in Moby-Dick Queequeg,

in spite of having left his island for a while in order to "see the world," is essentially a representative of primitive society. In Typee the opening scenes take place aboard the Dolly, a whaling vessel, while most of the action of Moby-Dick occurs aboard the Pequod, also a whaler. In Typee the Dolly is a microcosm of civilized society; in Moby-Dick the same is true of the Pequod with its hierarchically organized crew (some of them born in primitive societies) and its despotic captain.

In the discussion of Typee it was argued that the island and ship, as well as primitive and civilized society, should be considered as symbols the significance of which may be seen in the light of myth. Thus the island valley and primitive society are parallel symbols of Eden or the Golden Age, while the ship and civilized society are parallel symbols of the Fallen World or the Age of Iron.

In Moby-Dick Melville again uses these sets of contrasting symbols--island and ship, primitive and civilized society--and I suggest that familiarity with Typee can provide the key to their significance:² they too should be viewed as symbols which may be interpreted in the light of the myths of Eden and the Golden Age, since provision of an interpretative framework is a function of these myths in Moby-Dick.³ When in Moby-Dick Melville re-introduces the sets of contrasting symbols he had used in Typee, their significance for him, having

been determined by the myths evoked in that novel, is already "fixed" and personal." The evolution of personal symbolism is not a phenomenon unique to Melville: David Perkins observes of the Romantic poets that ". . . images recur in the work of a writer and bring associations from the poems or passages in which they had been used before; these images thus acquire increasing depth of implication and in them the writer gradually develops a personal symbolism" (11). For Melville, these sets of symbols are "myth-laden": they carry implicit allusions to the myths of Eden and the Golden Age, the myths which give them significance. As R.W.Short puts it, "the language of Melville's artistic strategy" is to use symbols and myth: "Melville's method . . . allows his symbols to accumulate meanings in the course of their use, as they knock about in his myth-world . . ." (104, 111).

This suggestion is reinforced by the recurrence of some of these symbols--the ship, primitive society, civilized society--in Billy Budd, Sailor, where once again they occur in conjunction with explicit use of the Eden myth, as will be seen.⁴ It may be claimed that for Melville, in Typee and Billy Budd, Sailor, images and concepts are transformed into symbols, given significance, by virtue of their roles in a myth or myths. One may thus speculate that, for example, if the ship is a micro-cosm of civilized society and both ship and civilized society serve as parallel symbols of the Fallen World

or the Age of Iron in Typee and Billy Budd, Sailor, then it is probable that in Moby-Dick too the ship and civilized society will be parallel symbols of the Fallen World or Age of Iron.

Evidence supporting that claim that, in Moby-Dick, the myths of Eden and the Golden Age provide an interpretative framework for the sets of symbols under discussion is not restricted to acknowledgement of use of these symbols in Typee and Billy Budd, Sailor. It was pointed out, in the discussion of Typee, that the island as symbol of Eden or the Golden Age, like the ship as symbol of the Fallen World or the Age of Iron, have their origins in myth and ancient literature. Similarly it was noted that primitive society, symbolical of Eden or the Golden Age and civilized society, symbolical of the Fallen World or the Age of Iron, owe much to myth and literature. Yet the background of myth and literature is no less operative for Moby-Dick and is as validly explanatory of its symbols as it is of those in Typee. When island, ship, primitive and civilized society appear in Moby-Dick, the same background of myth and literature is adequate to give them symbolic significance: thus the reader of Moby-Dick need not depend on knowledge of the use of these symbols in Typee and Billy Budd, Sailor to discern the ship, for example, to be a symbol of the Age of Iron and by analogy of the Fallen World. Further, in Moby-Dick, as will be demonstrated, such an interpretation of the symbolism of the ship coheres with,

and is reinforced by, that of the sea as established by Old Testament traditions and myths, since analysis of these reveals that the sea may be taken as symbolical of the Fallen World.

Thus far the parallel, in Melville's usage, between the myth of the Golden Age and that of Eden has, necessarily, been made explicit but in further examination of Moby-Dick it need not be. Although in the novel the myth of the Golden Age and Age of Iron does endorse and --notably as regards the ship--account for the significance of certain symbols, that myth is subsumed by the Eden myth which is more consistently and importantly evoked. Henceforward in the discussion of Moby-Dick's symbolism, therefore, to avoid cluttering the argument references to the Golden and Iron Ages will only be implied.

If one accepts that the Eden myth provides an interpretative framework for the symbols under discussion, Moby-Dick is thereby illuminated. To consider the novel in the light of these myth-laden symbols is not the only way of understanding the work, but it does permit a consistent reading and does reveal the novel's coherence particularly as, in Moby-Dick, this myth serves other functions as well.

To substantiate the claim that, in Moby-Dick, the sea may be viewed as a symbol of the Fallen World, one

must consider the significance of the sea in the context of the traditions and myths of the Old Testament, the main, if not the sole, source of the concept of the Fallen World--a concept which, at the outset, must be examined.

The adjective "fallen," as applicable to Adam and Eve (and their descendants), does not occur in Genesis but is used by biblical commentators and men of letters to describe the supposed changed spiritual status of mankind after Adam and Eve had defied God by eating the forbidden fruit. The expression "the Fallen World" is also not biblical; thereby commentators and authors imply, in general, the depravity of post-lapsarian life or, specifically, the degeneration of nature consequent on God's cursing the earth as part of his punishment of Adam and Eve: ". . . cursed is the ground for thy sake . . . Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee . . ." (Genesis 3:17-18).⁵ Thorns and thistles have come to symbolize the inhospitality of the environment and the pain and hardship of life in the Fallen World, a world which fallen man is held to deserve.⁶

It is not clear what the earth outside Eden was like prior to the Fall but it was, probably, beautiful and fertile since God saw his creation as "good." A curse pronounced by an omnipotent God implies subsequent deterioration so it can be conjectured that originally there were in the world either no thorns and thistles or

few and that the landscape was park-like. After the Fall the change in the character of the landscape is, presumably, what accounts for the import of "Fallen" in in the phrase "the Fallen World."

Once again in Genesis, in the time of Noah, God, to punish the wickedness of fallen man, employed nature (" . . . all the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened" (Genesis 7:11)) until an all-destroying sea, the great Flood, covered the earth. Ubiquitous water, limitless ocean, the consequence of God's wrath, thus represents the environment at its most hostile to man and so symbolizes the Fallen World at its worst. Significantly, the Flood destroys the Garden of Eden (Milton 9:lines 826-831). It is only God's vow and covenant with Noah--"I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake . . . and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Genesis 8:21,9:15)--that ensure that life may be resumed. The divine covenant links cursing of the ground (as after the Fall) with the destructive waters of the Flood: like the thorns and thistles, the sea becomes symbolical of man's fallen condition.⁷

In the argument above, the deduction of the sea's symbolical significance has been made with due respect to the orthodox religious principles of Genesis: the unitary nature of God and the concept of creatio ex nihilo have been assumed and there has been no suggestion that the Fallen World is "evil": it cannot be, since

nature (as opposed to man) having neither spirit nor free will is entirely passive and hence subject to the divine will. However, the significance of the sea as symbolic of the Fallen World (albeit evoking different connotations) can also be detected by examining the Old Testament in another way, that is to say, by considering the commonly acknowledged evidence of the influence, or residual traces, of pre-Hebraic mythology.

The view of nature discernible in the cosmogonies of pagan mythology is distinct from that of Genesis: neither the notion of monotheism nor the concept of creatio ex nihilo is entertained. Of those cosmogonies, the most important as far as its influence on Genesis is concerned is the Enuma Elish, the sacred Babylonian creation epic. In accordance with the assumptions of pagan cosmogony, creation in the Enuma Elish is seen as the imposition of order upon chaos, rather than as creatio ex nihilo: even prior to the creation of heaven and earth, matter is taken as existing. This matter, from which the world is formed, is water: it is independent of the existence of the "creator" god, Marduk, who himself was "created" of its substance. As order is personified in the god Marduk so, too, chaos, personified in the goddess Tiamat, is conceived of as having spirit and hence capable of resisting the will of the creator. Thus the imposition of order upon chaos entails an epic battle between the gods, a theomachia, which is very different from the divine fiat of Genesis.

The goddess Tiamat is simultaneously conceived of

as chaos, as primeval matter, as the ocean, and as a dragon of monstrous proportions. Thus the creation of the earth signals the victory of Marduk over Tiamat, following which the dragon is sliced in half: one half becomes the heavens and the other half the matter of the earth. Tiamat had originally been the salt-water ocean, the waters of which had co-mingled with those of the masculine sweet-water ocean, personified as the god Apsu. Thus the slaying of Tiamat and her separation into the heavens and the matter of the earth could also be represented as the separation of "the waters which were under the firmament" from "the waters which were above the firmament," as in Genesis (1:7). As Robert Graves and Raphael Patai express it, "The Babylonian Marduk, when slicing Tiamat in two, was really separating her from Apsu, God of the Upper Waters" (Hebrew 30).

The concept of order in opposition to chaos is readily assimilated to that of good opposing evil. It is thus but one step from Tiamat's doing battle with Marduk to seeing her as evil and, thus, the sea as evil too: in Enuma Elish the sea symbolizes the resistance of eternal and chaotic matter to the imposition of form, and hence the force of evil in the universe. Platonic cosmogony, like other pagan ones, viewed matter, equivalent to the sea in Babylonian myth, in a similar light.

It is generally agreed that the author or final editor of Genesis was familiar with Enuma Elish (Spiegel xxii-xxiii; Graves, Hebrew 21-22, 30-31). The resemblance between the account of creation in Genesis and the

Babylonian epic is closest in the notion that the deep ("tehom") is divided into two as was Tiamat, to separate the upper from the lower waters. Some commentators argue that there is a linguistic affinity between "tehom" and "Tiamat" (Cassuto 23; Graves, Hebrew 31(4); Sarna 22). Naturally, the notion of the sea as evil and rebelling against the will of God is not advanced in Genesis: the pagan animistic conception of the sea cannot be admitted, for since the sea is viewed as created without spirit and, so, without will, its rebellion is impossible. Indeed, Cassuto argues to the anti-mythological bent of Genesis by it specifically mentioning the creation of the sea, markedly different from Babylonian cosmogony (39). Nevertheless in other books of the Old Testament there are numerous references to God's crushing the rebellion of the sea (Cassuto 8-12, 36-38; Graves, Hebrew 29(c), 31(3), 32(7)-33(11), 47(b)). Several examples will suffice:

. . . thou breakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou breakest the heads of leviathan in pieces . . . (Psalm 74:13-14);

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? (Isaiah 51:9);

With his strong arm he cleft the sea-monster, and struck down the Rahab by his skill. At his breath the skies are clear, and his hand breaks the twisting sea-serpent (New, Job 26: 12-13).⁸

Commentators generally tend to view these passages either as unexcised material drawing on earlier and uncanonical texts or traditions or as examples of poetic use of

language, displaying knowledge of earlier myths but not to be taken literally. Cassuto postulates the existence of lost Hebrew narrative poems about the creation, works which ". . . bridged the gap between the poems of the non-Israelites and the myths alluded to in the Bible" (9; Ginzberg, Law 63).

In addition, as students of the Old Testament have demonstrated, the tradition of the sea's rebellion against the will of God has persisted in Jewish folk-tale and legend (Ginzberg, Legends 6-7; Cassuto 38-39; Graves, Hebrew 40-42,47). As Cassuto expresses it:

. . . the sea and the rivers and their helpers, who rebelled against their Creator, became among the Israelites symbols of the forces of wickedness, whilst God's victory over them foreshadowed the final triumph of absolute good over the principle of evil in the end of days, as we read in Isaiah xxvii 1: In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea (141).

As Lawrance Thompson puts it, "In Hebrew mythology, the sea is repeatedly represented as the element of disorder and of chaos: a howling infinite. More than that, the Hebrews doubled their symbolism, by representing disorder and chaos in the shape of that hideous sea monster, Leviathan" (171). It is no doubt for this reason that in eschatological visions the seas vanish as, for example, in Revelation: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (21:1).⁹

The heady notion of the sea's rebellion against the

Creator is difficult to entertain for the religious reader of the Old Testament, for the sea is no longer a goddess and the days of theomachia are over. Nevertheless, the notion of the rebellious sea lurks behind one view of the sea as symbol of the Fallen World, and echoes remain of Babylonian animistic myth. There is hence a parallel between the record of Adam's defiance of the Deity and the archaic memories of the rebellion of the sea, a rebel, even if not divine, at least possessed of spirit and free will.

There are two traditions of the sea, then, to be discerned in the Old Testament and, correspondingly, two notions of the sea as symbol of the Fallen World. One is in line with the overt teaching of Genesis, whereby the sea of the Flood is conceived of as inanimate: it is only in consequence of the wickedness of mankind in Noah's time that the earth is submerged and the sea becomes a symbol of the Fallen World. The other notion of this symbol is based on a covert tradition originally derived from paganism, or manifesting pagan influences: in this the sea is conceived of animistically and, in rebelling, it incurs a fall, though prior and independent, yet parallel to that of Adam and Eve. Thus both the view of the sea as inanimate and that of the sea as possessed of spirit and rebellious, point to the sea in Old Testament tradition as symbol of the Fallen World.¹⁰

Although in terms of both Old Testament traditions it may be argued that the sea in Moby-Dick be interpreted as a symbol of the Fallen World, an objection may be raised that Melville, in writing the novel, may not have been conscious of this symbolic significance. Would such an objection, if true, invalidate the suggested interpretation of the symbol of the sea in Moby-Dick? I would argue not, challenging the notion that Melville's supposed unconsciousness of the significance of his symbols affects their interpretation. Certainly, if a writer is conscious of the significance of his symbols he may provide strong hints to ensure their specific, "correct," interpretation, but his unconsciousness of their significance does not prohibit his employment of symbols in his work. In the creation of visual art in general and child art in particular and, above all, in dreaming, even total unconsciousness of their significance does not in any way inhibit the use of symbols.

The detection and interpretation of symbols is an observer's, reader's, critic's prerogative. The very terms "symbol" and "significance" belong to the critic's vocabulary, not the author's; it is the critic who interprets symbols, analysing the significance he finds in them. However, such interpretative activity is to be distinguished from enquiry into the author's consciousness of the significance of his symbols. If consciousness of symbolic significance is not mandatory for the author, nor is knowledge of literary traditions or myths which--a critic may claim--give significance to that

author's symbols; in principle, such knowledge is, for an author, not more important or relevant than his consciousness of the significance of his symbols. The critic's field of operation is the literary text (to which he has every access), not the author's consciousness (to which the critic may have no access at all). When a critic interprets an author's symbols in the light of literary traditions or myths, he cites these as affording evidence to support his interpretation, but there is, consequently, nothing sacrosanct about it: his interpretation must stand the same tests as any others--tests of fidelity to the text, illumination, plausibility, coherence and consistency.

It is possible that Melville, when writing Moby-Dick, was familiar with the tradition of the rebellion of the sea, but it is also likely that he was not. In the "Extracts" (2) he quotes from Isaiah:

"In that day, the Lord with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (27:1).

This is the sort of text that commentators seize upon as evidence of the rebellion of the sea (as Cassuto does, as seen), but it is not clear whether or not Melville saw the text in this light; he may well not have. More to the point, the narrator refers to the sea as follows: "No mercy, no power but its own controls it. Panting and snorting like a mad battle steed that has lost its rider, the masterless ocean overruns the globe" (234). This

passage refers to the sea as if it were autonomous, with the possible implication, depending upon the reader's frame of reference, that it is not ruled by God. The evidence from the text is inconclusive, so that one cannot pronounce upon Melville's knowledge of the tradition of the sea's rebellion.

There can be no doubt, however, that Melville was familiar with the tradition of the Deluge and, as may be seen in the novel, he was very conscious of the sea in that context. As the narrator observes, "Yea, foolish mortals, Noah's flood is not yet subsided; two thirds of the fair world it yet covers" (235). Ahab, musing upon the sea, sees it as "the same to Noah as to me" (462). The hunting of whales is put into the context of the Flood: whalemens conduct business upon the seas "which a Noah's flood would not interrupt" (63). Whaling ships are compared to the ark, as is the Pequod--an ironic allusion, since all aboard the ark survived. In the same vein, the carpenter of the Pequod is like one of the crew of the ark, while Ahab and Fedallah seem to the narrator like "the last men in a flooded world" (410). The whale, too, is seen in relation to the Flood: it is "the mightiest animated mass that has survived the flood" (62); "In Noah's flood he despised Noah's Ark; and if ever the world is to be again flooded, like the Netherlands, to kill off its rats, then the eternal whale will still survive . . ." (385).

Even if Melville were unfamiliar with both tradit-

ions of the sea in the Old Testament, a critic who was acquainted with them could nonetheless suggest that the sea in Moby-Dick be viewed as a symbol of the Fallen World. As it is, Melville's references in Moby-Dick to at least one of the traditions--that of the Flood--confirms the suggested interpretation of the symbol of the sea.

Outside the novel yet further evidence may be found of Melville's awareness of the sea as symbol of the Fallen World if one considers his experience as recorded in Typee and also, possibly, his reading. To the extent that Typee is autobiographical, it is more than likely that Melville stumbled by chance on the sea as symbol of the Fallen World. Whereas his experience of a South Sea island led him to see it as suggestive of Eden, it is possible that, by the elementary logic of contraries, he should come to think of the sea--and ships--as suggestive of the Fallen World. Then again, Melville's reading may well have endorsed the association of Eden with an island (or land encircled by the ocean) and the Fallen World with the sea: at the time of writing Moby-Dick he is known to have been familiar with The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle (ed. Des Maizeux note 1, 103).¹¹ Here too, by the logic of contraries, the sea is linked with the Fallen World.

Whether from experience, reading, the vagaries of chance, deep thought, or a combination of these factors, Melville lighted--initially in Typee, subsequently in Moby-Dick--upon the sea as symbol of the Fallen World.

To the extent that chance and experience led him to do so, Melville's intuitive sensibility must indeed have been remarkable.

It was claimed that the Eden myth provides an interpretative framework for sets of contrasting symbols in Moby-Dick--island and ship at sea, primitive and civilized societies. The justification for such a claim rests on Melville's use of these symbols in Typee (some of which are used again in Billy Budd, Sailor) as well as on the background of myth and literature in which these symbols have their origin and which gives them significance--a background as valid for Moby-Dick as for Typee, and one no less valid for Billy Budd, Sailor. Since the sea is so important a symbol in Moby-Dick, particular attention has been paid to its symbolical significance in the light of the traditions and myths of the Old Testament. I shall now illustrate, by analysis of the text, the hypothesis that the Eden myth provides an interpretative framework for these sets of symbols in Moby-Dick. The set of symbols chosen for illustration includes island, sea and land, the land being encountered in Moby-Dick but not in Typee. I shall subsequently illustrate the hypothesis by a set of contrasting symbols not found in Typee--that of civilized and primitive aspects of human nature.

In Moby-Dick the land, like island and sea, functions symbolically but, inasmuch as it comprises the

"frightful" in addition to the "good" places of the earth, it has dual significance. In the light of their moral-cum-psychological import, all these "geographical" symbols of the novel can be seen to present a range of value, from absolute good to absolute evil--from the idyllic island to the dreadful sea, with the "good" and the "frightful places" of the earth between, the good places approximating to the island and the frightful to the sea.¹²

The imaginary South Sea island of Kokovoko is the birthplace of Queequeg, the representative in the novel of primitive society. (Tashtego and Daggoo have no such function. To use James Baird's terminology, Queequeg is an archetypal Polynesian wise man, whereas "Tashtego and Daggoo are not archetypal wise men at all; they are characters introduced for the sake of structure" (227, 240).) The natural conjunction of South Sea island and primitive society leads one to suspect that, in Moby-Dick as in Typee, the South Sea island is a symbol of Eden. It is interesting to note that Daniel Hoffman implies as much in asserting that Queequeg is an "unfallen man" and that "Queequeg, prefigured by Typee . . . is the final elixir of Melville's own awakening --among the unfallen . . . Polynesians . . ." (Form 264,265). Significantly, W. H. Auden refers to Queequeg as "the Prelapsarian savage" (52).

Edenic imagery is suggested in the narrator's reference to an "insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy" (236). It is also suggested in a reference to

what is, presumably, an island surrounded by the "tornadoed Atlantic": the narrator remarks that ". . . deep down and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy" (326). Referring to the "insular Tahiti," the narrator adds: "Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return!" (236). This injunction suggests that departure from Eden is irrevocable. Whether the injunction is addressed to mankind in general (the primitive island symbolizing Eden) or to the individual (childhood innocence then equated to Eden), departure from the island always signifies loss of innocence and bliss and entails, symbolically, the setting out on a ship to sail the seas.

By the same token, the journey to the next world also involves a sea-voyage to a primitive island, a "return journey," for paradise is conceived as a heavenly Eden. Thus the narrator, referring to the deceased Samuel Enderby, remarks that he ". . . must long ago have slipped his cable for the great South Sea of the other world" (370). The custom among the South Sea islanders is to put into practice this conception, which is consistent with their cosmology: they stretch out a dead warrior in his canoe and leave him to be ". . . floated away to the starry archipelagoes; for not only do they believe that the stars are isles, but that far beyond all visible horizons, their own mild, uncontinented seas, interflow with the blue heavens . . ." (396).¹³ In similar vein, when Queequeg appears to be dying, ". . . the ocean's invisible flood-tide

lifted him higher and higher towards his destined heaven" (396). The eternal peace of death is to be found in ". . . the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more" (406).

The departure by ship from the primitive island--associated with Eden--signifies initiation into civilization, associated with the Fallen World. It will be recalled that, in Typee, this transition can be seen as a process of evolution even though, for the members of South Sea primitive society, this is accompanied in the nineteenth century by disaster and the destruction of their culture at the hands of Europeans--who came to their islands by ship. In Omoo, the disastrous consequences for the South Sea islanders of encountering civilization is highlighted even more strongly: the invasion of their islands and the destruction of their way of life denied them the opportunity of evolving gradually into civilization. Indeed, the history of the South Sea islands illustrates tragically the notion of "no return." In Moby-Dick, the process of evolution from the primitive to the civilized is dramatized in the development of Queequeg:

But Queequeg, do you see, was a creature in the transition state--neither caterpillar nor butterfly. He was just enough civilized to show off his outlandishness in the strangest possible manner. His education was not yet completed. He was an undergraduate. If he had not been a small degree civilized, he very probably would not have troubled himself with boots at all; but then, if he had not been still a savage, he would never have dreamt of getting under the bed to put them on (34).

The imagery of caterpillar and butterfly suggests,

albeit ironically, a process of development which Queequeg pursues tentatively.

As has been argued, the sea in Moby-Dick is symbolic of the Fallen World at its worst and, as such, is ruthlessly inimical to man: it is "a foe to man who is an alien to it"; ". . . for ever and for ever, to the crack of doom, the sea will insult and murder [man], and pulverize the stateliest, swiftest frigate he can make . . ."; ". . . not a modern sun ever sets, but . . . the live sea swallows up ships and crews" (235). The "appalling ocean" with its "malicious waves," like the "tornadoed Atlantic," is a "howling infinite" (236, 97, 326, 97). Life at sea entails experiencing the most intense cruelty and suffering. If the sea represents the final reality of fallen existence, mankind cannot bear too much reality: sustained voyaging--the unmitigated experience of the severest rigours of fallen existence--is intolerable to normal men who yearn for relief, if not the bliss afforded by idyllic islands, at least the respite offered by the land where fallen man finds life endurable. Most ships merely cross the seas, retaining identification with the land: "Merchant ships are but extension bridges; armed ones but floating forts; even pirates and privateers . . . but plunder other ships, other fragments of the land like themselves . . ." (63). The whaler of Nantucket, spending years afloat, comes nearest to accepting the sea as his natural habitat--". . . the sea is his; he owns it . . . The Nantucketer, he alone resides and riots on the sea

. . . There is his home . . ." (63)--but even he hopes, eventually, to return to land. As Richard Sewall points out, in Moby-Dick Melville presents the aboriginal awfulness, the terror of the sea, relentlessly, cruelly, wickedly (105).¹⁴

Although, in the novel, the land in general is more tolerable than the sea, the frightful places of the earth are associated with, if not equated to, the ocean:

. . . the sun hides not Virginia's Dismal Swamp, nor Rome's accursed Campagna, nor wide Sahara, nor all the millions of miles of deserts and of griefs beneath the moon. The sun hides not the ocean, which is the dark side of this earth, and which is two thirds of this earth (354-55).

Here the Virginian swamp, the "accursed Campagna" and the Saharan desert--all wastelands--are united with the oceans as symbolic of the Fallen World in which grief predominates and constitutes the reality of experience.¹⁵

Conversely, the good places of the earth--the "green, gentle, and most docile earth" (236)--approximate in symbolic import more closely to the island, symbol of aboriginal Eden from which man departed forever when he embarked upon civilization.¹⁶ In these good places man may live as contentedly as his fallen condition permits. They represent a possible way of life that avoids the worst of the horrors and frights of life in the Fallen World: ". . . in the port is safety, comfort, hearthstone, supper, warm blankets, friends, all that's kind to our mortalities" (97). There are the mariners'

homes and the places to which they--even Nantucketers--long to return.

The good places of the earth are the stuff of mariners' dreams and the object of their fantasies. The Pequod has barely set sail before Ishmael imagines the bliss of return to land: "Spite of this frigid winter night in the boisterous Atlantic . . . there was yet, it then seemed to me, many a pleasant haven in store; and meads and glades so eternally vernal, that the grass shot up by the spring, untrodden, unwilted, remains at midsummer" (95). At times, the sailor forgets he is at sea and his thoughts turn with longing to the "flowery earth" in the illusion that he is at home:

These are the times, when in his whale-boat the rover softly feels a certain filial, confident, land-like feeling towards the sea . . . The long-drawn virgin vales; the mild blue hill-sides; as over these there steals the hush, the hum; you almost swear that play-wearied children lie sleeping in these solitudes, in some glad May-time, when the flowers of the woods are plucked (405-06).

It is on one such occasion that Ishmael, squeezing the case-sperm, smells the aroma of spring violets--". . . I declare to you, that for the time I lived as in a musky meadow . . ." (348)--and a flush of love dissolves his wild oath to hunt Moby Dick. Even Ahab has pangs of regret for his choice of a whaler's life and experiences longings for the land:

". . . for forty years I have fed upon dry salted fare--fit emblem of the dry nourishment of my soul!--when the poorest landsman has had fresh fruit to his daily hand, and

broken the world's fresh bread, to my mouldy crusts . . ." (443).

In his pocket, Ahab keeps a small vial of Nantucket sand.

In terms of the interpretative framework of the Eden myth, then, the "geographical" symbols of Moby-Dick-- island, good and frightful places of the land, sea--are endowed with corresponding moral-cum-psychological qualities. Thus setting out to sea or returning to land is of the utmost significance. If happiness be the criterion of choice, the island, symbol of Eden, is most desirable, yet since it is the proper "home" only of primitive man, to "return" to it is not possible for civilized man ("Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return!" (236)). Moby-Dick is written from the standpoint of civilized man so, for him, the only available choice is between the sea and the land. From the moral point of view, sailing the sea is reprehensible since it implies, symbolically, acceptance of the Fallen World at its most ruthless. By the same token, returning to land is morally good since, although they share the "fallen" nature of the world, the good places of the earth at least approximate, in symbolic significance, the Edenic island.

Notwithstanding the impossibility of returning to the Edenic island, the concept of a Promised Land **intro-**

duces hope of salvation: as the pain of exile is alleviated by the hope of the Promised Land, so the suffering of the voyage is mitigated by dreams of land and its goodness. As Harry Levin puts it, "The Judeo-Christian tradition moves from paradise lost to paradise regained, from Eden through the wilderness to Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey . . ." (Myth 5).¹⁷ Hence the narrator's feelings of "hope and fruition" when he hears the hymn Bildad sings on the Pequod's departure from port:

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green.
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between." (95).

To Ishmael, the "swelling flood" is all too pertinent as the Pequod sets forth in thickening darkness into "the wintry ocean, whose freezing spray cased us in ice" (95). Stimulated by the thought of the "sweet fields," he looks forward to returning to land, there to behold "meads and glades so eternally vernal" (95).

Allied to the notion of departure from, and return to, the land, with the corresponding imagery of winter and spring, darkness and light,¹⁸ is the import of ships outward and homeward bound. The gloom of the outward bound Pequod--". . . the cold, damp night breeze blew . . . a screaming gull flew overhead . . . we gave three heavy-hearted cheers, and blindly plunged like fate into the lone Atlantic" (97)--is dramatically contrasted, in a meeting at sea, with the relief and joy of the homeward bound Bachelor. As the two ships cross

each other's wakes, the Pequod is "all forebodings as to things to come" while the Bachelor is "all jublations for things passed" (408).

To set out to sail the seas is presented as a dangerous, reckless, deadly activity. Death is described in terms of a voyage:

. . . Death is only a launching into the region of the strange Untried; it is but the first salutation to the possibilities of the immense Remote, the Wild, the Watery, the Unshored . . . (402).

For Ishmael, going to sea is the expression of a morbid obsession with death and may, in fact, be a "substitute" for committing suicide:

Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet . . . then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship (12).

There is, admittedly, also a suggestion that, for Ishmael, going to sea may prove regenerative: "It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation" (12). If so, then the term "substitute" is ambiguous, for while it may imply that going to sea is one way of committing suicide, it may equally imply that it is an alternative to suicide. There can be no doubt, however, about the death-seeking intention of men such as Perth, the blacksmith, in going to sea:

. . . to the death-longing eyes of such men, who still have left in them some interior compunctions against suicide, does the all-contributed and all-receptive ocean alluringly spread forth his whole plain of unimaginable, taking terrors, and wonderful, new-life adventures; and from the hearts of infinite Pacifics, the thousand mermaids sing to them--
 ". . . Come hither! bury thyself in a life which . . . is more oblivious than death. Come hither! put up thy grave-stone, too, within the churchyard, and come hither, till we marry thee!" (402).

Certainly, according to the narrator, sailors are very conscious of the presence of death: they are frequently found ". . . tinkering at their last wills and testaments . . . there are no people in the world more fond of that diversion" (197). The perils of whaling in particular breed a "genial, desperado philosophy" in which ". . . peril of life and limb . . . and death itself, seem . . . only sly, good-natured hits . . . bestowed by the unseen and unaccountable old joker" (195-96). In keeping with the spirit of this philosophy, Ishmael resolves upon a "cool, collected dive at death and destruction, and the devil fetch the hindmost" (197).

Yet while the sea is dangerous and deadly, to set out to sea, if not precisely because of the danger, is also seen as a courageous activity, particularly in whalemén: of all sailors, whalemén are ". . . the most directly brought into contact with whatever is appallingly astonishing in the sea; face to face they not only eye its greatest marvels, but, hand to jaw, give battle to them" (156). Such admiration of sailors and whalemén

makes it apparent that setting out to sea and returning to land are assessed not only morally but are also evaluated in accordance with the aesthetic criterion of courage, by which the values of departure from, and return to, land are inverted: setting out to sea is admirably courageous, while returning to land is despicably cowardly.¹⁹ The association of seafaring and courage may be seen in the contrasted claims to courage of soldiers and whalemén:

. . . many a veteran who has freely marched up to a battery, would quickly recoil at the apparition of the sperm whale's vast tail, fanning into eddies the air over his head. For what are the comprehensible terrors of man compared with the interlinked terrors and wonders of God! (98-99).

The aesthetics of courage is given clear expression in the figure of Bulkington; adventure, glory and death are praised to the disparagement of returning safely to land.

The novel opens with a scene of landsmen looking out to sea. They all gaze at the water but only the exception dares to leave the land; the sea fascinates them and they gaze upon it dreamily, fixed in "reveries," but afraid to venture further (12). They content themselves with getting close to the water, fearing to fall in. The contrast between the timid landsmen and the extraordinary bravery of the whalemén highlights the courage of the latter, the clearest example of which is Ahab. The aesthetics of courage tempers the moral point of view of the novel, and the consequence is ambivalence

about both setting out to sea (morally deplorable yet aesthetically praiseworthy) and returning to land (morally praiseworthy yet aesthetically contemptible).²⁰

As has been illustrated, in Moby-Dick the Eden myth provides an interpretative framework for a set of geographical symbols. The same myth, as will now be illustrated, functions similarly in relation to a set of contrasted concepts--the civilized and primitive aspects of human nature--a set not found in Typee.

In Moby-Dick Melville develops an analogy between "Nature" (which includes sea and island) and the "soul of man," or human nature. As the narrator expresses it, "O Nature, and O soul of man! how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies!" (264). F.O. Matthiessen observes that "the doctrine of 'linked analogies' between nature and man's mind" was one of the "key positions that [Melville] held in common with the transcendentalists" (405). In the words of Daniel Hoffman, for Emerson and Melville, ". . . particular natural facts are symbols of particular spiritual facts, and nature is the symbol of spirit" (Form 226). Harry Levin points out that, according to transcendentalist theory, ". . . to interpret the analogies whereby the soul of man might link itself with the physical world . . . was the imaginative challenge . . ." (Power 14). In Moby-Dick corresponding to the sea and the island are two psychological dispositions of the "soul":

. . . consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return! (236);

. . . amid the tornadoed Atlantic of my being, do I myself still forever centrally disport in mute calm . . . deep down and deep inland there still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy (326).

One of these psychological dispositions--corresponding to the sea--is the civilized aspect of human nature and is associated with the Fallen World; the other disposition--corresponding to the island--is the primitive aspect of human nature and is, by the same token, associated with Eden. One is reminded of James E. Miller's observation about the quest for an untouched paradise: "Perhaps that 'undiscovered island in the midst of the ocean' can be found--or created--in the midst of a man's soul" (Guide 35). At times the Edenic imagery is of the land rather than specifically the island: "Oh, grassy glades! oh, ever vernal endless landscapes in the soul . . . in ye, men yet may roll, like young horses in new morning clover . . ." (406).

The analogy between "Nature" and the soul of man marks a sophisticated development in Melville's conception of human nature. The sense of human nature implicit in Moby-Dick is very different from, albeit grounded in, that implicit in Typee. It will be recalled that in Typee the natures of civilized and primitive men

were viewed as irreconcilably opposed, as much so as were civilized and primitive societies, since man in each of these societies was assumed to have an appropriate nature, man in civilized society having a civilized nature and in primitive society a primitive nature. There was a link between the civilized and primitive, for civilized society evolved from primitive, and Tom was supposedly capable of transformation, by accepting the initiatory tattoo, from civilized to primitive man. However, synthesis of these two human "natures," other than fleetingly, was not viewed as possible.

In Moby-Dick the view of man is more complex. Instead of civilized and primitive men having different natures, the more mature Melville talks rather of the "soul of man" which has two psychological dispositions --the civilized and the primitive tendencies of human nature. The distinction between civilized and primitive men still exists, but in Moby-Dick they are seen as closer to each other than was implied in Typee, and as differentiated from each other by a matter of degree.

The focus of interest in Moby-Dick is on the nature of civilized rather than primitive man, and so it is not clear whether the analogy between "Nature" and the soul of man applies to primitive men. The lack of clarity is due to the fact that Queequeg, the most important primitive man in the novel, functions mainly in relation to the development of Ishmael. Certainly Queequeg manifests the primitive aspect of human nature, for he is "still a savage" (34); there is thus an analogy between

the island and his soul. Yet there is also, to a degree, an analogy between the sea and his soul, for Queequeg left his native island to sail the seas, and so is, embryonically, civilized--"just enough civilized" to appear "outlandish": as the narrator says, Queequeg was "a creature in the transition state" (34). For the South Sea islander who had not left the island, the analogy between sea and soul is potential rather than actual. There are other members of primitive societies in Moby-Dick in addition to Queequeg but, although Daggoo and Tashtego are presented with admiration and Pip with profound sympathy, their roles in the novel are relatively minor and, not hailing from South Sea islands, they do not throw light upon the analogy between "Nature" and the soul of primitive man.

Only in discussing the novel's view of civilized man is one on firm ground, for his soul is proclaimed analogous to "Nature" and so possesses both civilized and primitive tendencies. For civilized man, the primitive aspect of human nature represents the distant past from which he evolved, yet this primitive disposition survives in him in the sense that it represents a possible, a potential, mode of behaviour. Ishmael furnishes evidence for this claim, illustrating the revival of dormant tendencies.

In terms of the analogy between "Nature" and the soul of man, the sea, or the voyage, corresponds to the civilized aspect of human nature. At the same time, the activity of thought and the pursuit of truth

are presented in the imagery of a voyage:

. . . all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea . . . in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God . . . (97).

The pursuit of truth is viewed here as the ultimate purpose of the voyage.²¹ According to the narrator, many "romantic, melancholy, and absent-minded young men" and those given to "unseasonable meditateness" find escape from their "cares" by setting out to sea on long whaling voyages (139). Reference to the philosophical disposition of these "absent-minded young philosophers" --"young Platonist[s]" with Phaedon in their heads-- reinforces the association of voyage and search for truth (139). The search for truth, specifically about the whale, can be gained only by setting out to sea: ". . . only on the profound unbounded sea, can the fully invested whale be truly and livingly found out" (378); ". . . unless you own the whale, you are but a provincial and sentimentalist in Truth" (285-86). These remarks refer to factual knowledge of the whale, but the latter remark suggests that the whale may be viewed as a symbol of a profound, fundamental and awful Truth.²² As the narrator puts it, ". . . meditation and water are wedded for ever" (13). Since thinking and the search for truth are presented in the imagery of voyaging, and since the voyage corresponds to the civilized aspect of human nature, the novel suggests that thought and the pursuit of truth are the distinguishing manifestations of the

civilized aspect of human nature.

The analogy between "Nature" and the soul of man implies that the island, or remaining on the island, corresponds to the primitive aspect of human nature. Yet, as has been pointed out, civilized man has left the island, and for him to return to it is impossible: the best he can do is return to the good places of the land, which are akin, but not identical, to the island. Hence the human activities associated with returning to land approximate those associated with remaining on the island. Moby-Dick has no scenes set in South Sea islands, but Queequeg comes from one of them and, as the representative figure of primitive society, he manifests the primitive aspect of human nature, altered, but not radically, by his sea voyage, as has been observed. As the pursuit of truth is presented in the imagery of the voyage, so human fellowship--love and friendship--is presented in the imagery of the land: ". . . in the port is safety, comfort, hearthstone, supper, warm blankets, friends . . ." (97); Ishmael discovers that man's "attainable felicity" lies "in the wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fireside, the country" (349). Since human fellowship is presented in the imagery of the land (closely approximate in symbolic significance to the island), and since existence on an island corresponds to the primitive aspect of human nature, the novel suggests that the craving for human fellowship and, even more so, love is the distinctive indication of the primitive in human nature.

The analogy between "Nature"--sea and island--and the soul of man also involves aesthetic, as opposed to moral, values. As has been suggested, the sea, or voyage, corresponds to the civilized aspect of human nature, of which the distinctive manifestation is thinking and the pursuit of truth. It follows, in terms of the aesthetics of courage, that as setting out to sea is viewed as a brave and noble, because perilous, venture, so too the search for truth is noble and courageous, because perilous. Thus, after linking the pursuit of truth with the voyage of the soul, the narrator comments that ". . . the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her [the soul] on the treacherous, slavish shore . . ." (97). Discovering the truth about the whale is highly dangerous: ". . . you run no small risk of being eternally stove and sunk by him" (228); the whale can be known "only in the heart of quickest perils; only when within the eddyings of his angry flukes . . ." (378). **Fraught with danger,** the pursuit of truth is only for the courageous few: ". . . clear Truth is a thing for salamander giants only to encounter . . . What befel the weakling youth lifting the dread goddess's veil at Sais?" (286). It is no wonder, then, that ordinary men are afraid to embark upon the voyage in pursuit of "truth."

In keeping with the aesthetics of courage, once one is committed to "deep, earnest thinking," death in the pursuit of truth is preferable to abandonment of the quest--abandoning a voyage, even if it means survival:

. . . as in landlessness alone resides the highest truth . . . so, better is it to perish in that howling infinite, than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee, even if that were safety! For worm-like, then, oh! who would craven crawl to land! (97).

Those who live on land are "timid" and "untravelled"; it is "vain and foolish" of them to aspire to any knowledge of the whale by remaining on land, where they have small chance of encountering fundamental truth (378).

In Moby-Dick Melville conceives of the synthesis of the civilized and primitive aspects of human nature as the morally best aspiration available to civilized men: such a synthesis is the moral-cum-psychological equivalent of returning to land, for while the civilized aspect of human nature corresponds to setting out to sea, its primitive aspect corresponds to remaining on the island, to which return is no less impossible. land men. The synthesis of these two aspects of human nature implies psychic integration, which in Moby-Dick is both a moral and a psychological desideratum. The ideal of psychic integration also provides a touchstone for the moral assessment of the two main characters, the narrator Ishmael and the protagonist Ahab.

It was claimed that Melville's conception of human nature to be discerned in Typee differs from that evident in Moby-Dick: in Typee, civilized and primitive

men have different natures; in Moby-Dick, civilized men --primitive men too, to a degree, potentially--have both civilized and primitive aspects to their natures. Is it possible to account for the change in Melville's conception of human nature?

What evidently facilitated the change is his postulation, in Moby-Dick, that "Nature"--sea and island--is analogous to the soul of man. Whether Melville employed this analogy because of literary influence (such as transcendentalism) or in consequence of a happy insight of his own, it proved remarkably fruitful. Were one to disregard the framework of the Eden myth, the analogy may well encourage a psychological interpretation of Moby-Dick, for it justifies seeing correspondence between psychic activity and the stirring events that take place at sea. Thus Harry Levin argues that ". . . Ishmael, in pointing out those correspondences [between nature and the soul of man], sublimates the adventure from a physical to a metaphysical plane. There it becomes a gigantic psychomachia . . ." (Power 216-17). To D.H.Lawrence, the voyage of the Pequod represents "the voyage of the soul" while Moby Dick is ". . . the deepest blood-being of the white race . . . hunted . . . To subject him to our will" (1048,1060).

Considered within the framework of the Eden myth, the analogy opens up a psychological dimension that is virtually unexplored in Typee: in Moby-Dick, the mind of civilized man is complex, for each individual still bears on his "soul" the imprint of the archaic primitive

past, of Eden. Yet the initial use in Typee of the Eden myth to clarify, by juxtaposition, and to link the two natures of man pointed to the development in Moby-Dick; the conception of civilized and primitive aspects of man's nature in Moby-Dick can thus be seen as the consequence of the process, begun in Typee, of relating the two natures of man.

What else may account for the change in Melville's conception of human nature is his adoption and adaptation of the symbolic significance of the concepts of the head and the heart, concepts important in the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne. (Milton Stern points out that although the "element" of "heart" does not often feature in Typee, "it is one of the foreshadowings in which the book so richly abounds. Heart, in Melville's books, is generally related to the Typee world . . ." (Steel 65).) It is common knowledge that Hawthorne and his writings influenced Melville: in 1850, while engaged on Moby-Dick, Melville read Hawthorne's works and was introduced to their author. In August of that year Melville published an essay, "Hawthorne and his Mosses," in which he reviewed Hawthorne's volume of short stories, Mosses From an Old Manse. Towards the end of the essay, Melville discusses the influence of Hawthorne's work on his own writing:

To what infinite height of loving wonder and admiration I may yet be borne, when by repeatedly banqueting on these Mosses I shall have thoroughly incorporated their whole stuff into my being--that, I cannot tell. But already I feel that this Hawthorne has dropped germinous

seeds into my soul. He expands and deepens down, the more I contemplate him . . . (200).

In his letters, Melville refers to reading Hawthorne and Moby-Dick itself is dedicated to him.

Of all Hawthorne's ideas, that which perhaps most influenced Melville was the concept of the opposition of the head and the heart, and in his essay he specifically refers to it. A more significant reference, however, appears in a letter addressed to Hawthorne dated June, 1851. In the course of this letter, Melville significantly intertwines his own ideas with Hawthorne's: after devoting several paragraphs to his progress in writing Moby-Dick, he abruptly changes the subject to refer to Hawthorne's story, "The Unpardonable Sin" (or "Ethan Brand"). He focusses on the spiritual condition of Ethan Brand and makes an important observation on the head and the heart:

He was a sad fellow, that Ethan Brand. . . . It is a frightful poetical creed that the cultivation of the brain eats out the heart. . . . I stand for the heart. To the dogs with the head! I had rather be a fool with a heart, than Jupiter Olympus with his head (Ed. Davis 129).

Hawthorne's concepts of head and heart are developed in two collections of short stories read by Melville while he was writing Moby-Dick--Twice-Told Tales (1837) and Mosses From an Old Manse (1846)--and also appear in "Ethan Brand" (reprinted in Holden's Dollar Magazine, May, 1851). These concepts evolved gradually in the course of Hawthorne's development as a writer: in the

earlier collection of short stories, they are found in a number of tales in only a rudimentary form; in the later collection and in "Ethan Brand" they are highly developed, incorporating a moral and psychological theory.

An analysis of a number of Hawthorne's short stories from Mosses From an Old Manse--in particular, "Rappacini's Daughter" and "The Birthmark"--with a view to characterizing the concepts of head and heart, has been conducted elsewhere (Maltz 5-29).²³ In these stories, the concept of the head and the moral and psychological consequences of its domination over the heart particularly excited Hawthorne's interest. In general, he has less to say about the heart and his attitude to it is largely implied by his presentation of the head. To facilitate analysis of the concept of the head, one may distinguish between its primary and secondary characteristics. The primary characteristic is that which is of central and definitive importance; the secondary characteristics are the moral and psychological concomitants of possessing the primary characteristic.

For purposes of this thesis, a brief resumé of the characteristics of head and heart will suffice (Maltz 24-29). The primary characteristic of the head is the pursuit of truth: for example, both Rappacini (in "Rappacini's Daughter") and Aylmer (in "The Birthmark") are scientists and intellectuals. The pursuit of science, to Hawthorne, is symbolic of a passion for knowledge which recognizes no "natural" limitations. This passion,

therefore, is directed towards knowledge which is considered unattainable and which, in religious terms, is spoken of as "forbidden."

Accompanying the primary characteristic of the head is a cluster of secondary characteristics. The seeker after "forbidden" knowledge does not aim disinterestedly to gain knowledge: he is partly motivated by the desire for infinite power and so trespasses on the province of the divine. His pursuit of knowledge and power leads to an inversion of values and he is prepared to resort to evil to gratify his passion. To him the lives of others are not sacrosanct; on the contrary, they may, if necessary, be sacrificed. This very willingness to resort to evil co-exists with the head-dominated man's powerful awareness of evil in the universe. Monstrous egotism and intellectual pride are further secondary characteristics of the head-dominated man: he has no reverence for the Deity but desires that some of the glory due to God be paid to himself. His obsessions lead him to deceive himself that his aims are capable of fulfilment. Finally, domination by the head results in the phenomenon of the "withering of the heart." Understanding of, and compassion for, others diminishes, and sympathy and love for mankind die.

Hawthorne most clearly expresses the condition of the "withered heart" in "Ethan Brand." Brand set out to discover the Unpardonable Sin and, in the course of his quest, experienced great intellectual development which "disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and

heart" as "his moral nature had ceased to keep the pace of improvement with his intellect" (314). Although, intellectually, Brand had greatly advanced, the price he paid was high: his heart ". . . had withered,--had contracted,--had hardened,--had perished! It had ceased to partake of the universal throb. He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity" (314). With the withering of his heart, Brand lost natural "human kindness" and, isolated, became "a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment"; he became a "fiend" (314).

Hawthorne has an ambivalent attitude to the heart. On the one hand, it is viewed as depraved by nature. It harbours the original sin with which all men are supposedly born. As Elliston says in "Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent," ". . . there is poisonous stuff in any man's heart sufficient to generate a brood of serpents . . ." (200). "Earth's Holocaust" portrays the unpurified heart as the "'foul cavern'" from which issues "'all the shapes of wrong and misery'" (371). The heart must be drastically purified if mankind is to be redeemed, and until such time as this is effected, as is shown in "Earth's Holocaust," evil will continue to haunt the world. Yet purification of the heart cannot be effected as long as the head dominates the personality, nor may the intellect alone achieve salvation. On the other hand, Hawthorne also associates the heart with virtuous attributes--love, sympathy, participation in the brotherhood of man. The existence of these fragile

virtues, however, is constantly threatened by the disruption of the personality consequent on its domination by the head, as is illustrated by the fate of Ethan Brand. Such domination is viewed by Hawthorne as the worst of all possible conditions: the heart, which cannot be purged of its vices, in withering loses such virtues as it had.

Characters in Hawthorne's tales who are afflicted by domination by the head and the consequent withering of the heart--and there are many--reflect Hawthorne's conviction of the morbid condition of mankind. However, as a diagnosis of physical morbidity presupposes positive assumptions about health, so Hawthorne's diagnosis presupposes a psychological ideal--the spiritually whole man in whom a perfect balance is struck between the head and the heart. As Hyatt H. Waggoner says, ". . . only when head and heart work together is there a possibility of health and goodness" (x). The necessity for harmonious co-operation between head and heart is expressed in Hawthorne's tale, "Egotism; or, The Bosom Serpent": Elliston, says Waggoner, is cured of his malady only when "the voices of love and reason (or heart and head)" unite in their appeal to the unhappy man (x). Waggoner sums up as follows: "Both the cause and the cure of Elliston's disease . . . lay in the heart, though the heart was helpless so long as it was alone" (x).

It is evident that Hawthorne's scheme of head and heart played a part in the transformation of Melville's

conception of human nature²⁴ from that of Typee (the mutual exclusivity of civilized and primitive) to that of Moby-Dick (in which the civilized and primitive aspects of human nature co-exist in each individual). The primary characteristic of the head--the pursuit of truth--has an undeniable resemblance to thought and the pursuit of truth which characterize the civilized aspect of human nature in Moby-Dick. The positive attributes of the heart--love, sympathy, participation in the brotherhood of man--resemble love and the need of fellowship which distinguish the primitive aspect of human nature in Moby-Dick.²⁵ Finally, Hawthorne's concept of head and heart, while stressing the difference between the two faculties, nevertheless assumes, like Melville's concept of two aspects of human nature, the possibility of their co-existence in an individual.

"I stand for the heart": Melville's attitude, in Moby-Dick, to the primitive aspect of human nature is wholly favourable, and thus different from Hawthorne's ambivalent attitude to the heart. For Melville, Eden survives in the primitive aspect of human nature which endures in all men (" . . . in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti . . ." (236)) and so, to him, this primitive aspect is intrinsically good.²⁶ For Hawthorne, the heart, although it is the source of love, is depraved by nature since it represents man's inheritance of Adam and Eve's sin. Melville's attitude in Moby-Dick to the primitive aspect of human nature shows to what extent his view of primitive society had changed since

he wrote Typee. In that novel Melville presented primitive society ambivalently: despite its attractions, its repulsive features posed a threat to Tom's survival as a civilized man. However, in Moby-Dick, the threatening aspects of primitive society are ignored, and the narrator focusses only on its benevolent characteristics. James Baird confirms that Melville, retrospectively contemplating Polynesia, tends to overlook "the dangers and hardships of Tom in Typee Valley": "As the symbolist remembering Polynesia, Melville the artist took only what he needed, and no more" (120). Thus although Queequeg, the representative of the primitive, engages in "cannibal business" by peddling human heads, Ishmael is not alarmed (27): he does not fear becoming a victim of cannibalism nor participating in its practice. Accordingly, in Moby-Dick, primitive society assumes benign significance as a symbol of Eden and the islands of Kokovoko and Tahiti function purely as symbols. (In Typee the island functioned both as symbol and as a real place to be located on a map, unlike Kokovoko.) The benign character of primitive society in Moby-Dick is reflected in Melville's wholehearted approval of the primitive aspect of human nature as manifested in Queequeg.

In Moby-Dick it is Melville's attitude to the civilized aspect of human nature which is ambivalent and thus, again, different from both Hawthorne's strongly critical attitude to the head and Melville's attitude to civilized society in Typee. Tom, in Typee, is highly

critical of civilized society, yet nonetheless he chooses to return to it. In Typee, Melville affirms civilization; in Moby-Dick, he explores and celebrates it. In the latter novel the narrator investigates the essence of civilization, and discovers that it resides in thinking and the pursuit of truth, noble and grand yet perilous activities. Melville's evocation of the aesthetic criterion of courage is responsible for an ambivalent attitude to the act of setting out to sea, and the analogy of the sea and the civilized aspect of human nature transfers Melville's ambivalence from the one to the other. In Moby-Dick Melville, focussing on the ship as microcosm of civilized society, manifests a more mature and tolerant view of its complex nature --more mature than in Typee--and presents the voyage as a venture, at once morally suspect and courageous, into the unknown.

2 Ahab's "Tragedy" and Ishmael's Bildungsroman

Thus far, the first hypothesis of this chapter has been presented: one of the functions of the Eden myth in Moby-Dick is to provide an interpretative framework for its sets of myth-laden symbols. The second hypothesis advanced in this chapter is that another function of this

myth is to provide an interpretative framework for the contrasted adventures of the central figures of the novel --Ahab and Ishmael. I contend that, owing to Melville's changed conception of human nature, evident in Moby-Dick, there are two very different possibilities of development available to the main characters: Ahab elects one, Ishmael the other. Their stories are presented in appropriately different modes, virtually different genres: the story of Ahab, a Faustian figure guilty of those sins which caused the Fall, is recounted in what may loosely be termed a "tragedy,"²⁷ while the presentation of Ishmael's story may be likened to a Bildungsroman.²⁸ As Tyrus Hillway observes, ". . . Moby-Dick [is] a novel that fits no ready classification" (86). Recognizing its complexity, Daniel Hoffman argues that ". . . we should find it possible to describe [Moby-Dick] . . . as either a tragedy or comic work (depending on whether we take Ahab or Ishmael as its hero)" (Form 225). Must one choose? Cannot a novel contain more than one genre? Richard Chase argues that Moby-Dick does: ". . . Moby-Dick is extremely impure art; it is a hybrid, one of the most audacious, surely, that have ever been conceived" (Novel 100). As Richard H. Brodhead contends, "Moby-Dick . . . achieves its structure by counterpointing two plots, each of which belongs to a major character" (14).²⁹ In the novel--"tragedy" and Bildungsroman--the myth-laden symbols are of central importance since, as has been argued, they allude implicitly to the Eden myth; I contend that this myth provides an interpretative

framework for the whole.

The development of Melville's ideas on human nature which occurred between his writing Typee and Moby-Dick made possible his conception of Ishmael's story as a Bildungsroman and Ahab's as a "tragedy." It is true that the account of Tom's experience in Typee may be considered a Bildungsroman--Tom comes to discover his identity as a civilized man, escapes from the island and returns to the ship, that symbol of civilization--yet, although he comes to accept what he has previously rejected and thus can be said to have developed in the course of the novel, no further development is envisaged for him. All he can do is choose between primitive and civilized ways of life, which are held to be mutually exclusive, and his choice is firm and clear. In the novel the possibility of a synthesis of the two modes of existence is not entertained, apart, perhaps, from fleetingly, when Tom and Fayaway sail in their canoe.

It is significant that, in Typee, the settings are those of an island, symbol of Eden, and a ship at sea, symbol of the Fallen World. These alternatives represent the only viable choice available to Tom. In Moby-Dick, the land (as well as island and sea) features symbolically. Its good places, as has been claimed, are located symbolically between the island, on the one hand, and on the other, the earth's frightful places and the sea; although of the Fallen World, the earth's good places approximate in significance that of the island. In terms of the analogy between "Nature" and the soul of man, the

psychological equivalent of returning to the land is the synthesizing of the civilized and primitive aspects of human nature, as has been argued. The introduction of the symbol of the land in Moby-Dick, then, coincides with Melville's more mature conception of human nature.

The dilemma which confronts Tom in Typee is thus avoided in Moby-Dick. Ahab and Ishmael encounter a possibility not available to Tom, the possibility of integrating the civilized and primitive aspects of their natures, and Melville dramatizes their contrasted responses. In the novel, the focus of attention is clearly on Ahab: in him the civilized aspect of human nature dominates, and he refuses to redeem his condition by acknowledging the primitive aspects of his nature; correspondingly, intent on pursuit of Moby Dick, he refuses to return to the land. Ahab's intransigence leads to his death and the loss of the Pequod, and the account of his destruction may be loosely termed tragic. In contrast, the civilized aspect of Ishmael's nature is redeemed by the primitive aspect, and he achieves an integration of the two; correspondingly, he dissociates himself from the pursuit of Moby Dick, and survives to return to the land. It is suggested that Ishmael's compromise leads to his survival. The record of his spiritual change and development constitutes a Bildungsroman.

In Ahab's tragedy, as well as in Ishmael's Bildungsroman, Melville offers a critique of civilization, and in order to do so he employs the interpretative frame of the Eden myth. There are two elements of this myth which throw light on Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick--the nature of the sins which incurred the Fall, and the prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent. The implications of the latter will be examined in section 3 of this chapter. Here I consider Ahab in relation to the former.

For centuries biblical commentators, in discussing the Fall, have assumed that man's disobedience to God was, if not simply motivated by, certainly involved with, pride and the presumptuous desire to gain forbidden knowledge, a desire which was provoked by the Serpent's claim, ". . . ye shall be as gods . . ." (Genesis 3:5).³⁰ Thus Milton has Raphael answer Adam's "'desire / Of knowledge within bounds'" by adjuring Adam: "' . . . beyond abstain / To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope / Things not revealed . . .'" (7:119-22). Adam, repentant after the Fall, acknowledges that he "'sought / Forbidden knowledge by forbidden means'" (Milton 12:278-79). Man it was held, was created with limits set to his understanding and any man who attempts to transcend those limits commits a heinous sin which merits death as punishment. Ahab, in his determination to understand, and confront, the inaccessible reality that underlies appearance in this world, is such a man.

As has been claimed, in Moby-Dick setting out to

sea corresponds to the civilized aspect of human nature, the distinctive manifestations of which are thinking and the pursuit of truth; within the sea, the whale appears to symbolize primal truth. These generalizations may be illustrated by Ahab's thinking and his voyage: his pursuit of Moby Dick is inseparable from his philosophizing about the possibility of attaining truth. The nub of Ahab's thought, expressed most fully in the chapter "The Quarter-Deck," is the limitation of man's knowledge, a theme which involves certain central ideas.³¹

One such idea informing Ahab's thought is the common distinction between appearance and reality. Many philosophers and poets have sensed that what is thought to be knowledge of the world may well be fallible, since man's sense perceptions are so notoriously prone to illusions of all kinds. If so (the argument generally runs), then one's supposed knowledge is illusory, and what must be striven for, if one wishes for "real" knowledge, is direct access to some "reality" generally spoken of as hidden beneath a veil or behind a façade, the veil or façade creating the illusions with which most people are content.

In a key passage of his quarter-deck speech, Ahab uses imagery of this sort: "'All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. . . . If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall?'" (144). Ahab is inveighing against the limitations of man's knowledge: one can know only perceptible objects,

but this knowledge is inevitably superficial; one can know only the "mask" which conceals something else; one can know only the appearance but never the concealed reality, for that is beyond the limits of man's knowledge. At times Ahab is convinced that there is something behind the mask. He says in explanation: ". . . in each event--in the living act, the undoubted deed--there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask'" (144). In this passage, Ahab shifts from talk of things or objects to talk of events, acts and deeds and these, he claims, are indicative of the existence of some active being "behind the mask." Light is thrown on this rather mysterious passage by a subsequent comment of Ahab's: ". . . all the things that most exasperate and outrage mortal man, all these things are bodiless, but only bodiless as objects, not as agents'" (461); the bodiless thing, that can nonetheless act as agent, he compares to the wind. The suggestion is that some intelligent and supernatural being, possibly divine, shows evidence of existence "behind the mask," existence either present or past--one which has left its stamp on objects. It is this "inner reality" or "underlying reality" which Ahab craves to know. At times he doubts its existence: "'Sometimes I think there's nought behind'" (144). Yet by and large his imagery of "masks" and "walls" suggests a distinction between the two levels of knowledge--illusory, of the facade, and "true," of

reality--that corresponds to the distinction between appearance and reality. Commenting on Ahab's quarter-deck speech, Harry Levin detects in it ". . . the challenge of a disillusioned transcendentalism, which is impatient with material surfaces, eager to probe as far beyond them as possible, and doubtful as to the results of such an exploration" (Power 218).

Philosophers in the empirical tradition hold the distinction between illusory knowledge of the appearance and true knowledge of the reality to be valueless for, they argue, supposing one accepts the notion of an "underlying reality," how is one then to know, or have "true" knowledge of it? If sense-perceptions are the sole source of knowledge, and if they are so subject to deception, how can they contend better with underlying reality than with the surface appearance? The reluctant answer is that they cannot. The end of such questioning of the reliability of the sense-perceptions and the feasibility of probing a deeper reality is utter scepticism about the possibility of attaining any knowledge at all. This position, at any rate, was that taken by such an honest philosopher as David Hume.

Kant re-thought epistemology for his generation.³² He argues that the distinction between "illusory" and "true" knowledge--rather, between illusion and knowledge--is dependent on empirical evidence, that is to say, the concepts of illusion and knowledge presuppose that one can distinguish between them in terms of sense-perceptions. He maintains, in other words, on a priori

grounds (that is, by analysis of the concepts used) that ordinary, common, knowledge of the world is perfectly attainable, and is as well-grounded as it can possibly be, and that this knowledge can easily enough, in most cases, be distinguished from illusion in perfectly commonsense ways. Such knowledge Kant calls phenomenal, since it is knowledge of the manner in which, given man's sense-perceptions and his rational faculties, phenomena convey reality to mankind. The phenomenon is, in his terminology, to be distinguished from the noumenon, that is, the potential reality that might, theoretically, be known by means other than those of human senses and rationality.

While re-instating the possibility of knowledge, Kant accommodates the old sceptical claim of the fallibility of sense-perceptions by conceding that knowledge is relative: on the one hand one can, within the limits of human sense-perceptions and rationality, distinguish perfectly well between knowledge and illusion; on the other hand, there may be knowledge which is, in principle, totally different from man's, knowledge possessed by different beings. The noumenon, then, is postulated to indicate a logical limit to human knowledge and to express, simultaneously, a belief in the infinite potential of absolute, as well as other, non-human, knowledge of the world.

However, not all thinkers were as ruthlessly honest as Hume or as thorough as Kant. Adherents of the old sceptical position who sought an "underlying reality"

seized on Kant's concepts of the noumenon as representing the very reality they had postulated and, in defiance of all that Kant had said, held it to be a metaphysical entity. What was even more surprising is that some philosophers--among them, reputedly, Schopenhauer--made assertions about the noumenon that implied it was knowable after all, in spite of the logical arguments of both Hume and Kant. Such assertions must be viewed as "grounded" on mere speculation and non-rational intuition and cannot be said to yield knowledge since they are, in principle, not verifiable.

Ahab seems to lack intellectual probity since another idea developed in his metaphysical cogitations is that an "underlying reality" or "the truth" is, ultimately, accessible to a thinker sufficiently intrepid to "strike through" the phenomenological "mask." The "mask," like the maddeningly imprisoning "wall," represents both a barrier to "underlying reality" and the limit of human knowledge, but Ahab is determined violently to penetrate "mask" or "wall" and thus transcend human limitation. He is convinced that he, destined, as he believes, to hunt the truth, is absolved from limitation: "'Who's over me? Truth hath no confines'" (144).

A third, and for Ahab fatal, idea emergent from his tortuous speculations is that the barrier to underlying reality is to be identified with Moby Dick. It is probable that, even before his "dismemberment," Ahab, profoundly intellectual by nature, had pondered on appearance and reality and the accessibility of

underlying reality, but his identification of Moby Dick with the barrier to the latter is certainly consequent on his tragic maiming by that whale. "'To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me'" (144): as the narrator explains, Ahab, in agony and madness, had come to identify with Moby Dick ". . . all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations," exasperations which, no doubt, included the frustration of his craving to attain knowledge of underlying reality (160).

To Ahab, the White Whale is a "mask" concealing an unknown mystery, a "wall" restricting the freedom of his intellect. The images of masks and walls may be related to the image of the veil covering the face of the "dread goddess" at Sais (286); all suggest limitations imposed on human knowledge. Even though there may be nothing concealed by the wall or mask, the White Whale, as barrier, is inscrutable and it is this inscrutability which Ahab cannot abide: "'He tasks me; he heaps me . . . That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him'" (144). There are distinct suggestions that, in Ahab's view, Moby Dick either represents, or is himself, some spiritual power ("agent" or "principal") that imposes, or maintains, the "mask" on reality and that, like a "wall," imprisons the mind of man in limitation.³³ Ahab's assumption about Moby Dick's limiting knowledge is reminiscent of Melville's frustration, expressed in Mardi, at the obstacles to the attainment of truth, as described by

Nina Baym:

. . . [Melville] could only conclude that someone or something in the realm of the Absolute was preventing him from attaining his goal. Hence Melville conceived of truth as in the possession of a taunter, a withholder, an opponent (913).³⁴

Ahab believes that if he is to "strike through the mask" and "thrust through the wall," if he is to transcend human limitation and penetrate the inscrutable, he must harpoon and destroy the White Whale. That he should arrive at such a conclusion makes clear to what extent in his thinking the rational pursuit of Truth has given way to a mystical and insane justification of revenge. It is profoundly ironical that, having suppressed in himself all life-affirming emotions, the emotion of fiery hatred should finally make him incapable of rational thought. On the third day of "The Chase," in a moment of insight and rare humility, Ahab admits as much:

Here's food for thought, had Ahab time to think; but Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels; that's tingling enough for mortal man! to think's audacity. God only has that right and privilege. Thinking is, or ought to be, a coolness and a calmness; and our poor hearts throb, and our poor brains beat too much for that (460).

Several critics agree that for Ahab the pursuit of Moby Dick represents the pursuit of unattainable truth or knowledge, ". . . an attempt to know the unknowable, to get behind the 'pasteboard masks' . . ." as Millicent Bell puts it (643). Tyrus Hillway, for example, analysing the significance of the pursuit, claims that what Ahab

craves to attain is understanding of "the ultimate mystery of the universe," a phrase which can be understood to signify God, knowledge of whom is unattainable by man (89). Hillway argues that it is precisely this limitation of man that Ahab "hopes to transcend" (89). He claims that Ahab, "being highly educated and a Kantian as well," is aware of "the limitation of man's power to know God through his intellect" (89). Whether or not Ahab (as opposed to Melville) is versed in Kantian epistemology is debatable: it is true that Kant demonstrates that knowledge of God is unattainable, and it is also true that Ahab is aware of the limitations imposed on man's knowledge, but Ahab never achieves philosophical acceptance of the matter. As Hillway says, ". . . instead of submitting to his weakness, [Ahab] hopes to transcend it by sheer defiance" (89). However, despite his defiance, Ahab must forever remain what Hillway calls "the prisoner of his human form and human limitations" (90).

William Braswell recognizes the significance, in general terms, of the theme of the pursuit of truth in Moby-Dick: ". . . Melville uses exploring the seas to represent looking for the highest truth . . ."; "The land represents empirical truth. . . . one must shut this kind of truth out of his mind if he is to indulge in the introspective abstract reasoning . . . which discloses reality" (Thought 63,21). Strangely enough, however, Braswell does not develop this point, nor does he, in spite of Ahab's "exploring the seas," incorporate it into his analysis of "what Moby Dick symbolizes for Ahab."

Some critics, who agree that the pursuit of Moby Dick represents the pursuit of unattainable knowledge, nevertheless claim that it is Ishmael, not Ahab, who is the pursuer. Thus Charles H. Cook, Jr., distinguishes between Ahab's view and that of "Melville and Ishmael" on the significance of Moby Dick. Ahab, in his personal allegory of the White Whale, says Cook, regards him as the incarnation of evil; to Ishmael, the whale is "a symbol of infinitely multiple significance beyond the full comprehension of any man" (61). However, Cook overlooks the fact that there are two aspects to Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick: Ahab sees the White Whale not only as the incarnation of evil but also as the obstacle to the pursuit of truth. The same point may be made of John Parke's distinction between Ahab's and Ishmael's views on the significance of Moby Dick: Parke claims that to Ahab the White Whale is the incarnation of evil while to Ishmael he is an infinitely vast, indifferent power, "the noumenon of nature itself--a comprehensive dynamic symbol for the whole immense, riddling, uncaring cosmos" (87).

The legend of Faustus,³⁵ inasmuch as the Doctor's presumptuous pride and lust for forbidden knowledge are identical with the sins that by tradition occasioned the Fall, derives, ultimately, from the Eden myth, the myth that is so relevant in the interpretation of Moby-Dick. It is not surprising, therefore, that Melville, in his

creation of Ahab, a man of obdurate pride and intellectual ambition, should make him reminiscent of Faustus, as many critics have pointed out (Sedgwick 93,113; Hoffman, Form 234,243). R. W. B. Lewis links Ahab directly to Adam, arguing that ". . . Captain Ahab . . . [is a] tormented extension and distortion of [his] Adamic prototype" (129). Like Faustus, Ahab, in his pride, acknowledges neither his human limitations nor the unattainability of truth.³⁶ Hillway analyses Ahab as follows:

Ahab's great error . . . is failure to accept human limitations. In assuming the possibility of learning final truth, he puts himself in effect on a plane of equality with God. Thus he is not only unrealistic but guilty of the fatal sin of pride . . . (91).

Ahab's hubris (the obverse of which, as with Faustus, is self-deception) is manifest in his defiance of the Deity, who has, presumably, imposed the limitations on man's knowledge. Ahab rejects the authority of the Creator, even as manifest in the most resplendent of his works: "'Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me. For could the sun do that, then could I do the other . . .'" (144).

Again like Faustus, Ahab is prepared to summon the forces of evil to attain his ends. While in the Eden myth the Serpent, unsolicited, tempts prelapsarian man, in the Faustian legend Faustus, a fallen man, deliberately invokes the diabolic power which tempts him: it is appropriate that Ahab, also a fallen man, should do likewise. In the course of Moby-Dick there are hints that

Ahab has had truck with unorthodox beliefs but, in the novel, the forces of evil are dramatically presented in the form of Fedallah and his whale-boat crew. These Manillans are members of ". . . a race notorious for a certain diabolism of subtilty, and by some honest white mariners supposed to be the paid spies and secret confidential agents on the water of the devil, their lord . . ." (187). Fedallah is described as "swart, with one white tooth evilly protruding" and it is suggested that in his veins runs the blood of the devil, inherited from that primordial time when, as the "uncanonical Rabbins" hint, "devils . . . indulged in mundane amours" with "the daughters of men" (187,199). In addition to these suggestions by the narrator, a conversation between Stubb and Flask reveals the sailors' suspicions of the sinister stowaway with whom Captain Ahab has a mysterious relationship: Stubb takes Fedallah to be "the devil in disguise" and he is described in serpent imagery, Flask claiming that his (Fedallah's) tooth is carved to represent a snake's head (275); there is speculation that Fedallah possesses a tail and lies coiled up at night in the rigging.

Stubb hints that a Faustus-like bargain was struck between Ahab and Fedallah: ". . . the old man is hard bent after that White Whale, and the devil there is trying to come round him, and get him to swap away his silver watch, or his soul, or something of that sort, and then he'll surrender Moby Dick'" (275). Although Flask accuses Stubb of "skylarking," the reader is nonetheless not

expected to dismiss these hints of a diabolic pact between Ahab and Fedallah. The narrator gives free reign to such an idea earlier in the novel by saying that Fedallah ". . . evinced humself to be linked with Ahab's peculiar fortunes; nay, so far as to have some sort of a half-hinted influence . . . it might have been even authority over him . . ." (199). Not content with the assistance given by the diabolic Fedallah and his mysterious crew, Ahab invokes the devil directly when he ceremoniously dedicates his harpoon, enacting a parody of the Christian ritual by baptizing a weapon of death in blood. While performing the "baptism," Ahab utters the formula, "'Ego non baptizo te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diaboli!' . . ." (404).

If the sins of Ahab are not only those of Faustus but those which led to the Fall, Ahab, unlike prelapsarian man, cannot plead ignorance of evil: a fallen man in the Fallen World, the experience of evil so hardens and maddens him that, striving to wreak vengeance on Moby Dick, he achieves only his own destruction.

If the wages of the sins that occasioned the Fall was death and the wages of Faustus' same sins, death and damnation, Ahab's same sins earn him death and, if not damnation thereafter, hellish isolation, mental torture and despair in this life. In religious phraseology, the commission of sin is said to cause "hardening of the heart": according to Milton, it was only the intervention

of "prevenient grace," removing "the stony from their hearts," which enabled Adam and Eve to repent (11:3-4); Faustus's persistence in his sins so hardens his heart that repentance becomes, for him, impossible; so, too Ahab's sustained arrogance and determination to gratify his will makes his heart impervious to pleas, however poignant, that he should relinquish his hunt.

The concept, the "hardened heart," is very similar in import to that of the "withered heart" advanced by Hawthorne: he uses both terms to express his notion that an inevitable consequence of domination by the head is the withering of the heart (314). In questing for unattainable knowledge, the balance between the head and the heart is disturbed. Whatever the intellectual progress of the seeker after such knowledge, the price paid is that the heart withers and the seeker loses his sympathy and love for mankind: he loses hold of "the magnetic chain of humanity," and suffers the pangs of isolation from his fellow men. Of all Hawthorne's ideas about the head and the heart, that of the "withering of the heart" as a consequence of domination by the head influenced Melville most directly in Moby-Dick; Melville borrowed and adapted other ideas from Hawthorne to suit his purposes, but the notion that domination by the head causes "withering of the heart" he accepted unquestioningly.³⁷ The conception of human nature which Melville implies in Moby-Dick accommodates Hawthorne's notion of the withering of the heart: in Melville's terms, if the civilized aspect of human nature, manifest in thought and the pursuit of truth,

is dominant, then the primitive aspect of human nature withers, an occurrence evident in the loss of human sympathy. Ahab's relentless pursuit of truth, of unattainable knowledge, then, has as its consequence the withering of the primitive aspect of his nature.

Such a withering is evident in Ahab's isolation from others and his anti-social behaviour, both symptomatic of his lack of communicative sympathy.³⁸ Ahab's isolation is dramatized by his frequent withdrawals to privacy. At the outset of the Pequod's voyage Ahab, supposedly convalescing from an accident, is long confined to his cabin where he remains "invisibly enshrined" as if he were a demi-deity, remote from men, preserving a "Grand-Lama-like exclusiveness" (93,386). Towards the end of the novel, in a conversation with Starbuck, Ahab reveals the anguish attendant on "solitary command":

"When I think of this life I have led; the desolation of solitude it has been; the masoned, walled-town of a Captain's exclusiveness, which admits but small entrance to any sympathy from the green coutry without--oh, weariness! heaviness!" (443).

Ahab's withdrawals to his sanctum indicate his election of solitude and, when he is in company, as when dining with his officers, his silent, authoritarian, brooding presence prohibits conviviality:

Over his ivory-inlaid table, Ahab presided like a mute, maned sea-lion on the white coral beach, surrounded by his warlike but still deferential cubs. In his own proper turn, each officer waited to be served. They were as little children before Ahab . . . (131).

For the mates, dinners in the state-room are ". . . somehow solemn meals, eaten in awful silence; and yet at table old Ahab forbade not conversation; only he himself was dumb" (131-32). On these occasions, as the narrator puts it, ". . . in the cabin was no companionship; socially, Ahab was inaccessible" (134). The "second sitting" meals of the three harpooners, in dramatic contrast, are marked by hearty enthusiasm:

While their masters, the mates, seemed afraid of the sound of the hinges of their own jaws, the harpooners chewed their food with such a relish that there was a report to it. They dined like lords . . . (133).

The reader is not surprised that Ahab's "overbearing grimness" has an inhibiting effect upon those in his presence since, long before he appears on the scene, Captain Peleg says of him: "'I don't know exactly what's the matter with him; but he keeps close inside the house . . . ever since he lost his leg last voyage by that accursed whale, he's been a kind of moody--desperate moody, and savage sometimes . . .'" (76-77). In consequence of hearing this account of Ahab, Ishmael feels ". . . a certain wild vagueness of painfulness concerning him. . . . a sympathy and a sorrow for him . . ." and, at the same time, "a strange awe of him" (77). Elijah's ambiguous hints merely increase Ishmael's sense of "vague wonderments and half-apprehensions" (88). Only after Ahab emerges at last from his "sacred retreat," the cabin, on a "grey and gloomy" morning, does Ishmael set eyes upon his captain for the

first time: ". . . foreboding shivers ran over me. Reality outran apprehension . . ." (109). That Ishmael's awed response to Ahab is due to neither a peculiarity of his temperament nor an imagination fevered by hearsay may be deduced from the effect of Ahab's presence on the crew.

Ahab communicates sympathetically with only two members of the Pequod's crew--Starbuck and Pip. Yet Ahab comes deliberately to reject both on the grounds that any relationship with them would deflect him from his declared intention, the pursuit of Moby Dick. Thus while at one point, in "The Symphony," Ahab approaches Starbuck--"'Close! stand close to me . . . lower not when I do; when branded Ahab gives chase to Moby Dick'"--yet on the second day of the chase, when Starbuck attempts to dissuade him from further pursuit, Ahab rejects his plea and orders his unquestioning silence: "' . . . in this matter of the whale, be the front of thy face to me as the palm of this hand--a lipless, unfeatured blank'" (444,459). Ahab's sympathy for the anguished Pip indicates the captain's potential for warm human relationships. Thus when Pip clasps Ahab's hand, saying that their palms should be riveted together and insisting, "' . . . I will not let this go,'" Ahab responds, "'Oh, boy, nor will I thee . . . Come, then, to my cabin'" (428). Yet, in a later scene, Ahab resolves to keep Pip at a distance, saying, "'Lad, lad, I tell thee thou must not follow Ahab now,'" and when Pip vows to Ahab, "' . . . I will never desert ye, sir . . . '" Ahab has to steel himself against such an avowal: "'If thou speakest thus to me much more,

Ahab's purpose keels up in him. I tell thee no; it cannot be. . . . Weep so, and I will murder thee!" (436).³⁹

If Ahab is brusque, uncommunicative, and unfriendly towards his crew he is equally so towards his fellow-captains whom he meets on the voyage. His attitude is abnormal since, as the narrator says, it is natural that ships at sea ". . . not only interchange hails, but come into still closer, more friendly and sociable contact" (205). When the Pequod first comes abreast of another whaler, the Albatross, Ahab hails her, asking whether the White Whale has been sighted, but before her captain can reply, rough weather causes him to drop his trumpet in the sea and the ships drift apart. On this occasion the weather, apparently, prohibits conviviality but it also provides Ahab with an excuse not to interrupt his chase. Ahab hails other ships encountered by the Pequod and asks the same question; if the answer is negative, he sails on. He is not prepared to consort with other captains unless he hears information about the White Whale. The "gam" with the Samuel Enderby affords the only instance in which Ahab boards another vessel (with the possible exception of the Town-Ho), and he does so because with her captain, who lost an arm to Moby Dick, he can discuss his all-absorbing pursuit. The extent to which Ahab's chase dehumanizes him is obvious in his response to the appeal of Captain Gardiner to join him in the search for the whale-boat with his twelve-year old son aboard: "'Do to me as you would have me do to you in the like case'" (435). Ahab adamantly refuses to be delayed. His

ruthless rejection of the captain's plea is consistent with the impious resentment of social bonds he has come to feel: "'Cursed be that mortal inter-indebtedness . . .'" (392).

Ahab's withdrawal from, and his chilling effect on, the officers and men of the Pequod, as well as his lack of comity at the games, all point to the withering of the primitive aspect of his humanity. Perhaps against such massive evidence of Ahab's anti-social behaviour, due weight should be given to what Captain Peleg says of Ahab:

". . . he has a wife--not three voyages wedded --a sweet, resigned girl. . . . by that sweet girl that old man has a child: hold ye then there can be any utter, hopeless harm in Ahab? . . . stricken, blasted, if he be, Ahab has his humanities!" (77).

Although Peleg admits that, since Ahab lost his leg, he is at times moody and savage, he nevertheless trusts that "that will all pass off" and insists that Ahab is a good man, albeit a "swearing good man" (77). However, it is important to note that in his comment on Ahab, Peleg, who had "sailed with him as mate years ago," describes an Ahab of the past and, presently, on land (77): he has no foreboding of what Captain Ahab, at sea and in pursuit of Moby Dick, is to prove to be.

Ahab's sin of pride divorces him from common humanity. As Hillway observes, ". . . like Ethan Brand in Hawthorne's tale, [Ahab] believes himself above and apart from other men . . ." (91). Ahab says of himself: ". . . Ahab stands alone among the millions of the peopled earth, nor gods

nor men his neighbors!" (452). Ahab's colossal egotism and strength of intellect and self-will--"What I've dared, I've willed; and what I've willed, I'll do!"--establish his tyranny over others (147). By exploiting the power and authority that reside in command, he ensures that the "sultanism of his brain" becomes "incarnate in an irresistible dictatorship" and, insistent on his will, he denies free will to his crew to the extent that they become mere extensions of his being: "'Ye are not other men, but my arms and my legs; and so obey me'" (129,465). In the words of Milton R. Stern, ". . . the crew becomes an extension of [Ahab's] will and his absolute vision. People are debased to instruments, things" ("Millennial" 56). Starbuck, despairingly, realizes that to Ahab the crew is as committed to effect his will as he is. In pursuit of Moby Dick, the crew are "one man, not thirty" and, as all the various materials that make a ship are ". . . both balanced and directed by the long central keel; even so, all the individualities of the crew . . . [are] all directed to that fatal goal which Ahab their one lord and keel [points] to" (455).

"To accomplish his object Ahab must use tools . . ." --his men: "Like machines, they dumbly [move] about the deck, ever conscious that the old man's despot eye [is] on them"; Ahab uses them, like machines, to perform his will: ". . . my one cogged circle fits into all their various wheels, and they revolve" (183,438,147).⁴⁰ Ahab can manipulate his crew thus largely because he can turn their baser instincts to his account.⁴¹ When the oath

to kill Moby Dick is sworn, Ahab's exploitation of the men is evident in his arousal of their pack-instinct: their ". . . wild eyes met his, as the bloodshot eyes of the prairie wolves meet the eye of their leader, ere he rushes on at their head in the trail of the bison . . ." and his oratory whips them into a frenzy of hatred (145).

The impact of Ahab's will on the crew is most forcibly expressed in terms of magnetism, explosion and electricity. The narrator refers to Ahab's "magnetic . . . ascendancy" over his first mate "so long as Ahab kept his magnet at Starbuck's brain" (183). In the chapter, "Sunset," Ahab assesses his crew: ". . . like so many ant-hills of powder, they all stand before me; and I their match"; in "Dusk," Starbuck feels Ahab has "drilled deep down, and blasted all my reason out of me!" (147,148). As Ahab grasps the crossed lances of the mates he seems to transmit to them "the same firey emotion accumulated within the Leyden jar of his own magnetic life" (146). When the typhoon strikes the Pequod Ahab clasps the conducting links and audaciously pits his fiery spirit against the fire of heaven and, later, when he replaces the compass needle, reversed by the storm's electricity, with one of his own contriving, it is as though magnetized by his galvanic personality and, by pointing true east in the direction of Moby Dick, obeys his will: "'Look ye, for yourselves, if Ahab be not lord of the level loadstone!'" (425). The narrator observes, "In his fiery eyes of scorn and triumph, you then saw Ahab in all his fatal pride" (425).

If Ahab is a fallen man in the Fallen World, it is in accordance with the symbolic import of ship, voyage and the sea in the novel that he and his ship (with its crew whom he so dominates) should be identified, and that his "tornadoed" being and forever outward-bound voyage should relate him to the sea and all it signifies. As Leo Marx observes, "[The Pequod] is Ahab's ship in every possible sense" (114). Starbuck refers to Ahab as "old man of oceans" (412) and Ahab himself sees his life as committed to the sea:

"Forty years of continual whaling! forty years of privation, and peril, and storm-time! forty years on the pitiless sea! for forty years has Ahab forsaken the peaceful land, for forty years to make war on the horrors of the deep! Aye and yes, Starbuck, out of those forty years I have not spent three ashore" (443).

Increasingly he has lost contact with the land--he laments his "separation from greenness" (Marx 314)--and comes to salute the sea as kin to his spirit:

". . . hail, for ever hail, O sea . . . Born of earth, yet suckled by the sea; though hill and valley mothered me, ye billows are my foster-brothers!" (409-10).

In Moby-Dick the sea is associated with darkness and Ahab's bond with the sea is strengthened by his own association with darkness. Thus the ocean is "the dark side of this earth," while the "dark Hindoo half of nature"

builds its throne "in the heart of these unverdured seas"; Ahab says of himself, "'So far gone am I in the dark side of earth, that its other side, the theoretic bright one, seems but uncertain twilight to me'" (355,409,433). As the typhoon rushes towards the Pequod, Starbuck urges that advantage be taken of the gale to head for home: "'Yonder, to windward, all is blackness of doom; but to leeward, homeward--I see it lightens up there; but not with the lightning!'" (414). Yet Ahab confronts the tempest to pursue Moby Dick and, although momentarily hesitating (in "The Symphony"), to the end he rejects both Starbuck's anguished appeals to turn homeward and his morally outraged protests against the chase. In the words of the narrator, ". . . the rushing Pequod . . . plunging into that blackness of darkness, seemed the material counterpart of her monomaniac commander's soul" (354).

Ahab's refusal to accept the limitation of human knowledge and his insistence on revenge drive him, and prove him to be, mad. Hawthorne maintains that domination of head over heart results in psychological and moral morbidity; Melville shows, in Ahab, that the domination of the civilized aspect of human nature over the primitive causes a fatal withering of the latter and consequent mental and moral disease. The narrator speaks of "the cankerous thing in [Ahab's] soul" and refers to him as "a blighted fruit tree" (443,444). Starbuck (in "The

Musket") knows the danger of Ahab's murderous madness but, short of killing his sleeping captain, which he is too pious to attempt, he cannot conceive how to contain it. In "The Cabin," Ahab (when confronted by Pip, that figure of the loyal and loving primitive crazed by his lone exposure to the sea) himself recognizes both his morbid condition and the possibility of its cure--a possibility he rejects: "'There is that in thee, poor lad, which I feel too curing to my malady. Like cures like; and for this hunt, my malady becomes my most desired health" (436). In the same chapter, Pip pleads, in terms of incorporation, for Ahab's friendship, imploring his captain, ". . . do ye but use poor me for your one lost leg..." (436). Here Ahab is offered vital human support but as his purpose is deadly, it is appropriate that he should choose to rely on what has become virtually part of him, "that dead bone upon which he partly stood" (385). In his self-will, tragically, Ahab chooses madness and death.

The dramatic story of Ahab, specifically, is tragic inasmuch as its catastrophic conclusion and the terror and pity it arouses stem from the character of its protagonist: Ahab's virtues--his dauntless courage, tenacity of purpose and capacity for self-sacrifice--ensure his status as tragic hero in accordance with the aesthetics of courage, and, seemingly, qualify him, as one of the "salamander giants," to encounter the "clear Truth" (286). However, these very virtues, his greatest gifts, once subject to his hubris, his will to transcend human limitations, induce in him the self-deception and monomania

which lead to his destruction. Richard Sewall comments, illuminatingly, on Ahab: "In finally coming to terms with existence (though too late), he is tragic man; to the extent that he transcends it, finds 'greatness' in suffering, he is tragic hero" (104).

Ahab's story is also, by virtue of the myths Melville evokes, expressive of a generally tragic vision of life: Ahab, committing those deadly sins which caused the Fall of Adam and the doom of Faustus, and which have become integral to the concept of civilization, himself becomes representative of civilization. In terms of the novel's symbolism, Ahab's civilized nature, unmitigated by its primitive aspects, scorns such security as is represented by the land and, in pursuit of an unattainable truth insanelly voyages to self-destruction amid savage seas and uncharted waters. By making Ahab civilization's representative, Melville implies that civilization, rejecting the beneficent influence of its primitive heritage and the stability of the known in order to probe life's final mysteries, is, like Ahab, mad, and that, horrifyingly, its doom may well be his.

Richard Sewall argues that tragedies should affirm values or give grounds for hope, and hence he comments as follows on the concluding chapters of Moby-Dick:

. . . the ending seems too dire for tragedy. It seems to deny the future; when the Pequod sinks, all seems lost; and there is no further comment, no fifth act compensations to let in a little hope. The only comment is the action itself . . . There is one survivor of the action: the tragic artist to tell about it from beginning to end. . . . If the world [Moby-Dick]

presents is the starkest kind of answer to the Emersonian dream, it is not a world for despair or rejection--as long as there is even one who escapes to tell its full story (104-05).

Sewall does not view the novel as a hybrid of tragedy and Bildungsroman but as tragedy. Hence it is not surprising that he overlooks in it the importance of Ishmael, which is more than that of survivor who tells the tale. If Moby-Dick is a tragedy, Ishmael functions as a foil to Ahab, representing the way rejected by Ahab--but that could be taken by others. He represents more than "a little hope" in the novel.

Granted, dramatically, Ahab's tragedy dominates Moby-Dick but it, nevertheless, expresses only partially Melville's attitude to civilization since, in the novel, the tragedy is countered by the Bildungsroman of Ishmael who is, though finally so different, like Ahab in many ways and, like Ahab, a figure representative of civilization.

In Moby-Dick there are, as it were, two Ishmaels--the intense and morose young man who decides to go whaling and whose story concludes with his rescue by the Rachel, and the balanced, deeply sympathetic and genially humorous narrator.⁴² The former develops into the latter: the reader is aware that while much of what the immature Ishmael felt and thought, the mature Ishmael still feels and thinks, it is the experience of the Pequod's voyage that accounts for the development of the tyro whalemén

into the experienced and wise narrator, who, although he does not merge with Melville, is certainly his spokesman.⁴³

Although the tone of the opening paragraph of the novel is brisk and jocular, the re-iteration of "whenever" in relation to such images as "coffins," "funerals," and "pistol and ball," make it clear that not only the young, but also the mature, Ishmael experiences fits of depression accompanied by impulses to commit social violence, even suicide. The narrator's name (assumed, possibly, for its archetypal significance) suggests the outcast, the isolato who, in his suffering, exasperation and aggression, feels his "splintered heart and maddened hand . . . turned against the wolfish world" (53).⁴⁴ When beset by his "hypos," Ishmael takes to sea: ". . . I am in the habit of going to sea . . ." (14); then Ishmael's temperament resembles Ahab's, for then in Ishmael, too, the primitive --the vital and sociable--aspect of human nature withers and morbid and rash thoughts predominate. The young Ishmael who determines to go whaling is a crewman fit for Ahab, and Ishmael the narrator is qualified--by virtue of his knowledge of "the dark side of this earth" and his intimations of "Ahab's larger, darker, deeper part"--to present, with profound sympathy, Ahab's predicament (355,161).

It is appropriate, in terms of the novel's symbolism, that the disgruntled and reckless young Ishmael (dominated by the civilized aspect of his nature) should decide to go to sea. In the first chapter the narrator admits that his curiosity about the unknown, however dangerous, is

insatiable; he is "tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote" and loves to sail "forbidden seas" (16). Accounting for his youthful decision to undertake a whaling expedition, Ishmael explains that he was fascinated by the most formidable of sea-creatures and haunted by visions of them, visions in which a gigantic white whale looms:

Chief among these motives was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my curiosity. . . . in the wild conceits that swayed me to my purpose, two and two there floated into my inmost soul, endless processions of the whale, and, midmost of them all, one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air (16).

It is dramatically proper, and thematically significant, that Ishmael, lured to sea by such a vision, should sign on with--of all the whalers in Nantucket--the Pequod, whose captain is dedicated to hunting Moby Dick.

Like Ahab, Ishmael--both the young and the mature--is a thinker and speculates on the nature of reality and the deception of appearance.⁴⁵ In the chapter, "The Whiteness of the Whale," the narrator attempts to explain "what, at times, [Moby Dick] was to me": "It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me" (163). "It was" to the young Ishmael, but in listing the awful and horrifying manifestations of whiteness, the mature Ishmael writes in the present tense:

. . . these, to Ishmael, are as the shaking of of that buffalo robe to the frightened colt!
Though neither knows where lie the nameless things of which the mystic sign gives forth such hints; yet with me, as with the colt,

somewhere those things must exist. Though in many of its aspects this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright (169).

To Ishmael, the whiteness of the whale terrifies by its implication that the "underlying reality" is death or blank nothingness: apart from white,

. . . all . . . hues--every stately or lovely emblazoning--the sweet tinges of sunset skies and woods; yea, and the gilded velvets of butterflies, and the butterfly cheeks of young girls; all these are but subtle deceits, not actually inherent in substances, but only laid on from without; so that all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but the charnel-house within; and when we proceed further, and consider that the mystical cosmetic which produces every one of her hues, the great principle of light, for ever remains white or colorless in itself, and if operating without medium upon matter, would touch all objects, even tulips and roses, with its own blank tinge--pondering all this, the palsied universe lies before us a leper . . . (169-170).

Leo Marx argues that ". . . Ishmael decides that what strikes terror to the soul is not the object at all, but rather its unknowability" (301). However, no mere sceptic distinguishing appearance from reality--which is what Marx suggests Ishmael does--would use the imagery of "the charnel-house within." This image belongs not to epistemology but to mysticism, one which is sensitive to the universal presence of death.⁴⁶ Allen Austin argues that "the White Whale symbolizes to Ishmael the destructive principle at the core of existence, the inevitability of personal annihilation," and suggests that "the central concern of Moby-Dick is . . . the finality of death" (346,349). Lawrance Thompson makes a similar point:

". . . 'death' is the major motif throughout Moby-Dick" (143).

Speculations about death abide with Ishmael and account for his sense that the surface beauty of the sea treacherously conceals a cruel and deadly world:

Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure (235);

. . . beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the ocean's skin, one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it; and would not willingly remember, that this velvet paw but conceals a remorseless fang (405).⁴⁷

To young Ishmael all the horrors of death and annihilation are symbolized by "the Albino whale": "Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt?" (170). Pondering on how it was that the crew of the Pequod, which seemed "specially picked and packed by some infernal fatality," responded so "aboundingly" to Ahab's quarter-deck speech, Ishmael, the narrator, hints that ". . . to their unconscious understandings . . . in some dim, unsuspected way, [Moby Dick] might have seemed the gliding great demon of the seas of life . . . ," but, as for himself, he frankly admits that he could see "naught in that brute but the deadliest ill" (162-63). Inasmuch as he was like Ahab in morbid temperament and daringly speculative intellect, Ishmael was peculiarly susceptible to Ahab's rhetoric, and it was inevitable that he commit himself to Ahab's "indissoluble league" (146):

I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; my oath had been welded with theirs . . . A wild, mystical, sympathetic feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine (155).

At this moment, Ishmael and Ahab are virtually identified; both are fallen men in whom self-will predominates, civilized men in whom the primitive aspect of their nature has withered, men in whom hatred displaces love and the mad ambition to destroy the source of woe and dread ousts any wise understanding of life.⁴⁸

In a discussion of "observer-hero" novels, of which Moby-Dick is an example, Lawrence Buell suggests (among other patterns) that in some novels the hero represents an identity that the observer has repressed, in others ". . . the observer may disapprove of and finally reject what the hero represents" (96). I contend that the observer Ishmael's response to Ahab is initially the one, subsequently the other. As John Rothfork puts it, "In the beginning Ahab's search is also Ishmael's. . . . But they finally diverge" (58).

Though Ishmael does, in the quarter-deck scene, feel at one with Ahab, his psyche, unlike Ahab's, is flexible and, so, capable of redemption. In Ishmael's Bildungsroman Melville dramatizes the gradual integration of the civilized and primitive aspects of Ishmael's nature. For Melville, as has been suggested, the primitive aspect of human nature is intrinsically good, since it represents

pristine Edenic innocence, latently present in all men. It is Queequeg, the embodiment of the primitive in human nature, who "awakens" the primitive in Ishmael--that aspect of his nature which, developed and integrated with his civilized self, qualifies him for survival in the Fallen World. James Baird points out that the relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg is based upon Melville's experience of tayo--fraternal love--among the people of Nukuheva (205-07).⁴⁹

Despite Ishmael's initial terror of Queequeg when the two sailors had, perforce, to be bed-fellows, a close and warm relationship rapidly develops between them and Ishmael, as he puts it, ". . . began to be sensible of strange feelings": "I felt a melting in me. No more my splintered heart and maddened hand were turned against the wolfish world. This soothing savage had redeemed it.

. . . I began to feel myself mysteriously drawn towards him" (53). The consistent use of conjugal imagery--Queequeg's hugging Ishmael with a "bridegroom clasp" in a "matrimonial sort of style"; ". . . henceforth we were married . . ."; the "hearts' honeymoon" of "a cozy, loving pair"--to describe the nature of their friendship allies the savage to the forces of love, sexuality and life, forces reciprocally awakened in Ishmael (33-34, 53, 54).⁵⁰ Queequeg redeems Ishmael's heart--the primitive aspect of his nature--and so saves him from being obsessed by violence and death. As Merlin Bowen puts it, "Queequeg . . . [is] the very type of the savior heart . . ."; ". . . Queequeg . . . leads Ishmael back to life and

wholeness" (34,242). Daniel Hoffman suggests that ". . . Ishmael acknowledges that part of himself which finds its identity in Queequeg: the unfallen Adam characterized by . . . the primordial energies affirming life and love" (Form 264).

The primitive aspect of human nature requires fellowship and interdependence and Ishmael retains a strong bond with Queequeg throughout the voyage. In "The Monkey-rope," this bond is symbolically shown when the two friends are roped together: while Queequeg cuts up the carcass of a whale, Ishmael holds the cord upon which his friend's safety and very life depend. Once again, the bond between the two men is described in conjugal imagery; it is also expressed (alluding to the "monkey-rope") as "an elongated Siamese ligature" which makes Queequeg Ishmael's "inseparable twin brother" (271). An image from the business world is added, expressing interdependence, for Ishmael feels that his ". . . individuality was now merged in a joint stock company of two . . ." (271).

The revitalizing influence of Queequeg, the primitive, is not experienced by Ishmael alone. On two occasions in the novel Queequeg's life-saving benevolence is literally exemplified: when, on the schooner bound for Nantucket, a young man is swept overboard, Queequeg, although the youth had previously insultingly mimicked him, dives to his rescue, and when Tashtego is deemed lost in the sinking dead whale's head, Queequeg miraculously recovers him. The narrator describes this latter feat

in terms of midwifery: "poor Tash" is hauled out by his head and his "delivery" is due to Queequeg's "great skill in obstetrics" (290). Although this imagery factually describes what happened, Melville is also clearly concerned with the theme of symbolic rebirth and deliverance from death.

If Ishmael is closest to Ahab in the opening of the chapter "Moby Dick," he is at the furthest remove from him in the chapter "A Squeeze of the Hand." Here the primitive aspect of Ishmael's nature, vitalized by Queequeg, is predominant. While squeezing the case Ishmael experiences a gush of benevolence and love:

. . . while bathing in that bath, I felt divinely free from all ill-will, or petulance, or malice, of any sort whatsoever. . . . I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-laborers' hands . . . Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness" (348-49).

Rapt in charismatic and erotic enthusiasm, Ishmael ". . . forgot all about our horrible oath; in that inexpressible sperm, I washed my hands and my heart of it . . ." (348). His part in Ahab's "indissoluble league" is dissolved.

What is significant is that Ishmael here proves to be as capable of abandoning himself to the promptings of the primitive, as he was to the civilized, aspect of his being. Concomitantly, he is as able to apprehend the virtue of the land as he is to respond to the challenge of the sea. It is appropriate that, here, Ishmael the narrator breaks into the account of his youthful experience

with a heartfelt endorsement of the values represented by the land:

. . . by many prolonged, repeated experiences, I have perceived that in all cases man must eventually lower, or at least shift, his conceit of attainable felicity; not placing it anywhere in the intellect or the fancy; but in the wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fire-side, the country . . . (349).

This passage expresses the most positive affirmation of values in the novel. The form, ". . . in all cases man must . . . ," is that of an ethical imperative, yet the gently amused tone of the concluding sentence of the paragraph--"In visions of the night, I saw long rows of angels in paradise, each with his hands in a jar of spermaceti" (349)--betrays the mature Ishmael's awareness that universal love and felicity is a desideratum rather than an abiding reality, but a desideratum to which he, nevertheless, commits himself.⁵¹

Although the primitive aspect of Ishmael's nature is revived, it cannot, since he is representative of civilized man, ever usurp the civilized aspect. It can, however, most beneficially, be integrated with or counterpoised to that aspect. Employing Hawthornian terms, Merlin Bowen expresses the idea as follows:

Salvation--if salvation indeed is to be had--will lie not in purification by the exclusion of a large part of life but in wholeness approached through a generous inclusiveness; it will consist . . . in a development and balance of the powers of heart and head (23).⁵²

Balance and the via media are what are insisted on by the

engravings on the Quito doubloon; it is a "token of balance" (Seelye 67).⁵³ However, the significance of the "equatorial coin" is distorted by all who attempt to interpret it ("'I look, you look, he looks . . .'" (362)): it is only Ishmael, the narrator, who, in his description, elucidates its meaning:

On its round border it bore the letters, REPUBLICA DEL ECUADOR: QUITO. So this bright coin came from a country planted in the middle of the world, and beneath the great equator, and named after it; and it had been cast midway up the Andes, in the unwaning clime that knows no autumn. . . . and the keystone sun entering the equinoctial point at Libra (359).

Ismael, the poised raconteur in Lima, had embraced--had "married"--Queeqeg, and has acquired wisdom and achieved a balance in his psyche. In terms of the novel's symbolism Ishmael cannot, as a representative of civilized man, find "home" in an Edenic island, but he can return to land--corresponding to integrating the primitive and civilized aspects of his nature--as he does when rescued by the Rachel. Also, as civilized man, he can undertake other voyages, as indeed he does when overcome by his "hypos."

It has been argued that Ishmael, the narrator, holds that those who set out to sea are courageous and those who do not are pusillanimous, and that, analogically, it is those who have intellectual and spiritual terrors, and endure the attendant woe, in the pursuit of truth who are courageous--the more dangerous and longer sustained the voyage, the more admirable the voyager; the more daring and prolonged the thought, the more admirable the thinker.

If this is so, Ishmael's resounding affirmation of the values of the land seems contradictory--but only if one ignores the phrase, "attainable felicity" (349). Ishmael, as civilized man, cannot but entertain the high ambition to know, to arrive at, the Truth, and so, with romantic enthusiasm, he pays tribute to intellectual and spiritual daring, but the Ishmael in whom the primitive has been vitalized comes, realistically and humbly, to accept man's limitations and to value such joy and security as is available in the Fallen World. Ishmael's affirmation of the values of the land coincide with the healing, the new wholeness, of his nature. William Sedgwick makes these points as follows:

The landsman puts aside the indefinite heights of human nature . . . He accepts the limitations which have been ordained for men . . . In the language of Melville's symbolism man is an amphibious creature. . . . But his sea instinct must be checked and countered by his land sense if he is not to expose himself to horrible dangers (100-01).

It may be argued that Ishmael's survival of the destruction of the Pequod and its crew is merely a necessary narrative device employed by Melville. It may also be argued that it does not imply any moral comment: in the "Epilogue" the quotation, "And I only am escaped alone to tell thee" (470), which links Ishmael to the messengers in Job, supports this contention, since not only are the messengers (presumably) neither better nor worse than those

they report slain, but also the whole burden of the book of Job is that disaster should not be considered punishment for wrongdoing.⁵⁴ It may also be pointed out that Ishmael himself ascribes his escape simply to chance and fate:

It so chanced, that after the Parsee's disappearance, I was he whom the Fates ordained to take the place of Ahab's bowsman, when that bowsman assumed the vacant post; the same, who . . . was dropped astern (470).

These arguments and the observation, however, require qualificatory comment or expansion. First, in Moby-Dick it is not only conventionally expedient to have a survivor to provide a narrator: it is imperative that Ishmael, specifically, should survive to become the narrator since, in his creation of Ishmael, Melville, as in a Bildungsroman, traces the development of a character, development which begins in the young whaleman of the narrative but which is completed and made manifest only in the wise and mature narrator whose personality, blending with that of the omniscient narrator, pervades the novel.

Secondly, if, as this thesis contends, Melville deliberately contrasts Ahab's tragedy with Ishmael's Bildungsroman to illustrate a fatal, as opposed to a viable, response to life in the Fallen World, as surely as Ahab must die, it is dramatically appropriate that Ishmael must survive: his survival endorses those values which Ahab rejected but which Ishmael acknowledges; by having Ishmael survive, Melville establishes that what he has come to represent is worthy of life and, in that sense,

"good."⁵⁵ As Leo Marx puts it, "In accomplishing Ishmael's 'salvation,' Melville in effect puts his blessing upon the Ishmaelian view of life . . ." (318).⁵⁶

Thirdly, chance may well account for Ishmael's escape from the vortex of the sinking ship, but is it also merely by chance that the coffin-lifebouy surfaces to hand, that neither sharks nor sea-hawks attack, and that the Rachel finds the drifting Ishmael? So much chance amounts to the miraculous, and, whether he sees Fate as extraordinarily kind or God intervening, the reader cannot but infer supernatural benevolence and, so, sense that Ishmael "deserves" to be saved. Surely, here, Melville is deliberately evoking such a response and, as surely, by making Queequeg's coffin the ~~th~~ means of Ishmael's survival, he deliberately symbolizes what can "bouy up," "save," the psyche of civilized, fallen, man:⁵⁷ from the primitive Queequeg the young Ishmael learnt not only to cherish love and life but also, by observing the savage's calm approval of his coffin--"Rarmai' (it will do; it is easy) . . ." (397)--to accept death.⁵⁸

The contrast between Ahab and Ishmael is that between one who is fixed in his opinions before he embarks on the voyage and who never veers from his declared intention, and one who is responsive to experience and who changes in the course of the voyage.⁵⁹

Ahab is "gnawed within and scorched without, with the infixed, unrelenting fangs of some incurable idea . . ."

(162): indeed, the voyage of the Pequod is devoted to the execution of Ahab's "one only and all-engrossing object of hunting the White Whale" (162). Thus when Ahab first convenes the crew, in "The Quarter-Deck," he reveals his determination to encircle the earth and scour the seas in search of Moby Dick, and, from the beginning to the end of the novel, Ahab lives and breathes hatred of his adversary: "' . . . to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last breath at thee'" (468). Ahab is too fixed in the grip of monomania to entertain the healing emotion of love. The knowledge he relentlessly pursues is unattainable, so he is doomed to inevitable failure. In the fate of Ahab, chief actor in the tragic drama, Melville comments on the folly of the pursuit of unattainable knowledge and on the danger of the domination of human nature by its civilized aspect--cause of Fall to Adam, doom to Faustus, destruction to Ethan Brand. Ahab's voyage into the horrors of the Fallen World must end in death.

In contrast, Ishmael changes in the course of the Pequod's voyage. As Merlin Bowen asserts, "Ahab and [Ishmael] have gone the same voyage, but where one has found death, the other has found life" (252). Ishmael is young, pliable, and open to experience: in consequence of the catalytic encounter with Queequeg, Ishmael's psyche is made whole since the civilized aspect of his nature comes to be balanced by the primitive, that loving --and therefore redeeming--aspect of human nature which,

the novel implies, is capable of revival in all men but those who, like Ahab, persistently deny it. As James E. Miller expresses it, ". . . the story's movement for Ishmael is away from independence and solitude toward interdependence and involvement" (Guide 78). Unlike Ahab, Ishmael is a minor actor in the tragedy; once he signs on with the Pequod he has no control over events. In the words of Vincent Buckley, ". . . he is passive, overshadowed and overwhelmed by the forces which he confronts" (153). Yet in the story of the young man who becomes the narrator, the maturation of a psyche is dramatized. A civilized man, Ishmael comes to cherish the primitive; an impetuous seafarer, he comes to appreciate the values of the land; a seeker after knowledge, he comes to realize that the Truth is unattainable to man, beset by limitations. C. H. Holman asserts that Ishmael comes to attain the wisdom of Job, learning "to know woe without becoming mad";⁶⁰ to Milton R. Stern, ". . . Ishmael comes to value people above abstractions, to recognize that the actualities and needs of human relationships must take precedence over ideologies" ("Millennial" 56). The fate bestowed on Ishmael is evidence of Melville's awareness of the all-importance to life of love, sympathy, "human kindness"--the Edenic virtues--and his advocacy of wise understanding and psychic balance: Ishmael is qualified to survive in the Fallen World and return from the terrors of the deep to the security of the land.

In the tragedy of Ahab and the Bildungsroman of Ishmael, Melville, in accordance with the Platonic

principle that society is man writ large, comments on the life of civilized man and on civilization itself, the way of life of the Fallen World. In his study of civilization, Civilization and its Discontents, Freud selects two principles of prime importance evident in the life of man and the development of society--Eros or the life-instinct, and Thanatos or the death-instinct. Freud argues as follows:

. . . the meaning of the evolution of civilization is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species. This struggle is what all life essentially consists of, and the evolution of civilization may therefore be simply described as the struggle for life of the human species (ed. Strachey 122).

Freud's concepts of Eros and Thanatos may usefully be employed to elucidate the contrast between Ahab and Ishmael.

In Ahab's tragedy, Thanatos reigns. Ahab voyages with the sole aim of killing Moby Dick; the crew, who swear the quarter-deck oath, commit themselves to death, and so the Pequod sails to its destruction. Inasmuch as the Pequod and its crew, the instruments of his will, are Ahab writ large, so civilization is the Pequod, its microcosm, writ large: in Ahab, in the crew he exploits, in civilization itself, the civilized aspect of human nature subjugates the primitive, and Thanatos stultifies Eros.

In the story of Ahab, Melville indicates one direction civilization, life in the Fallen World, may take;

in Ishmael's story, he points to another.⁶¹ At the beginning of the novel young Ishmael was dominated by Thanatos and he, too, swore the oath that identified him with Ahab. With his primitive nature revived by his espousal of the values represented by Queequeg, the embodiment of Eros, his commitment to Thanatos is absolved and, learning from Queequeg's attitude to death--to him, neither an obsession nor the cause of dread--Ishmael is set free, as Queequeg is free, to choose to live. The mature Ishmael, the narrator, acknowledges the power of Death but, endorsing the principle enunciated by Thomas Mann in The Magic Mountain--"For the sake of goodness and love, man shall let death have no sovereignty over his thoughts" (496-97)--he gives his allegiance to Eros.⁶²

By portraying in Ishmael the gradual integration of Eros and Thanatos, or the counterpoising of Eros to Thanatos, Melville shows himself a realist, for suffering and death cannot be denied. In terms of the Eden myth, Thanatos is integral to the nature of fallen man; only in Eden was man, and "society" (as in the Golden Age) ruled by Eros alone. In the Fallen World, the world of civilization, men and society have a choice: they can either submit to the tyranny of Thanatos, and perish, or, by revitalizing inherent Eros, counter woe and death, and survive, live. As Daniel Hoffman argues, "The instinctual self . . . is the source both of Eros and of anarchy. To separate oneself from it, as Ahab tries to do, inevitably leads to the dehumanization of the ego" (Form 268).

In terms of the novel's symbols and myths, permanent

return to the island, symbol of the primitive Eden, is impossible: so Tom, a civilized man, finds in Typee and, as sailor he returns to the ship and the sea, prepared again to traffic with suffering and danger. In Moby-Dick, the choice is between the sea and the land, symbols of the Fallen World, each associated with its own set of values. Ahab and Ishmael, as sailors, embark on a perilous voyage in pursuit of Moby Dick, but whereas Ahab, committing himself totally to the sea and confrontation with its final horror, is destroyed, Ishmael, subscribing to the values of the respite, the security, the love and all the attainable felicities afforded by the land (existence at its possible, if humble, best), is equipped to survive, partially redeemed, purged of the most destructive excesses assailing fallen man.

In Ahab's tragedy and in Ishmael's Bildungsroman, as in the sets of myth-laden symbols, Melville continues in Moby-Dick the critique of civilization which he undertook in Typee. In Moby-Dick, as in Typee, he uses the Eden myth--and, subsumed under it, the myth of the Golden Age--as vehicles for that exploration. One of the functions of this myth in Moby-Dick, as has been shown, is to provide an interpretative framework for the sets of myth-laden symbols in the novel; another is to provide an interpretative framework for Ahab's tragedy and Ishmael's Bildungsroman.

3 Ahab's Pursuit of Moby Dick as the Incarnation of Evil

Melville was not a writer content with, or whose imaginative powers were exhausted in, exploring primitive society and civilization, although Joyce S. Adler asserts that ". . . modern civilization is from first to last, in all [Melville's] work, his main concern" (7). As F. O. Matthiessen observes, Melville was ". . . a skeptic with a religious and philosophical bias that would not let him rest, but drove him further into speculation on the nature of good and evil than any of his contemporaries had gone" (376). His contemplation of evil led him to a darker philosophy of the unseen than was fashionable among transcendentalists and other optimistic philosophers (Matthiessen 405-07, 436). Merlin Bowen argues that to Melville, "The world of nature is a haunted world, stalked everywhere by the specter of physical evil . . . its beauties masks for nameless evils" (74).⁶³ In the words of Milton Stern, "The smell of mortality, the sights and mysteries of existence which, like the sharks and whales and squids, are dark things to man's sight, are all part of the reality with which man must cope, within which man must fashion his destiny" (Steel 244). Melville pondered on man's encounter with evil and explored this theme in Ahab's enraged conviction that Moby Dick is Evil incarnate: in this struggle, suggests Matthiessen, Melville ". . . embodied his growing sense that evil was

an integral, if inexplicable, element of life itself"
(408).

The Fallen World is the world of error and evil which civilized--fallen--man must experience. The mature Ishmael's response to that experience, a response of wise acceptance and patient endurance, is possible only because he has come to value the primitive, Edenic aspect of his nature. He has learnt humility and feels sympathy:

. . . everybody . . . is one way or other served in much the same way--either in a physical or metaphysical point of view, that is; and so the universal thump is passed round, and all hands should rub each other's shoulder-blades, and be content (15).

Although he is intensely aware of the essential horror and tragedy of life, Ishmael, the narrator, realizes that living need not always be hellish and that, to survive, man must retain a sane balance between joy and grief, love and hatred, and not resign himself to damnation: "Give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee, deaden thee; as for the time it did me" (355).

Ahab's response to life in the Fallen World is tragically different. However "grand" and "god-like" in intellect and power of personality, Ahab is also "ungodly" (76). He refuses to submit to suffering and instead takes it as evidence of active evil with which, in his pride, he comes to see himself as destined to contend. He dedicates himself to hate and woe, and so becomes mad: "There is a wisdom that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness" (355).⁶⁴ Ahab's madness--his conviction that

the principle of evil is practically assailable in Moby Dick--so usurps his intellect and stifles the redemptive primitive and Edenic urges of his nature that he condemns himself to hell on earth: "Gifted with the high perception, I lack the low, enjoying power; damned, most subtly and most malignantly!" (147). As R. W. B. Lewis puts it, a person can suffer from ". . . a sense of evil so inflexible, so adamant . . . [that it] is a path toward destruction . . . the very embrace of the destroying power" (132).

The third hypothesis presented in this chapter is that, inasmuch as Ahab in his madness hunts Moby Dick as the incarnation of evil, Melville alludes to another element of the Eden myth--the prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent. It will be recalled that after the Fall, God pronounces judgement on the Serpent:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman,
and between thy seed and her seed; it shall
bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel
(Genesis 3:15).⁶⁵

The contrast in the Eden myth between the Garden of eternal bliss and the Fallen World of death and woe dramatizes the loss for man incurred by the Fall, and accounts for the enmity of the "seed" of Eve for the Serpent, the prediction of which acknowledges fallen mankind's rage at the Serpent's role. According to ancient Christian tradition the Serpent is Satan, evil incarnate (Revelation 12:9).⁶⁶ The prediction of its enmity for the "seed" of Eve, a manifestation of hatred of, and rage against, the Creator, acknowledges that the mischief

caused in Eden is but the first attack in the devil's campaign to ruin mankind (Milton 6:900-07).

This element of the Eden myth serves several functions, the most important of which is to illuminate Ahab's sense of Moby Dick: it throws light on Ahab's conception of Moby Dick as evil incarnate, and on his consequent adoption of a mythical role in attempting to slay the White Whale; it may also, possibly, throw light on Ahab's motive in the hunt. At the same time, this element of the Eden myth also permits an ironic judgement of Ahab's actions, in accordance with the traditional Christian interpretation of the text predicting enmity.⁶⁷

Prior to expatiating on these ideas, it is necessary to summarize Melville's presentation of Ahab's insanity. That Ahab identifies a dumb brute, Moby Dick, as evil incarnate is both the consequence, and evidence, of the madness that overcomes him on the homeward voyage after his first confrontation with the White Whale and that, though often cunningly concealed, possesses him thereafter. Ahab's madness is caused by sustained physical agony and the spiritual torment of humiliating defeat and the urge to vengeance: ". . . then it was, that his torn body and gashed soul bled into one another; and so interfusing, made him mad" (160).

The key passage describing Ahab's dismemberment and his subsequent identification of his assailant with Evil occurs in the chapter "Moby Dick":

His three boats stove around him, and oars and men both whirling in the edies; one captain, seizing the line-knife from his broken prow, had dashed at the whale, as an Arkansas duellist at his foe, blindly seeking with a six inch blade to reach the fathom-deep life of the whale. That captain was Ahab. And then it was, that suddenly sweeping his sickle-shaped lower jaw beneath him, Moby Dick had reaped away Ahab's leg, as a mower a blade of grass in the field. No turbaned Turk, no hired Venetian or Malay, could have smote him with more seeming malice. Small reason was there to doubt, then, that ever since that almost fatal encounter, Ahab had cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale, all the more fell for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations. The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung. That intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites of the east revered in their statue devil;--Ahab did not fall down and worship it like them; but deliriously transferring its idea to the abhorred white whale, he pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. All that most maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees of things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks the sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it (159-60).

The growth of Ahab's sense of Moby Dick's evil, and the increase of his fury in response to that evil, can be compared to the evolution of two augmenting and inter-involved gyres, both of which originate in the disastrous encounter and attain stasis only in Ahab's insane idée

fixe: Moby Dick is evil and must be destroyed.

Although Moby Dick, when hunted, is considered by other whalers to show "infernal aforethought of ferocity," it is only when that whale destroys his boats and amputates his leg that proud Ahab sees the creature as malevolent, feeling it could not "have smote him with more seeming malice."⁶⁸ This sense of evil is augmented when Ahab, the baffled thinker, comes ". . . to identify with [Moby Dick], not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations . . ."; then the whale appears to him as the ". . . incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them" Finally Ahab, the reckless metaphysician, identifies Moby Dick with primordial Evil, the spiritual power worshipped by the Gnostic Ophites, or Satan, ". . . to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds"

Correspondingly, Ahab's vengeful hatred intensifies. His attack on Moby Dick with the line-knife is merely the reflex action of a frustrated hunter, expressing only "corporal animosity," but as the evil of the White Whale augments in his delirious mind, a "wild vindictiveness" possesses him. Finally, his explosive enmity becomes the expression of all fallen mankind's furious resentment of suffering--". . . the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down" Since in Moby Dick, the cause of his agony, "all evil, to crazy Ahab" is not only "visibly personified" but also "practically assailable," he hurls himself, "as if his chest had

been a mortar" and "his hot heart" its missile, in desperate defiance against his enemy--to him, the Adversary.

During the stormy winter when the Pequod rounds the Horn and Ahab struggles to recover from his wound, the access of madness in him is only too apparent: ". . . at intervals during the passage, he was a raving lunatic . . . ," and his mates have, perforce, to straitjacket him in his hammock (160). However, as his ship enters the tranquil tropics, ". . . to all appearances, the old man's delirium seemed left behind . . ." (160-61). Ahab calmly resumes command, his officers thank God "the direful madness was now gone," and on his return to Nantucket, where his reported attacks of insanity are ascribed to his being "naturally grieved . . . with the terrible casualty which had overtaken him," he is entrusted with the captaincy of the Pequod (161-62). Nevertheless, the narrator insists, from the time of his maiming, Ahab remains mad: "Ahab's full lunacy subsided not, but deepeningly contracted . . ." (161). His monomania does not destroy his mind but usurps and exploits it--"That before living agent, now became the living instrument"--to effect his fixed purpose (161). The fact that ". . . not one jot of his great natural intellect had perished" enables him, during the Pequod's voyage, to dissemble his madness and maintain command: although his fiery oratory can instill his frenzied hatred of Moby Dick into his crew, he also ensures their diurnal allegiance by continuing "true to the natural, nominal purpose" of the voyage, and lest he outrage his first officer's sense of

propriety, when Starbuck demands that sailing cease while the oil casks are repaired, Ahab complies (161,184).

To express the extent to which Ahab's monomania dominates his total being, Melville presents him, in the terms of demonology, as "possessed." In "The Chart," when Ahab, to escape hellish nightmares, rushes wildly from his state room, his "tormented spirit" is described as "a vacated thing"; momentarily his "soul" flies from his "characterizing mind":

But as the mind does not exist unless leagued with the soul, therefore it must have been that, in Ahab's case, yielding up all his thoughts and fancies to his one supreme purpose; that purpose, by its own sheer inveteracy of will, forced itself against gods and devils into a kind of self-assumed, independent being of its own. Nay, could grimly live and burn, while the common vitality to which it was conjoined, fled horror-stricken from the unbidden and unfathered birth. Therefore, the tormented spirit that glared out of bodily eyes, when what seemed Ahab rushed from his room, was for the time but a vacated thing, a formless somnambulistic being, a ray of living light, to be sure, but without an object to color, and therefore a blankness in itself. God help thee, old man, thy thoughts have created a creature in thee; and he whose intense thinking thus makes him a Prometheus; a vulture feeds upon that heart for ever; that vulture the very creature he creates (175).

It is this "creature," tyrannizing Ahab's psyche, to which Fedallah is demoniacally allied, or of which, as the imagery suggests, he is the hideous ectoplasmic manifestation: ". . . they stood . . . fixedly gazing upon each other; as if in the Parsee Ahab saw his fore-thrown shadow, in Ahab the Parsee his abandoned substance" (439). By pursuing in vengeance that which occasioned suffering, Ahab only incurs greater suffering; in hunting

Evil, he is possessed by it and becomes its prey.

The paragraphs above emphasize that Ahab is presented as intellectually and morally mad. This is indisputable, yet he is neither ridiculous nor repulsive and evokes the sympathy and awe due to a tragic protagonist. Melville ensures this largely by bringing to bear on the reader's response to Ahab the powerful undertow of the Eden myth.

Ahab's tragedy has many features which ally it to myth. The plot is grandly simple: a sustained hunt concludes in a mighty battle. Little is known of the protagonist, whose name has ominous significance, prior to his encounter with the White Whale and, thereafter, he is dedicated to a single aim. In the narrative, the ancient device of triplicity is employed: it is at the same season of the year that the protagonist is maimed, wounded and killed;⁶⁹ three prophecies are made to him; the final battle lasts three days. Underlying a realistic account of a whaling voyage is patterning characteristic of myth in general, but there are elements in Ahab's tragedy which invite the reader to recall the mythical Edenic prediction of enmity in particular: Ahab's physical and spiritual agonies are such as to qualify him to represent suffering and outraged mankind, and Ahab's sense of himself as Man pitted against Evil has metaphysical implications.

In the novel, Melville invokes the Eden myth (and the more ancient myths it subsumes) to account for--though not

condone--Anab's sense of Moby Dick. In the text, Melville deliberately, although apparently incidentally, associates whales with dire mythical serpents so that the reader comes to feel that, in Ahab's mad thinking, there is, nevertheless, plausible mythical method.

The "Extracts" (2) include a passage from Isaiah:

"In that day, the Lord with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (27:1).

In this passage, Leviathan--the whale--is identified with both the sea-serpent and the dragon. Within the world of Moby-Dick as well, whales, dragons and sea-serpents appear to be interchangeable. Whales and dragons are explicitly identified in a passage from the chapter, "The Honor and Glory of Whaling":

. . . in many old chronicles whales and dragons are strangely jumbled together, and often stand for each other. 'Thou art as a lion of the waters, and as a dragon of the sea,' saith Ezekiel; hereby, plainly meaning a whale; in truth, some versions of the Bible use that word itself" (305).

In the same chapter, the narrator appears to argue against the identification of serpent and dragon by contrasting them:

. . . it would much subtract from the glory of the exploit had St. George but encountered a crawling reptile of the land, instead of doing battle with the great monster of the deep. Any man may kill a snake, but only a Perseus, a St. George, a Coffin, have the heart in them to march boldly up to a whale (305).

On closer inspection, however, the narrator contrasts land-serpent and whale only because he is intent on asserting that St. George's dragon must be conceived of as a monstrous dragon of the sea, rather than of the land: the identification of whale, dragon and sea-serpent thus remains unaffected.

When Ahab conceives of Evil as incarnate in a whale --a monstrous dragon of the sea--he has excellent reasons, mythically speaking, for doing so.

In the land-Serpent of Eden there is a residual trace of the great sea-dragon of Babylonian myth, Tiamat, or a cognate figure. Nahum M. Sarna argues as follows:

The use of the serpent symbolism in this situation [in Eden] has most likely been conditioned by the place of the serpent in the old cosmic combat myth . . . There, be it noted, the serpent is one of the epithets of Leviathan, one of the chief opponents of God and representative of cosmic chaos (26).

Umberto Cassuto postulates a Hebrew poetic tradition according to which the prince of the sea revolts against God, a tradition which is ". . . the Israelite version of the eastern legends concerning the battles between the great gods and the god of the sea in the era of creation" (141). As has been pointed out, the sea and the rivers became to the Israelites symbols of the forces of wickedness.⁷⁰ Hence, suggests Cassuto, the serpent was chosen as symbol of evil in the Eden myth since serpents are found in the sea, in rivers, and on land, whereas ". . . dragons and big serpents called Leviathan exist only in the sea, and

could not appear in the garden" (141).

Not only is the Serpent of Eden derived from Tiamat or some such figure: the notion of the rebellious sea also derives from the same source, as has been argued.⁷¹ Hence for Ahab to conceive of the evil principle, Evil incarnate, as a dragon of the sea, is in fact to evoke a primordial archetype of evil, more ancient than the Serpent of Eden: it is to evoke a Tiamat figure.⁷² To Ahab, Moby Dick is the monstrous dragon in its aboriginal environment --the sea--and is a figure more potent and more terrifying than the land-Serpent of Eden, yet mythically capable of merging with it. Lawrance Thompson records that ". . . in Christian interpretation, some of the Church fathers (St. Augustine, for example) insisted that all Biblical references to 'Leviathan' were references to Satan" (171). Evidence for the coalescence, in Ahab's mind, of Moby Dick and the Serpent of Eden--identified in Christian tradition with Satan--has been cited, but bears repeating:

That intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites of the east revered in their statue devil;--Ahab . . . deliriously transfer [red] its idea to the abhorred white whale . . . (160).

If Ahab conceives of Moby Dick thus, and if one recalls, in the Eden myth, the prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent, that Ahab, a descendent of Eve, should hate that whale seems "logical," "inevitable."

According to the prediction of enmity in Genesis (3:15), the "seed" of Eve is to "bruise" the Serpent's head: this element of the prophecy is also relevant in an examination of Ahab's hunt. When he encounters Moby Dick in battle, to what extent does Ahab assume a mythical role?

The prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent is highly ambiguous, or would appear to be so from the differences in translated versions of the text and the multiplicity of its possible interpretations. One can cite, for example, albeit anachronistically, a translation very different from that of the Authorized Version--that in The New English Bible:

'I will put enmity between you and the woman,
between your brood and hers.
They shall strike at your head,
and you shall strike at their heel' (Genesis 3:15).

Accounting for the differing interpretations of this prediction are three cruxes. Does the term "seed" (or "brood") refer to all mankind--the descendants of Eve--or to an individual, and Messianic, figure? Does the prediction that the "seed" of Eve will "bruise" (or "strike") the Serpent's head imply a continuous battle, a state of endless warfare--or a conclusive, eschatological battle? Is the Serpent an allegorical figure representing man's evil impulses and inclinations, or is it to be identified as Satan? Many interpretations of the prediction are possible, and have been upheld, but two in particular differ radically from each other.

One view, supported by the translation in The New

English Bible, holds that the prediction refers to all mankind, and that the enmity between man and Serpent implies abiding contention; "bruising" or "striking" the head of the Serpent would then signify blows struck in an endless battle. This view tends to moralize the battle as one between good and evil, and to psychologize it as one between the good and the evil impulses within the individual, and hence sustained as long as human nature persists in the Fallen World. On this view, the tense of the prediction may be termed the "future-mythical": the prediction refers to the future, yet since it also refers to all mankind, it allows for repeated re-enactment; indeed, it could be said to invite endless re-enactment in generation after generation. In the words of Michael Grant, ". . . myths . . . are lived and re-lived, as well as told. Thomas Mann spoke of the 'quotation-like' life of mythopoeic man, who . . . seeks an example from the past and slips into it . . ." (142).⁷³

The other view, consistent with the King James translation, calls on the typological method of interpreting Old Testament texts, a method employed in Christian hermeneutics, whereby figures and events are interpreted with reference to Christ. It holds that the prediction of enmity concerns Christ, conceived of as a Messianic and eschatological figure, and Christian commentators have traditionally tended to interpret the expression, "seed" of Eve, as referring to Christ. The prediction, it is held, refers to decisive and eschatological battles which are to take place in the distant future, battles

the outcome of which will be resounding victories for Christ. The defeated opponent will be the Serpent, identified with Satan, Prince of Darkness. On this view, the tense of the prediction is that of the future simple --albeit the distant future--and the fulfilment of the prediction will be achieved by Christ.

A characteristic statement of this interpretation of the text is found in Paradise Lost: ". . . by that seed / Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise / The Serpent's head . . ." (12:148-50). Adam questions Michael concerning this battle to be fought by "The Seed of Woman . . . the Son / Of God Most High" (12:379-82):

"Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise
Expect with mortal pain; say where and when
Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the victor's
heel" (12:383-85).

In explication, Michael adjures Adam, "'Dream not of their fight / As of a duel . . .'" (12:386-87), and prophesies the crucifixion-resurrection of Christ, interpreting this event figuratively in terms of a combat (12:427-33). Michael goes on to prophesy to Adam Christ's eschatological victories over the Serpent, the first ushering in the millenium:

"Then to the heav'n of heav'ns he [Christ] shall
ascend
With victory, triumphing through the air
Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
The Serpent, prince of air, and drag in chains
Through all his realm, and there confounded
leave . . ." (12:451-55).

Christ's final victory, explains Michael, signifies the

end of the world--the dissolution of Satan, the raising of a new heaven and a new earth (12:543-49).

It is clear that the interpretation of the prediction of enmity that is traditionally held by Christian commentators--implicit in the Authorized Version, explicit in Paradise Lost--is the one that throws light on Ahab's adoption of a mythical role. In his hunt for Moby Dick may be seen Ahab's attempt to fulfil the prediction of the battle between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent, only with himself in the Messianic role. To Ahab, Moby Dick is a creature identical to the Serpent-Satan, and he conceives of his hunt of Moby Dick as culminating in the defeat and death of the White Whale, of Evil incarnate. It follows that the mythical role which Ahab attempts to enact is one that traditional Christian exegetists, such as Milton, regard as predicted of Christ.

It will perhaps have been noted that the quotations from Paradise Lost (12:451-55, 543-49) do not refer to the slaying of the Serpent-Satan: Christ enchains the Serpent during the millenium and, finally, Satan and the old world "dissolve" simultaneously. In contrast, Ahab intends very real slaughter--he will ". . . chase that white whale . . . till he spouts black blood and rolls fin out" (143)--yet the victory Ahab strives for is, in his mad metaphysical mind, identical to that of Christ.

Bruce Franklin argues for the importance of Egyptian myth in Moby-Dick: "The struggle between Osiris and Typhon forms a basic part of the conception of Ahab's struggle with Moby Dick" (Wake 71). However, according to Franklin,

Melville thought Osiris and Typhon mythically related to Christ and Leviathan: ". . . Melville saw similarities between Osiris and Christ. . . . Melville entertained the possibility that the Christ myth was only a later version of the Osiris myth"; "Behind Leviathan loomed the Egyptian god Set, or . . . Typhon" (Wake 93,71). Hence Franklin eventually formulates his position as follows: ". . . Ahab's monomania makes him re-enact the role of the dragon slayer, makes him play Osiris to Moby Dick as Typhon, perhaps therefore Christ to Moby Dick as Leviathan . . ." (Wake 98).⁷⁴

A number of critics refer to Ahab's allegorical turn of mind, arguing that this is betrayed by the fact that Ahab's conception of Moby Dick as the incarnation of evil is an outward projection of his subjective response to the White Whale. Richard Chase, for example, maintains as follows: "The Whale is evil for Ahab . . . Ahab is, or becomes, a rigid allegorist--that is one of the things wrong with him" (Novel 81). Daniel Hoffman uses similar terminology, saying that "Ahab has the most allegorical mind of any character in American fiction" (Form 248). Charles H. Cook suggests that Ahab's tendency to allegorize is "the tragic flaw in Ahab's character"; Ahab is a man who ". . . inflates his own private hurt into the hurt of all mankind, and who allegorizes the inflictor of this hurt as the dwelling-place of all human evil" (60).

To say that Ahab conceives of Moby Dick allegorically is revealing as far as it goes, yet the description of

Ahab is incomplete, for it characterizes only his conception of Moby Dick, but says nothing of his action in hunting him. Had Ahab merely had an allegorical turn of mind, there need have been no pursuit of Moby Dick, since allegory is a mode of perception and is passive, whereas pursuit, being an action, presupposes a different principle. The pursuit of Moby Dick, the event of overriding importance in the novel, becomes possible only when Ahab adopts the role of hunter and would-be slayer of what he believes to be the incarnation of evil.⁷⁵ Insofar as Ahab adopts this role, he takes upon himself the enactment of myth. As has been mentioned, Ahab's determination to engage in battle with Moby Dick recalls the prediction of a battle between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent. The adoption of a role that enacts myth, then, goes far beyond the mere possession of an allegorical turn of mind: when Ahab becomes the hunter attempting to slay the White Whale, his action can be seen rather as the consequence of his allegorical view of Moby Dick, for it is the completion in action of a response initiated in the mind, in perception.

The adoption of a role that enacts myth is an action, voluntarily performed, and implies a resolve, even if not conscious, on the part of the person enacting a myth, or attempting to fulfil a mythical prediction. It is always difficult to reconcile voluntary action with the feeling an agent may have that his actions have been determined. The task is easier if the agent is an underling taking orders from others, most difficult if he is himself in command of others. Yet Ahab, captain of the

Pequod, feels, talks, as if he were not acting freely: "The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run" (147). The image suggests that Ahab must do as he does, although there is an element of ambiguity in that it is possible that his own powerful will could be represented in the image of the "iron rails." Ahab's remark (overheard by Stubb) that he finds certain cards in his hands and must play these and no others is also ambiguous: at least a modicum of choice is implied, yet the general idea of fate is strongly suggested. Other remarks are less ambiguous and suggest less choice, such as Ahab's contention, "' . . . we are turned round and round in this world . . . and Fate is the handspike'" (445). He adds that his heart cannot beat nor his brain think, "' . . . unless God does that beating, does that thinking, does that living, and not I'" (445). He feels that a "' . . . cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor commands [him] . . .'" (445). When Starbuck tries to persuade Ahab to discontinue the chase, Ahab replies as if he has no option whatsoever but to continue, for he is not a free agent:

"This whole act's immutably decreed. 'Twas rehearsed by thee and me a billion years before this ocean rolled. . . . I am the Fates' lieutenant; I act under orders" (459).

In contrast, Starbuck never ceases to assume that Ahab acts freely and can call off the hunt for Moby Dick if only he chooses to do so: "' . . . let us square the yards . . . to go on a better voyage than this'" ; "'Away with me! let us fly these deadly waters!'" (418,444).

Even after two days of the final encounter with Moby Dick, Starbuck never loses sight of the fact that Ahab is a free agent: "'Oh! Ahab . . . not too late is it, even now, the third day, to desist'" (465).

Ahab's feelings that his actions are fated is possibly explicable psychologically as the concomitant of a mighty resolve, one so adamant that the agent himself feels that he cannot change it, or as the consequence of some passionate desire, one so powerful and so deeply rooted in his innermost being that he feels that it, too, cannot in any way be changed. To make this suggestion is to speculate, but certain passages in the description of Ahab's monomania lead one to suspect that his talk of "fate" has more psychological than metaphysical significance, in that it throws more light on Ahab than on the nature of reality. For example, the narrator says as follows: "That before living agent, now became the living instrument" (162). This sentence suggests that Ahab had to **obey** the promptings of his monomania. Ahab's lack of rational control over his passionate desire to seek out Moby Dick is also seen in his awareness of his secret madness. His "dissembling" is the sane façade concealing his monomania and, once again, there is the suggestion that Ahab cannot help himself: ". . . that thing of his dissembling was only subject to his perceptibility, not to his will determinate" (161). Yet from the fact that Ahab is not in control of his monomaniac hatred of Moby Dick, it does not follow that his actions have been determined by Fate, God, or immutable decree.⁷⁶

Ahab sees the world coloured by his own feelings-- a disposition not surprising in one who is both a supreme egotist and a Romantic figure. Aware that he cannot help hating Moby Dick, he feels that his actions in pursuing the whale cannot be helped either, and that therefore "Fate" controls his actions. To think in this way is to elevate his personal psychology, if not pathology, into metaphysics. Such a process of thought is parallel to Ahab's augmentation in his mind of the malice of Moby Dick until he sees him as the incarnation of evil.

As has been mentioned, the Eden myth's prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent functions in illuminating Ahab's consciousness, and may possibly throw light on his motive in attempting to slay the White Whale.

To discuss Ahab's motive is not to deny that one of personal vengeance for, as the narrator says of Ahab, "He was intent on an audacious, immitigable, and supernatural revenge" (162). Starbuck, knowing that the White Whale is responsible for the loss of Ahab's leg, also sees his pursuit of the White Whale as vengeful, and feels that such an ambition is morally outrageous: "'Vengeance on a dumb brute! . . . that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing . . . seems blasphemous'" (144). Starbuck's view is endorsed by Dr. Bunger, surgeon of the Samuel Enderby, whose captain, like Ahab, lost a limb in an encounter with

Moby Dick. The ship's surgeon affirms that the White Whale acts from instinct, not malice, and that accordingly vengeance against him is unjustifiable. Both Starbuck and Dr. Bunger account for Moby Dick's supposed malice in naturalistic, non-moral terms, whereas to Ahab, Moby Dick is Evil incarnate, and hence vengeance may be justified. It is important to note that Ahab's passion for revenge is not only personal, but elevated, grand and universal, and it becomes shared by the entire crew of the Pequod:

". . . they so aboundingly responded to the old man's ire . . . that at times his hate seemed almost theirs; the White Whale as much their insufferable foe as his . . ."

(162). The passion for revenge is a factor in Ahab's motivation, but the hurt and the suffering are not his alone: "He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down . . ." (160). In the words of Richard B. Sewall, "The perennial sense of injustice, the cry of Prometheus and Job as of Lear and Hamlet, was also Ahab's. Why do the innocent suffer?" (103-104).

Yet to Ahab, killing Moby Dick signifies more than an act of "supernatural" revenge on behalf of all mankind. His vision of the incarnation of evil allows for other motivation as well, but the reader is not told explicitly what it is--a strange omission of important fact in a novel where so much is so fully explored. One of the functions of the Eden myth's prediction of enmity is to throw light on the aims, apart from that of attaining universal vengeance, that possibly motivate Ahab to

undertake the expedition. What else does the slaying of Moby Dick represent to Ahab? What else does he hope to achieve thereby? Since, as has been argued, to Ahab Moby Dick and the Serpent-Satan are coalesced, and since he adopts the mythical role of doing battle with this creature--to him, Evil incarnate--the answer to these questions lies in eschatology. The reason is that, as has been pointed out, the mythical role Ahab attempts to enact is one that Christian commentators have traditionally regarded as predicted of Christ. James E. Miller argues that ". . . Ahab wants to rid the world of evil . . ." (Guide 10); Ahab sees himself as fighting a conclusive battle against evil incarnate, and intends that it end in the death of the enemy of mankind.⁷⁷

Ahab's hoped-for victory over the White Whale represents to him the destruction of a figure supposedly responsible for the introduction of evil into the world. His victory would be the consummation of his myth-inspired battle with the Serpent of Eden, Satan, the aboriginal malignity worshipped by the Ophites. Ahab's victory would not merely rid the world of the source of evil, but would also ameliorate the lot of suffering mankind. Since the Serpent-Satan is viewed as the evil principle whose machinations led to the Fall in Eden, the slaying of the principle of evil would, presumably, be the first step in negating the effects of the Fall. The slaying of Moby Dick would thus represent an act of purification which would eliminate, or at least lessen, the power of evil in the world. The long-lost joys of Eden might not thereby

be restored,⁷⁸ nor its pristine perfection regained, but the Fallen World of punishment and suffering, of evil and death, would not remain unaffected either: the slaying of the principle of evil would, it is hoped, usher in a millenium (if not "new heavens, new earth"), the advent of which is the ultimate aim of Ahab's quest, and the motivation for the Pequod's hunt for Moby Dick.⁷⁹ Beyond the savagery of the hunt, and the noise of battle, lies the dream of a boon to be conferred upon mankind--by Ahab, who sees himself as a Messianic figure.

In considering the function of the Eden myth's prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent, the focus of attention has thus far been on its illumination of Ahab's conception of his hunt for Moby Dick, undoubtedly its most important function. Yet the prediction of enmity may also serve as an ironic means of judging Ahab's actions. If it be correct that the mythical role Ahab attempts to enact is one that traditional Christian exegetists, such as Milton, regard as predicted of Christ, it follows that, from such a viewpoint--that generally accepted within the culture and time in which Melville was writing--Ahab displays truly damnable hubris in attempting to hunt and slay Moby Dick. Henry Pommer comes to a similar conclusion, arguing that Ahab's monomania leads him to take upon himself "God's function of overcoming the devil" and to come to think of himself "as the equal of God" (98).⁸⁰ In the words of Daniel

Hoffman, "It is . . . the fatality of Ahab's hubris that he sees himself as the lordly avenger slaying the tangible shape of evil" (Form 261). Ahab displays hubris, to the Christian, whether Moby Dick really is the incarnation of evil, or Ahab is deluded in thinking so. What matters is his attempted usurpation of the role that Christians believe is destined for Christ. Ahab is thus revealed to be a figure who attempts to overstep the boundary separating the human from the divine, and in making such an attempt, he evinces monstrous delusions. The hubris of Ahab's deeds matches that of his rhetoric; his hubris in attempting to slay what he believes to be the incarnation of evil recalls--exceeds--that of his attempt to destroy what he is convinced is the barrier to unattainable knowledge.

Given the interpretation that Melville's contemporaries would have of the prediction of enmity, it is reasonable to suggest that it also serves to point to the inevitable outcome of Ahab's quest. Once again, what matters is not whether Ahab's views on the White Whale are valid or erroneous, but his attempted usurpation of Christ's role. From this standpoint it is clear that Ahab, a mere man, is doomed to failure in his attempt to destroy what he believes to be the principle of evil. Ahab has no divine sanction for such a vast undertaking, and his encounter with the White Whale ends, predictably, in disaster. In the words of Matthiessen, Melville sees ". . . in Ahab the destruction that must overtake the Man-God, the self-appointed Messiah" (459).⁸¹ Bruce Franklin makes a similar

observation, whether Ahab enacts the role of dragon-slaying Osiris hunting Typhon, or Christ hunting Leviathan: "Playing the role of a god is the most complete ungodliness.

. . . Ahab's destruction is caused by following the mythological actions rather than the moral and metaphysical teachings of the savior gods . . ." (Wake 98).

Both the Old and New Testaments prophesy battles parallel to that in the traditional Christian interpretation of the prediction of enmity. The book of Isaiah, for example, has the following prophecy (which Melville quotes in the "Extracts" (2)):

"In that day, the Lord with his sore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (27:1).

Revelation prophesies war in heaven, when Michael and his angels engage in battle with the dragon: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world . . ." (12:9). Maud Bodkin has observed of these and other eschatological battles that "the aboriginal conflict is transferred to the final epoch, or is there to be completed" (79).⁸² These battles, like that in the traditional Christian interpretation of the prediction of enmity, are fought by angelic or divine figures. They are not fought, nor predicted to be so, by mortals.

Joseph Campbell uses the expression, "the call to adventure," to refer to a hero's contact with "the other world," a contact which marks a turning-point in his life,

and which initiates a momentous quest (51-58). Ahab's quest to hunt and slay Moby Dick has all the makings of a response to "the call to adventure," yet Ahab received no such call. His expedition in pursuit of Moby Dick is self-generated; it is neither divinely initiated nor divinely sanctioned. If this is so, then Jonah, the subject of Father Mapple's sermon, functions in Moby-Dick in ironic contrast to Ahab: Jonah heard a divine "call to adventure," but sought to flee it; Ahab undertakes a quest that may not even be embarked upon by mortal man, yet without having had any call or sanction other than his own.⁸³

It has been argued that the main function of the Eden myth's prediction of enmity is to illuminate Ahab's conception of Moby Dick as the incarnation of Evil. Yet it in no way follows that the White Whale is what Ahab takes him to be: whether or not Ahab is right is a matter for independent enquiry.⁸⁴ The passion and power of the key passage in the chapter, "Moby Dick," in which Ahab deliriously claims that the White Whale is the incarnation of evil (160) make a great impact, and leave an indelible impression, on the reader's mind. This passage may tend to swamp the pronouncements of other characters, even as Ahab himself towers above the officers and men of his crew. Its power has a seductive effect that appears to confer on Ahab's thoughts the status of objective truth. However, power of expression is no guarantee of freedom from error.

Besides, it should not be forgotten that Ahab is but one of the characters in the novel, even if its most important; Ahab is not the narrator, and Ahab's point of view must be distinguished from that of the teller of the tale. As the narrator puts it, "What the white whale was to Ahab, has been hinted; what, at times, he was to me, as yet remains unsaid" (163). Daniel Hoffman makes a similar point when he remarks: "For Ahab there are no whales in the sea but Moby Dick . . . Ishmael, on the other hand, throughout conceives of Moby Dick as the whale of whales . . . more powerful than others, but of their kind and species . . ." (Form 250). Ahab's conception of Moby Dick does not represent the only possible view, and there is nothing sacrosanct about it; other characters see Moby Dick in a different light.⁸⁵ No matter how important Ahab is, his interpretations of reality do not comprise the totality of the novel. Nevertheless, some critics think that Ahab's conception of Moby Dick has the status of objective truth within the context of the novel, and they manifest their agreement with Ahab by themselves referring to Moby Dick as the incarnation of evil.

For example, in his analysis of Moby-Dick, William Braswell states as his "central problem, the meaning of the allegorical conflict between Ahab and Moby Dick" (Thought 67). Braswell begins by investigating the significance of "what Moby Dick symbolizes for Ahab"; his analysis leads him to conclude that Moby Dick represents evil (Thought 57). Initially, Braswell is extremely careful to state

that he is analysing "what Moby Dick symbolizes for Ahab." However, he uncritically assumes that any symbolic interpretation of the White Whale is dependent solely upon Ahab's point of view of Moby Dick. Thus Braswell's analysis of what Moby Dick represents to Ahab is imperceptibly transformed into a general analysis of the symbolic significance of Moby Dick, an analysis which ignores point of view. As a consequence, Braswell's acceptance of the White Whale as a symbol of evil throughout the novel is a limited and even distorted interpretation. Yet this critic's approach to the symbolic significance of the White Whale is by no means unique in Melville criticism.

E.M.Forster has this to say in Aspects of the Novel: ". . . the spiritual theme of Moby-Dick is as follows: a battle against evil conducted too long or in the wrong way" (127-28). Like Braswell's, Forster's analysis does not raise the question of point of view, nor does it give due weight to the fact that it is only to Ahab that Moby Dick represents the incarnation of evil. Consequently, as in Braswell's analysis, Moby Dick is proclaimed to represent evil in the novel as a whole. It seems, therefore, that the failure of a critic to take cognizance of various points of view leads to interpreting Moby Dick as evil in himself, rather than only from Ahab's point of view.

Conversely, those critics who take point of view into account, recognize that Moby Dick is the incarnation of evil only in the eyes of Ahab. Thus Charles H. Cook, Jr., for example, rightly insists on the importance of point of view in the novel, arguing that ". . . the whale holds

one kind of meaning for Melville and Ishmael and a different and more specific meaning for Ahab," and he points out that it is only to Ahab that "the whale has become . . . an incarnation of the world's evil" (61). In the words of Richard Chase, "The Whale is evil for Ahab, but not for Melville, Ishmael, or the reader" (Novel 81).⁸⁶

Whatever the validity of Ahab's view of Moby Dick--whether he is right or wrong about the White Whale, and whether he is a genius or mad--what Ahab thinks about Moby Dick makes the hunt peculiarly significant and exciting. There are other whalehunts in the novel, and without Ahab's monomania, his conviction that the White Whale is the incarnation of evil, the hunt for Moby Dick would be but one more whalehunt, and the novel would lose its profoundest dimension, even if it were acknowledged that Moby Dick were the supreme whale, and the hunt for him the epitome of all whalehunts. The difference between such a novel and Moby-Dick is due to the significance that Ahab attaches to the White Whale and to the hunt unto death to slay him. For Ahab is the character through whose consciousness Melville explores the depths of the eternal human predicament--the confrontation with the mystery of evil, and the agonized suffering in response to its living strength and its horror.

Ahab's belief that the White Whale is the incarnation of evil is but one of the themes, albeit the most important, in the Pequod's quest: it will be recalled that there is

another, that related to the activity of thought and the pursuit of truth. As was noted, essential to Ahab's philosophy is his sense of limitation imposed on man's knowledge, and his determination to destroy what he views as the barrier to absolute knowledge--to him, Moby Dick. It follows, then, to Ahab, that the single act of slaying the White Whale would result in a two-fold victory: simultaneously it would signify the defeat and destruction of the principle of evil (thereby ushering in a Messianic era) and it would also mean the destruction of the barrier to the attainment of what had previously been unattainable knowledge.

What, if any, are the links connecting Ahab's view of Moby Dick as Evil incarnate and as the barrier delimiting human knowledge? It is possible there are none: if there are any, the novel does not make them. One could suggest that both themes derive from the mythical experiences of pre-lapsarian Adam and Eve, to which correspond the experiences of man in the post-lapsarian world. Thus, corresponding to the limitations divinely imposed in Eden and transgressed at the instigation of the Serpent is the limitation of mortal knowledge imposed upon Adam's descendants, and so chafed against by Faustus--and Ahab; corresponding to Eve's encounter with the Serpent, destroyer of her bliss, is the prevalence of evil in the post-lapsarian world, from which all mankind suffers, and which maddens Ahab.

In any event, of Ahab's two views of Moby Dick--the two themes developed in the hunt--one is in all probability

superimposed upon the other. It was suggested that Ahab's views on illusion and reality, and on the possibility of knowing "underlying reality," had been his intellectual concerns prior to his initial fateful encounter with Moby Dick, and that his identification of Moby Dick with the barrier to knowledge of "underlying reality" is a later superimposition upon these purely intellectual concerns.⁸⁷ It could similarly be suggested that Ahab's obsession with Moby Dick's evil is in turn superimposed upon his intellectual concerns, a superimposition effected by the idea's increasing domination of his consciousness until it reaches the proportions of monomania. Insofar as Ahab views Moby Dick as the barrier delimiting man's knowledge, it follows that killing him is an attempt to destroy the barrier. Yet Ahab's furious and allabsorbing passion is more aroused by viewing Moby Dick as the incarnation of evil. This obsession, monomania, is the most significant and dominant object of Ahab's consciousness.

It is possible, within the framework of a Gnostic view of the Fall of man, to suggest a closer link between the two themes of the Pequod's quest--Moby Dick the barrier delimiting human knowledge, and Moby Dick the incarnation of evil.⁸⁸

Gnostics distinguish between the Demiurge or Creator God of the world--the God of the Jews--and the Supreme Being of the universe, the true Divinity who rules the spiritual world and is the source of perfect good. The Creator God is held to be inferior to the Supreme Being; indeed, the Creator God is held to be born of Sophia, one

of the outermost of a series of "aeons" or spiritual emanations of the Supreme Being. A marked feature of Gnosticism is its opposition to the Demiurge, who is blamed for the evil of the world. In contrast, the Supreme Being of the universe exists on a plane at many removes or "aeons" from this world, the number of aeons varying between six and three hundred and sixty five, according to differing sects. For this reason, the Supreme Being preserves his goodness unsullied by contact with matter, and since he did not create the world, he cannot be held responsible for its evil.

Matthiessen suggests that ". . . Ahab's sense of the evil in God corresponds to something Melville had himself experienced . . ." and that the Gnostic sects held some attraction for him (450). Lawrance Thompson goes much further and claims that Melville belongs to "the Satan school of literature," secretly subscribing to Gnostic teachings, ". . . fascinated by the notion that God must be malicious" (129). In Moby-Dick, according to Thompson, ". . . Melville dramatizes and illuminates his own dark concepts as to the unjust ways of God to men" (204). Thompson argues that ". . . Melville's underlying theme in Moby-Dick correlates the notions that the world was put together wrong and that God is to blame; that God in his infinite malice asserts a sovereign tyranny over man . . . but that the freethinking and enlightened and heroic man will assert the rights of man and will rebel against God's tyranny by defying God . . ." (242-43).

One of the requisite conditions for Ahab's having

a Gnostic weltanschauung is that he should view Moby Dick as in some sense a divine being associated with the Creator God, and there are hints that he does so. Thus he says of the White Whale: ". . . I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. . . . be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal . . .'" (144). Thomas Vargish argues that to Ahab (whether or not to the narrator), ". . . the white whale represents either an 'agent' of the Creator God or the 'principal' himself" (276). If it be correct that to Ahab, Moby Dick is associated with the Creator God, then Ahab's view of him as the barrier delimiting man's knowledge corresponds to the limitations imposed in the Garden of Eden. Ahab's view of Moby Dick as the incarnation of evil echoes the Gnostic belief that the Creator God is authoritarian and evil, and that he is responsible for the sufferings of mankind, punishing them for violating the limitations he imposed on them.⁸⁹ In the same way, the Gnostic would see Zeus as tyrannical and evil in forbidding fire--associated with light and knowledge--to mankind, and then punishing Prometheus for stealing the forbidden (Jonas 96-97).⁹⁰

It is a matter for debate beyond the scope of this thesis whether it is correct to say that the novel as a whole, or Ahab's view of Moby Dick, reflects Gnostic teachings.⁹¹ It is no less plausible to suggest, as do a number of critics, that Ahab's view--and perhaps Melville's--reflects the teachings of Manichaeism, which sharply contrasts the principles of good and evil,

and believes them both to be co-eternal (Matthiessen 439; Chase, Novel 114; Bewley 198).⁹² As Harry Levin says of Moby-Dick, "The basic premise of the Manicheans, that the devil may be no less powerful than God, is entertained as a working hypothesis . . ." (Power 220).

4 The Myths of Hero and Dragon

The myths of Hero and Dragon are among those dominant in Moby-Dick, and the narrator refers to them explicitly in the chapter, "The Honor and Glory of Whaling," which is of great importance notwithstanding its brevity, for it contains the most extended mythical references in the novel. The myths of Hero and Dragon portray battles between men and dragons which are similar to the battle between the hunters aboard the Pequod and Moby Dick--in the words of the narrator, "the most marvellous event in this book" (181). Any exploration of myth in Moby-Dick must, therefore, consider this chapter.

One of the hypotheses of this thesis is that the myths of Hero and Dragon function as touchstones for the reader, providing him with a critical perspective of the hunt, the White Whale, and whether Captain Ahab attains "heroic" (as opposed to "tragic") stature. These myths may also possibly function in illuminating Ahab's

conception of the hunt, although that is a matter for debate.

An unusual feature of the myths of Hero and Dragon in "The Honor and Glory of Whaling" is their presentation, which is characterized by vagueness of reference to the events of the novel, making the significance of these myths peculiarly difficult to establish. The narrator, whether or not identified as Ishmael, recounts a number of these myths, and leaves them "free-standing," or "floating." Their relevance to Ahab's hunt for Moby Dick is not stated by the narrator, so that it is useless to appeal to his authority, and the reader is accordingly faced with the problem of what light, if any, they throw on this event. It is possible that the narrator--and perhaps even the author--had not fully thought out the mythical implications of Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick. It is no less conceivable, however, that the indeterminate-ness of application of these myths to the events of the novel is a deliberate auctorial device, forcing the reader to contemplate a number of possibilities, and choose one of them.

The very indeterminateness of application of these myths to the novel's events could suggest that they are used, as in a theatrical backdrop, as archetypal background to the action which takes place in the foreground, and this, I argue, is indeed the function in the novel of references to them. The narrator appears to leave it to the reader to draw his own conclusions about the relation between the events in the foreground and the archetypal

events depicted in the background, and so the reader must decide whether the characters of flesh and blood imitate or re-enact the events depicted in the mythical archetype, or whether the relation is one of ironic contrast. The answer is by no means clear, let alone obvious: it is open to debate whether *Moby Dick* is like or unlike the dragons of myth, and whether Ahab is a hero or is contrasted to the ancient heroes. The myths of Hero and Dragon, therefore, assume the status of touchstones or criteria of judgement, endorsed by the weighty authority of myth, by means of which the main event of the novel may be seen in perspective and assessed.

It should be noted that these myths purport to refer to particular persons doing battle with particular dragons or whales, as the narrator insists, and they also purport to have, and may conceivably have, some historical basis, referring "historically" to specific individual heroes, such as Perseus, Hercules, St. George and so on (305). These myths also refer, potentially, to whalemén in general: ". . . only a Perseus, a St. George, a Coffin, have the heart in them to march boldly up to a whale" (305). Thus Ishmael is ". . . transported with the reflection that [he himself] belong[s], though but subordinately, to so emblazoned a fraternity": "Perseus, St. George, Hercules, Jonah, and Vishnó! there's a member-roll for you! What club but the whaleman's can head off like that?" (304,306). Although whalemén in general are discussed in this quotation, the important question is whether these references to heroes battling

with dragons or whales apply to Ahab's contest with Moby Dick. The myths refer to dragons killed by Perseus, St. George, and others, and the dragon references could refer, by implication, to whales in general, but do they apply to Moby Dick?

The reader, then, has to decide whether the myths of Hero and Dragon illuminate Ahab's hunt for Moby Dick, and such an undertaking demands the establishment of criteria --for the hero, for the dragon, and for the enactment of the myths: analysis of the elements of the myths will, it is hoped, provide grounds for the establishment of the required criteria. As in instances of the application of general concepts to particular cases, the reader may then clarify the relation of these myths to the events of the novel. Armed with the relevant criteria, he can proceed to investigate Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick, and decide whether Ahab is a hero, whether Moby Dick is a dragon, and whether the myths of Hero and Dragon have been enacted.

The myths of heroes contending with dragons must be examined in order to analyse the elements of these myths, and to establish the various criteria. The narrator cites the examples of Perseus, Hercules, and St. George and their myths must initially be recounted.⁹³

Flying over the coast of Philistia (or Ethiopia, in some versions), Perseus espies a maiden chained to a rock. Instantly falling in love with her, he descends and begs to hear her story. She replies that she is Andromeda,

daughter of King Cepheus, and that Poseidon, in his anger, ". . . churned up a flood which swept across the land. With it came a monster, devouring whatever crossed his path. An oracle promised liberation from this plague provided I, the king's daughter, were thrown to the beast for food. My father's people pressed him to save them, and in despair he had me fettered to this cliff'" (Schwab 69). Andromeda's parents were "watching anxiously from the shore near by" (Graves, Greek 1:240); when the dragon appeared, "they embraced their daughter but could think of nothing to do but weep and lament" (Schwab 69). Having obtained the king's permission for the hand of his daughter, Perseus enters into combat with the dragon as it emerges to devour the girl, and slays the monster after a brief battle. As the narrator of Moby-Dick says, ". . . Perseus . . . harpooned the monster and delivered and married the maid" (304).

It is to be noted that this battle was not Perseus' first encounter with a monster: he had previously killed the Gorgon, Medusa, whose serpent hair and petrifying hideousness suggest a connection with dragons and snakes. Parallel to the myth of Perseus and Medusa is that of Bellerophon and the Chimaera. As Robert Graves puts it, "Perseus killed the monstrous Medusa with the help of winged sandals; Bellerophon used a winged horse, born from the decapitated body of Medusa, to kill the monstrous Chimaera" (Greek 1:244). According to Schwab, the Chimaera "was bringing ruin upon Lycia" (203). However, the motive in sending Bellerophon upon this quest was not

to save the Lycians from the scourge of the dragon, but to send him to his death. Perseus, too, was sent on a quest that was to be fatal, and he is thus linked with Bellerophon and also with Hercules, a descendant of his.

In a manner similar to that of Perseus, Hercules encounters Hesione, whom he rescues from the dragon which he slays:

. . . Poseidon had sent a sea-monster to punish Laomedon for having failed to pay him and Apollo their stipulated fee . . . Poseidon ordered this monster to prey on the plainsfolk and ruin their fields by spewing sea water over them. . . . Laomedon visited the oracle of Zeus Ammon, and was advised by him to expose Hesione [his daughter] on the seashore for the monster to devour. . . . In the end, it was decided to cast lots, and the lot fell upon Hesione, who was accordingly bound to the rock, where Heracles found her (Graves, Greek 2:168-69).

According to Schwab, "As Heracles was passing, the unhappy father called to him and asked for help" (175). C. Kerényi adds as follows: ". . . Heracles leaped into the creature's gullet . . . he abode for three days in its belly and came back bald-headed. Thus he killed the monster" (Heroes 161).

As with Perseus, this exploit is not the only recorded one in which Hercules encounters and slays a dragon. Among his other opponents are the Lernaean Hydra, a monster who reputedly terrorized the countryside, and also the dragon Ladon, guardian of the golden apples of the Hesperides. In addition, Hercules kills the griffin-vulture which has long tormented Prometheus, and captures the monster-dog Cerberus, three-headed and maned with

serpents, in the underworld.

The narrator of Moby-Dick has qualms about Hercules being a "whaleman"--a slayer of dragons: "Whether to admit Hercules among us or not, concerning this I long remained dubious . . ." (305). Yet he need not have been so diffident, for Hercules' battles with dragons and monsters are no different in kind from those of Perseus, and the rescue of Hesione is no different from that of Andromeda. Possibly the narrator was not very familiar with all the details of the exploits of Hercules, for he is referred to in general terms as a "brawny doer of rejoicing good deeds" (306). Attention is drawn to the strange circumstance of Hercules being swallowed by a whale and spending three days in its belly before fighting his way out: apparently the narrator's qualms are due to the fact that "it nowhere appears that he ever actually harpooned his fish, unless, indeed, from the inside. Nevertheless . . . I claim him for one of our clan" (306).

The obvious parallel to Jonah does not fail to strike the narrator, and with tongue in cheek he argues: "If I claim the demi-god then, why not the prophet?" (306). According to the narrator, "the best contradictory authorities" consider the Grecian story derived from the Hebrew--and vice versa! (306).⁹⁴

Like his famous predecessors, St. George also saves the daughter of a king from being devoured by a dragon:⁹⁵

It chanced . . . that he was riding one day in the province of Libya, and there he came upon a city called Sylene, near which was a marshy swamp. In this lived a dragon "which envenomed

all the country." The people had mustered together to attack and kill it, but its breath was so terrible that all had fled. To prevent its coming nearer they supplied it every day with two sheep, but when the sheep grew scarce, a human victim had to be substituted. This victim was selected by lot, and the lot just then had fallen on the king's own daughter. No one was willing to take her place, and the maiden had gone forth dressed as a bride to meet her doom. Then St. George, coming upon the scene, attacked the dragon and transfixed it with his lance. Further, he borrowed the maiden's girdle, fastened it round the dragon's neck, and with this aid she led the monster captive into the city (ed. Thurston 148-49)

The people would have fled, but George told them not to fear. He undertook to slay the dragon if they would accept Jesus Christ, and when they assented, the dragon was slain.⁹⁶

Analysts of myth regard the myths of Perseus, Hercules, and George slaying dragons as having evolved from the prototype Combat myth, that Ur-battle in which Marduk slays the sea-monster, Tiamat (Graves, Greek 1:244 n.7; 2:174 n.2; Hooke 17). Robert Graves argues that Marduk's predecessor, Bel, had actually slain Tiamat, although that did not prevent Marduk from claiming to have done so (Greek 1:35 n.5). Michael Grant argues that there may have been intermediaries between the prototype of Marduk's battle with Tiamat, and the battles of heroes and dragons. Thus, in slaying the monster Typhoeus, "Zeus is the forerunner of many dragon-slayers, such as Saint George of Cappadocia . . . But Zeus is also the successor of Babylonian Marduk who overcame Tiamat . . ." (Grant 115). G.S. Kirk sounds a note of caution, arguing that ". . . tracing the Near-Eastern origins of recurrent motifs in

Greek myths is a fascinating but perilous occupation" (Nature 255). In his view, the theories of Robert Graves are "brilliant" but "totally misguided" (Kirk, Myth 5). Nonetheless, it is generally acknowledged, as Kirk puts it, that ". . . Greek myths were infected by Near-Eastern themes . . ." (Nature 255). Whatever the merits or de-merits of other attempts at tracing the origins of myths, the evidence for viewing Marduk's conquest of Tiamat as the prototype of Perseus', Hercules' and George's battles with dragons is very persuasive, and there are many voices in favour of its acceptance.

Analysis of the myths of Hero and Dragon reveals their elements, which provide grounds for the establishment of criteria for the hero, for the dragon, and for the enactment of the myth.

In all the preceding myths, there is a dragon or other monster of frightening appearance, whose physical being frequently suggests a pre-human era of the world's history, and whose longevity apparently dates from time immemorial. In some instances in which a hero fights with a dragon or other monster, it is a menace to society; in other instances, the dragon is a creature dwelling in remote regions, and the hero has to search far and wide to find it. This distinction is an important one.

When the dragon menaces a city, it is frequently the scourge of the countryside, and is dangerous and deadly: Philistia, or Ethiopia, is devastated by flood and by the

dragon slain by Perseus; the plains of Troy are threatened by the dragon slain by Hercules; Libya is "envenomed" by the dragon slain by St. George. Unless appeased by its hapless victims, sacrifices to its ravenous appetite,⁹⁷ the dragon threatens the city, or even the whole countryside, with devastation. This creature is clearly a force or principle of violent and unnatural death and destruction, and is universally regarded as evil. It appears to be an enemy of mankind in its own right, but it may be sent by a greater power, such as Poseidon, wishing to punish a city. The dragons menacing cities and slain by Perseus and Hercules emerge from the sea, accompanied by or causing destructive floods, while the dragon slain by St. George emerges from a swamp. The association of dragon and inundation recalls the primordial Tiamat.

The threat to the city is a matter of common knowledge at the time, and the notion of a dragon being a menace implies that its destructive nature is widely recognized, and not merely a matter of opinion or private conviction. There can be no question about the evil of such a dragon, or of its hostile acts towards mankind, for its savage nature has been publicly attested to, and the evil it performs is visible and beyond dispute: everybody in the city knows of the danger, if not from personal experience, then owing to the selection of victims by means of lot and oracle. There is a universal cry that somebody take steps to save those in danger, for help is urgently called for and desperately needed, initially to save the maiden bound to the rock, ultimately to save the city.

Yet heroes fight not only dragons that menace cities: both Perseus and Hercules also fight dragons that dwell in isolation, remote from the haunts of men. Here is Kerenyi's description of the dwelling-place of Medusa:

On the other side of Okeanos, near the Garden of the Heperides, where the realm of Night begins, was the dwelling-place of the Gorgons. . . . Neither sun nor moon ever shone upon them. A landscape of pathless forests and rocks had its beginning there . . . It was the land of darkness . . . (Heroes 50).

Medusa menaces no city, nor does she threaten anyone when Perseus seeks her out and slays her. Yet remoteness of habitation reduces neither the danger nor the deadliness of the monster, for few could be more dangerous than the Gorgons, who literally petrify all who set eyes upon them. Their evil and destructive nature, as with dragons that menace cities, is a matter of common knowledge, for their notoriety has spread far and wide. Perseus himself sees plenty of evidence of their victims as he approaches their cave:

Everywhere, all through the fields and along the roadways he saw statues of men and beasts, whom the sight of the Gorgons had changed from their true selves into stone (ed. Innes 115).

The distinction between a dragon menacing a city and one which lives remote from mankind, and a description of their respective characteristics, provide the criteria for dragons in the myths of Hero and Dragon.

As there are two situations in which the hero fights a dragon and, correspondingly, two types of dragon, so there are two corresponding types of hero. If the dragon

menaces a city, the hero may be looked upon as a saviour, but if the hero seeks out a dragon living in isolation far from the haunts of men, he cannot be seen in this light. To say this is not to diminish the heroic stature or courage of the fighter against remote dragons, but to suggest that he has a different function from that of the saviour-hero. However, there is nothing to prevent the same hero from fighting both types of dragon, as do Perseus and Hercules: thus Perseus slays Medusa before slaying the dragon menacing Andromeda's city. When he saves Andromeda, he is clearly a saviour but, when he slays Medusa, he is not, although his "work" is the same. The distinction, then, is entirely pragmatic, depending upon the setting of the battle, and upon its outcome and consequences.⁹⁸

In the battle with a dragon menacing a city, the plight of the victim demonstrates the response of the populace to the dangers threatening it, a response at once hopeless and helpless, expressed in its willingness to select victims to appease the wrath and savage appetite of the dragon. The selection of victims is symbolic of abject defeat and expresses a sense of implacable doom, which can at best be only temporarily alleviated, oppressing king and commoner alike. The vulnerability of the city is epitomized dramatically in the plight of Ariadne and Hesione; their being young women and bound to rocks serves to reinforce the pervading sense of helplessness, fatalistic in the extreme. Although the call to save the person or persons in danger rings loud and clear, no one is able or willing to step forward in response to

it. The maiden's plight is witnessed by the king and queen, parents of the victim, and no doubt by their attendants as well: all stand nearby, lamenting and weeping yet hanging back, unable to prevent the monster from approaching its prey. Thus instead of coming to her assistance, Agenor (or Phineus, according to Ovid), uncle and fiancé of Andromeda, makes himself scarce when the dragon emerges from the sea, although he vociferously demands fulfilment of the marriage contract once the dragon is safely dead.

Providentially, the saviour-hero arrives on the scene of horror, invariably coming from afar, sometimes from the sky, and dramatically rescues the maiden in the nick of time. In sharp contrast to the despairing inhabitants, Perseus, Hercules and St. George are neither stricken with paralysing fears nor even, apparently, intimidated. Perseus and Hercules are implored to come to the aid of the stricken maidens, perhaps because their remarkable powers are evident to the kings, or perhaps as a desperate last resort. The call for help spurs the saviour-hero into immediate action. He steps forward, offers to slay the dragon and, at once, enters into bloody combat. The concept saviour-hero, then, implies tremendous courage and contrasts with the timidity, if not cowardice, of others.

The hero who fights a dragon living in remote regions is no less valiant, for the contrast between hero and populace is no different wherever the battle is fought. By extrapolation, it is evident that people would be as little inclined to contend with Medusa as to fight the

dragon attacking Andromeda: the spell exercised by Medusa upon her victims is typified in the petrifying effects of her hideous visage upon all who behold her. In contrast, Perseus valiantly attacks and slays Medusa. He is more than a match for her deadly powers and even comes to exercise control over them when, after slaying her, he keeps her severed head in a wallet.

Before a protagonist steps forward to do battle with the dragon, he cannot begin to be considered a hero or a saviour-hero: that step is his first towards heroic status. Yet although great courage is a necessary condition for the concepts "hero" and "saviour-hero," it is by no means a sufficient condition for either, as will be argued.

The bravery of the hero and saviour-hero is not a matter of potential, but of demonstration in action. While it may be feasible to talk of heroic potential (as of intelligence potential), was there ever a hero immortalized in myth or legend who demonstrated no more than potential? In the myths of Hero and Dragon, deeds alone count. Accordingly, the concepts "hero" and "saviour-hero" impose the necessity of passing a test: only if the challenge is accepted can the test be passed (or failed), but if the test is never undergone, the candidate's performance can never be known. It follows that, for the myth of Hero and Dragon to be enacted, the presence of a dragon is as essential as that of a combatant. The challenge of a Medusa or a dragon is necessary before Perseus can acquire his exalted hero, or saviour-hero, status. Sometimes such an encounter is avidly sought,

but often it is sprung upon the protagonist by chance.

The concepts hero and saviour-hero are initially situational, that is to say, dependent upon an heroic response to a situation fraught with danger, rather than ones designating the combatant's nature. To the protagonist of the myths, the presence of a dragon issues in a warrant, if not an imperative, to encounter it in battle. The difference between the response to a dragon menacing a city and a dragon living in remote regions appears to be one of urgency--of the danger to the victims of the dragon--but the courage required is undoubtedly the same. The heroic response of the combatant is a brief apotheosis of human nature, as with the semi-divine heroes and their mortal counterparts, such as St. George; the dragon constitutes a challenge to which the hero and the saviour-hero, unlike other people, respond with superhuman strength. Once a combatant is victorious, he acquires heroic status; the appellation "hero," acquired by the slayers of dragons living remote from men, and the appellation "saviour-hero," acquired by the slayers of dragons menacing cities, remains thereafter as a designation of the combatant. This must be so, for otherwise Perseus would be a saviour-hero on the day he slays the dragon and saves Andromeda, but would cease being one on the following day.

The adoption of the heroic role may be warranted, but nobody may step forward, as happened prior to Perseus' rescue of Andromeda. Conversely, it should be noted in passing that the heroic role may be adopted without its adoption being warranted. Such was the misfortune of Don

Quixote, a latter-day would-be hero and saviour of damsels in distress. Wandering the earth in search of tests and challenges yet coming across none of moment, Don Quixote, convinced that he is a knightly hero, is the victim of delusion and self-deception.

If one of the necessary conditions for the status of hero or saviour hero is the bravery of the man who, unlike others, steps forward to do battle, the other (and logically prior) necessary condition is the presence of a dragon, whether living in remote regions or menacing a city. Both conditions are necessary, yet neither is in itself sufficient, for the enactment of the myth demands both dragon and hero. Thus courage is not enough to make a hero, if the criterion for hero be extracted from the myths of Hero and Dragon, for victims of self-deception may do battle with imaginary or illusory dragons.

Even if the adoption of the heroic role is warranted by the presence of a dragon, and even if the combatant steps forward to do battle with it, it still does not follow that he is a hero or saviour-hero, nor that the myth of Hero and Dragon is being enacted, for the combination of conditions is not yet sufficient. The final necessary and sufficient conditions are more stringent, derived from elements of these myths that are located in the outcome of the battle. When Perseus, Hercules or St. George encounter the dragon or monster, the protagonist always emerges victorious from the combat. The concept of victory implies both that the protagonist slays the dragon, and that he survives the combat and lives on.

The protagonist's victory provides the final necessary and sufficient conditions for the concepts of hero and saviour-hero, and also for the enactment, or re-enactment, of the myth.

The myths of Hero and Dragon are orientated towards life. They are not blind to terrors and dangers which cause such suffering to vulnerable humanity but, in the figures of hero and saviour-hero, these myths are seen to be robust and tough, reflecting optimism and confidence, for the forces of death and destruction are defeated. Life is supremely valued, and death is a disaster. There may be other myths which celebrate courage in itself, irrespective of the outcome of the combat, and which may, for example, emphasize the final victory of the spirit, or may praise martyrdom. However, Perseus is no martyr, nor are Hercules or St. George. Their victories are tangible and of this world (although St. George made his conditional upon religious conversion), transforming the protagonist into a hero or saviour-hero, and celebrated in myth.

When the saviour-hero slays the dragon menacing a city, he confers the gift of life upon its inhabitants, for destruction and evil are averted by vanquishing the force of unnatural death. The life of the maiden bound upon the rock is saved, and the city is at last relieved of the scourge of death and destruction that it had formerly to endure. As heroes are distinguished from other men by valour and by victory over a dragon or monster, so the saviour-hero is distinguished from other

heroes by a victory which confers life upon others by eliminating the threat of unnatural death and destruction. Any diminution of the achievement of the protagonist in battle with the dragon menacing mankind, or living in remote regions, reduces his claim to be a saviour-hero or a hero. Thus, if the protagonist slays the dragon but does not survive the battle, or if the dragon is not slain (but, say, escapes), then there are correspondingly fewer grounds for the protagonist's celebration as a hero. Should the dragon kill the protagonist, and continue menacing the city, or roaming remote regions, then it is clear that the protagonist is not a saviour-hero or a hero, and that the myth has not been re-enacted.

To step forward and fight the dragon, like entering a race, implies a decision, or perhaps a response to a call, for it is a voluntary act. However, to be a saviour-hero or a hero is not only to enter a race but to win it; the protagonist must not only fight but must be victorious. Yet victory is not the consequence of volition: the title "victor" depends upon the outcome of the combat. Whether or not the protagonist remains alive and kills the dragon is what counts in such a battle. Only if the dragon is slain and the victor remains alive is the combatant a saviour-hero or a hero, and the myth re-enacted.

In the myths of Hero and Dragon, intentions and motives are less important than deeds. A person who intends conferring life upon others by slaying the dragon attacking a city, but who does not succeed, may be brave, may be a martyr if he loses his own life, but he is not

a saviour-hero. In contrast, a person of whose motives one knows nothing, but who steps forward and actually kills the dragon in combat, thereby removing the danger to a city and in fact conferring life upon others, is a saviour-hero. It is true that the appeal to help the victim or victims is essentially moral, its assumption being the sanctity of life, yet, although the appeal is made when life is threatened, it does not necessarily follow that the protagonist's response to it is motivated by moral considerations. Thus Perseus' motive in rescuing Andromeda may well have been love or lust or curiosity or something other: it is said that he fell instantly in love with her, and that he asked for her hand in marriage before stepping forward to slay the dragon (ed. Innes 112-13). Motives are similarly unimportant for the hero doing battle with a dragon in remote regions. Perseus, for example, ventured forth to slay Medusa in order to provide a suitable gift for Polydektes' banquet, to which he had been invited (Kerenyi, Heroes 48-49).

The myths of Hero and Dragon derive from the youth of the Western world, and are rooted in yet more ancient cultures. The appellation "hero" is a sign of adulation, and Perseus, Hercules and St. George, slayers of dragons, were all revered. Both Perseus and Hercules, descended of the gods, were awarded the semi-divine status of cult worship;⁹⁹ George was declared a saint (although as martyr rather than hero (Hogarth, "St. George" 18)), and in fairy-tales, the dragon-killer is awarded half the kingdom.

Armed with criteria extracted from the myths of Hero and Dragon, it should now be possible to examine the text of the novel, with a view to exploring what light (if any) these myths shed upon the major event of the novel, the encounter between Ahab and Moby Dick, recognizing that such an undertaking must always be a matter for debate.

The initial enquiry must focus on the status of the White Whale: is he a dragon, resembling one of those encountered in myth? In a sense, it is beyond dispute that Moby Dick is one, for, since the narrator identifies whales and dragons (305), Moby Dick is a dragon by definition, as are all the whales of the sea; all instances of hunting whales are, ipse facto, instances of hunting dragons. In spite of the narrator's insistence on this point, however, this sense of the term "dragon" cannot be all that he had in mind in alluding to the myths of Perseus, Hercules and St. George. The dragons of these myths are creatures more horrifying than most whales, and far more powerful and deadly. Ought Moby Dick to be viewed as such a creature?

The problem is, whose views is one to take into account? The most articulate claims about Moby Dick are unquestionably those of Ahab, and he does not doubt that the White Whale exceeds all other whales in deadliness and destructiveness. To Ahab, he is the "white fiend" (404), the incarnation of Evil, and should be pursued unto death. Yet, as has been mentioned, Ahab is one of many

characters in the novel, and his assertions are not beyond question. Other characters make judgements which are very different from those of Ahab. To Starbuck, Moby Dick is but a "dumb brute" (144); to Gabriel, he is "the Shaker God incarnated" (267); to Dr. Bunker, surgeon of the Samuel Enderby, Moby Dick reveals, not malice, but rather "awkwardness" (368). Not all the characters are even particularly interested in Moby Dick. The captain of the Bachelor, for instance, adopts a tone of dismissal. In reply to Ahab's queries about the White Whale, he says, "'No; only heard of him; but don't believe in him at all'" (408).

Whom is the reader to believe? What is said is important, but so is who said it. Both Ahab and Gabriel are suspect, although they hold diametrically opposed opinions about Moby Dick, since their reliability as witnesses is impugned because of their madness. Ahab is indefatigably insistent that Moby Dick is a creature more horrifying, powerful, malicious and deadly than any other whales in the sea--but Ahab is monomaniac. The narrator emphasizes that, in other respects, Ahab is normal, that his intellect is unaffected, and that the means he adopts towards his ends are perfectly sane. It is only on the topic of Moby Dick that what Ahab has to say is unreliable. Gabriel, too, is not to be believed when talking about Moby Dick, for when doing so he speaks with "gibbering insanity" (267). Possessing "that cunning peculiar to craziness," Gabriel assumes "a steady common sense exterior" in order to be accepted as a sailor aboard

the Jeroboam, but his "insanity broke out" afresh soon after losing sight of the land (266).

Yet could not Ahab be partially right, even though he is mad? It will be remembered that one of the gyres of his madness reflects an ever-increasing augmentation in his mind of Moby Dick's evil. Thus although Ahab's mad claims that the White Whale is the incarnation of evil far exceed that whale's actual danger and deadliness, nonetheless Moby Dick may indeed be as monstrous as any dragon encountered in myth: the notion of the incarnation of evil entails a measure of evil vastly greater and more powerful than that of the dragons of the myths here considered.¹⁰⁰ Hence it is still an open question whether or not Moby Dick resembles the dragons encountered by heroes in these myths. Besides, the reader does not know whether Starbuck and Dr. Bunger are right about the White Whale. In such an important matter, the reader must judge for himself, rather than depend upon the opinions and assertions of the characters of the novel. Since they have not helped to settle the question, the reader must search for more objective material to enable him to do so. Ahab's assertions about Moby Dick are given at the end of Chapter 41--"Moby Dick"--and investigation of the rest of the chapter will prove fruitful, since it is devoted (among other things) to impressions and reports of the White Whale.

The picture of Moby Dick emerging from Chapter 41 is compounded of a mixture of facts, superstitions and rumours, and information about the terrors of sperm whale fishing.

To account for this extraordinary combination, the narrator emphasizes that Moby Dick's natural haunts are the seas most frequented by sperm whale fishermen, but that ". . . only a few of them, comparatively, had knowingly seen him; while the number who as yet had actually and knowingly given battle to him, was small indeed" (155). Thus some sailors tend to ascribe the deeds of "a Sperm Whale of uncommon magnitude and malignity" to Moby Dick, and "it was not an unfair presumption" for them to do so (155). Other sailors do the opposite: since there are instances in the sperm whale fishery of attacks by whales "of great ferocity, cunning, and malice," they are ". . . content to ascribe the peculiar terror [Moby Dick] bred, more . . . to the perils of the Sperm Whale fishery at large, than to the individual cause" (155-56). As an exacerbating factor, sailors in general tend to be superstitious, according to the narrator: ". . . in maritime life . . . wild rumors abound . . ." (156). Further, whalers are not exempt from "that ignorance and superstitiousness hereditary to all sailors" and, of all sailors, the whaler comes into closest contact with all the horrors as well as the marvels of the sea, so that he is ". . . wrapped by influences all tending to make his fancy pregnant with many a mighty birth" (156).

No doubt the sperm whale hunt is a frightening undertaking: many courageous whalers who hunt other species of whale would "decline a contest" with the sperm whale (157). Naturalists declare it to be a terror to other marine creatures, including sharks, asserting that

they dash themselves to death against rocks in their haste to escape its jaws. These same naturalists assert that the sperm whale is "so incredibly ferocious as continually to be athirst for human blood" (157). Whalers who hear such reports are convinced that the outcome of any encounter with such a creature would mean "inevitably to be torn into a quick eternity" (157).

Remarks of this sort are highly suggestive to the reader, who has been given various hints of Moby Dick's ferocity, and who is predisposed to a sympathetic reception of Ahab's oratory, manifested several paragraphs later in the novel, on the evil of the White Whale, for all the terrors of the Sperm Whale seem to redound upon Moby Dick. It is important in an enquiry into the nature of Moby Dick to distinguish suggestion--or the transference of suggestion-- from fact.

The catalogue of superstitions about Moby Dick functions in a similar manner. The "rumors," combined with "morbid hints, and half-formed foetal suggestions of supernatural agencies," produce a picture of the White Whale "invested . . . with new terrors unborrowed from anything that visibly appears" (156). It was believed that Moby Dick was ". . . ubiquitous; that he had actually been encountered in opposite latitudes at one and the same instant of time" (158). It was even believed that he was immortal. As these superstitious beliefs are revealed, they are simultaneously labelled "superstitions" and "wild suggestings" and so are immediately discredited (158). Nevertheless, they function in mystifying the

reader and in arousing his curiosity and apprehensiveness by evoking an atmosphere of terror and fatality.

Buried among the details of the terrors of sperm whale fishing and superstitious beliefs about Moby Dick are factual accounts of encounters with him. Here, for example, is a passage in which the facts of a number of encounters with Moby Dick are inextricably interwoven with rumour and embroidered with circumlocution:

. . . in most instances, such seemed the White Whale's infernal aforethought of ferocity, that every dismembering or death that he caused, was not wholly regarded as having been inflicted by an unintelligent agent (159).

The following passage is a condensed factual account based upon numerous encounters:

. . . such calamities did ensue in these assaults --not restricted to sprained wrists and ankles, broken limbs, or devouring amputations--but fatal to the last degree of fatality; those repeated disastrous repulses, all accumulating and piling their terrors upon Moby Dick; those things had gone far to shake the fortitude of many brave hunters . . . (156).

Here follows another passage describing the facts, based upon further encounters, albeit with a doubtful reference in the phrase, "according to specific accounts": were those accounts, the reader wonders, rumour or fact?

Nor was it his unwonted magnitude, nor his remarkable hue, nor yet his deformed lower jaw, that so much invested the whale with natural terror, as that unexampled, intelligent malignity which, according to specific accounts, he had over and over again evinced in his assaults. More than all, his treacherous retreats struck more of dismay than perhaps aught else (159).

Prior to the Pequod's epic battle with Moby Dick, the most important recorded encounter is Ahab's, that in which the White Whale "reaped away" Ahab's leg, and which is the turning-point in Ahab's life. The scene is one of devastation, and is apparently typical of such encounters, with "the chips of chewed boats, and the sinking limbs of torn comrades" (159).

Embedded as they are amidst superstitions, rumours and suggestions of terror, the facts of the actual encounters with Moby Dick are heightened in horror by their setting: not every creature could be a suitable object for, or bear the weight of, such a mass of horrifying suggestions. However, the facts of the encounters in themselves present incontrovertible evidence of Moby Dick's nature. He clearly stands out as particularly dangerous and deadly, a creature fearful to behold and terrifying to encounter, who would tear his hunters with "demonic indifference" (437). He does not appear to be different in kind from the dragons and monsters of myth encountered by Perseus, Hercules and St. George.

This impression is reinforced by consideration of the various encounters with Moby Dick that are recorded elsewhere in the novel. In the course of the Pequod's voyage, there are a number of gams with vessels, some of which have encountered the White Whale. The chapter, "The Town-Ho's Story," tells of one of these encounters, although Ahab does not get to hear about the incident: the mate, Radney, was afloat on the sea when Moby Dick seized him ". . . between his jaws; and rearing high up

with him, plunged headlong again, and went down" (222); some time later, the whale rose again with the tatters of Radney's shirt in his teeth. In the gam with the Jeroboam, Ahab hears of the death of its mate in one such encounter. Another gam takes place with the Samuel Enderby. Its captain, Captain Boomer, relates how the whale cut his whaleboat in two; in the ensuing turmoil, a barbed iron ripped his arm so severely that it had to be amputated. In the gam with the Rachel, Ahab hears that one of its whaleboats, with its crew aboard, is missing after encountering Moby Dick. Finally, the Pequod meets the Delight. The shattered remains of a whaleboat are visible upon the ship's broad beams; four men have been drowned and a fifth man killed as a consequence of their encounter with Moby Dick.

The Pequod's own, eventual, encounter with the White Whale is the most terrifying of all. On the first day of a three-day battle, the whaleboats were in the sea awaiting the re-appearance of Moby Dick, who had at last been sighted, when ". . . suddenly . . . there were plainly revealed two long rows of white glistening teeth . . . The glittering mouth yawned beneath the boat like an open-doored marble tomb . . ." (448). The whale proceeded to take the bows of the boat within its mouth and ". . . shook the slight cedar as a mildly cruel cat her mouse"; he "dallied" with the doomed craft in this "devilish way" until he snapped the boat completely in two (449). Only the intervention of the Pequod saved Ahab and his crew as the whale swam around them in ever-contracting circles.

In the furious battle of the second day, Moby Dick sends Ahab's boat hurtling through the air and spinning over and over, until it falls face downwards into the sea. In the turmoil, Ahab's ivory leg is snapped off, a grim reminder of the amputation in the original encounter, and Fedallah vanishes, an ominous portent of the fulfilment of the prophecies of doom. The third and final day of the chase reveals Fedallah's torn body lashed to the whale's back. Maddened by the attack on him of the previous day, Moby Dick seemed "possessed by all the angels that fell from heaven" (464). In his fury, and "strangely vibrating his predestinating head," Moby Dick attacks the ship itself: "Retribution, swift vengeance, eternal malice were in his whole aspect . . . ," as he charges full force against the Pequod and sinks it (468). Ahab is strangled in the lines of his harpoon and, except for Ishmael, the entire crew is drowned.

There are objective grounds, then, independent of Ahab's monomaniac assertions, for concluding that Moby Dick is deadly and dangerous, and resembles the dragons encountered in myth. If it were thought that, since Ahab's conviction that Moby Dick is Evil incarnate is incredible, therefore Moby Dick is unlike the dragons of myth, such an argument would be fallacious: Ahab may be an unreliable witness, but it does not follow that his convictions on Moby Dick are entirely without foundation. The deadly nature of Moby Dick is certainly not a figment of Ahab's imagination, for it has been publicly attested to in a series of disasters, and, among those who have directly

encountered the White Whale, his destructive nature is a matter of common knowledge.

If, then, the White Whale is to be viewed as a dragon, does he skulk remote from the paths of men, such as the monster Medusa, or is he a menace to mankind, such as the dragon attacking Andromeda?

The criterion derived from the myths of Hero and Dragon posits that the menacing dragon attacks the habitations of men and that help is desperately needed by those endangered, whereas the dragon skulking remote from mankind is not an aggressor. It follows that the criterion for the menacing dragon does not apply to Moby Dick. All the records of the various encounters with him, including that of the Pequod, point to his attacking others only when threatened; the encounters with him invariably occur during whalehunts. To Moby Dick, the whaling ship must seem "the source of all his persecutions," as is the Pequod when attacking him (466). Left alone, he appears never to initiate attacks. Starbuck's remarks to Ahab on the third, fatal, day of the chase accurately sum up who is attacking whom: "'See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him!'" (465). The generalization, "'Moby Dick seeks thee not,'" holds for all recorded instances of encounters with him.

When Ahab eventually locates Moby Dick at the end of the year-long voyage of the Pequod, the whale is neither attacking nor threatening anybody. Nobody requests help, nor appeals to Ahab to rid the world of Moby Dick, not even because of the latter's past encounters with whalemens.

Thus Ahab's hunt for Moby Dick can, by no stretch of the imagination, be regarded as providing help to anybody. On the contrary, those characters who comment on the projected hunt invariably warn or appeal to Ahab to desist from the attack.

Strangely enough, few such appeals are made by the members of Ahab's crew, although they have most reason to dread the hunt. Yet, if one bears in mind the terror in which Ahab holds the crew, their reluctance to speak out is understandable. Only Starbuck, from the beginning, voices opposition to the intended pursuit and several times exhorts Ahab to desist from the hunt, pleading, "'Shall we keep chasing this murderous fish till he swamps the last man?'" (459). When Pip gives voice to his fears, he probably reflects those of the crew: "' . . . that anaconda of an old man swore 'em in to hunt him! Oh, thou big white God . . . have mercy on this small black boy down here . . .'" (155). Yet although the crew do not actively oppose the hunt, for they are swept along by Ahab's passion and terrified of his power, they have no rational basis for initiating or continuing the pursuit; of their own free will, they would never hunt the White Whale. Starbuck speaks for everybody when he says to Ahab, "' . . . why should anyone give chase to that hated fish!'" (444). The crew would willingly give up the chase, but Ahab forces them to continue.

Two characters, not sailing aboard the Pequod, advise Ahab to refrain from his venture. One of them, Captain Boomer of the Samuel Enderby, is himself a victim of

Moby Dick's ferocity, and has had to endure the amputation of an arm. The captain's attitude to hunting Moby Dick contrasts radically with Ahab's, in spite of their similar experiences: "'No more White Whales for me; I've lowered for him once, and that has satisfied me. . . . he's best let alone . . .'" (368). The other character advising against the proposed hunt is Gabriel, who fulminates against Ahab and warns him of disaster.

Moby Dick, then, is a creature whose haunts are in the remote areas of the earth and who lives far away from mankind. So remote does he live, that Ahab is faced with the enormous practical problem of how to find him. In the words of the narrator, "The hated whale has the round watery world to swim in, as the small gold-fish has its glassy globe" (148). To the uninitiated, ". . . it might seem an absurdly hopeless task thus to seek out one solitary creature in the unhooped oceans of this planet" (171). However, by dint of poring, nightly, over his maps and charts, and by the most exhaustive and painstaking study of them, Ahab is confident that he will successfully track down Moby Dick and locate him again. The particular place and time appointed, known technically as the "Season-on-the-Line," is the very place and time of year where Ahab once lost his leg: only once a year can Ahab be certain of encountering Moby Dick again. Yet the possibility of chance affording an unexpected encounter entails constant vigilance: "in the sleeplessness of his vow," Ahab could not "tranquillize his unquiet heart as to postpone all intervening quest" (173).

Moby Dick, then, has a dangerous nature and, like some dragons of myth, lives remote from mankind. Had Moby Dick not resembled either of the dragons in the myths of Hero and Dragon, any further enquiry would be redundant, other than to emphasize the contrast between these myths and Ahab's pursuit of the White Whale: Ahab could not be seen as either hero or saviour-hero, and the myth of Hero and Dragon could not be re-enacted in the novel, for the presence of a dragon is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the status of hero or saviour-hero, and hence for the re-enactment of the myth.

If Moby Dick is a dragon that lives in the remote areas of the earth, there are a number of implications for Ahab. It will be recalled that Ahab inflated in his mind the evil of Moby Dick, claiming him to be Evil incarnate, yet nobody else agrees with Ahab, nothing points to his being right, and there is no independent support for his convictions. Everything points to Moby Dick's having a nature different from that which Ahab attributes to him, and hence to his having a different status. The difference is the measure of Ahab's illusion. Further, Moby Dick is not a menace to mankind, so it follows that Ahab cannot be a saviour-hero. However, Ahab may yet be a hero for doing battle with Moby Dick, for a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the status of hero is that the protagonist fight a dragon living remote from mankind.

Is Ahab, then, a hero?

Ahab is cast in an heroic mould, and his appearance

is that of antique divinity--indeed, of Perseus himself: "His whole high, broad form, seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable mould, like Cellini's cast Perseus" (110). Aboard ship, he stands "like an iron statue," one arm raised, looking straight ahead (400). He gives the impression of having ". . . an infinity of firmest fortitude, a determinate, unsunderable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of that glance," and he possesses an "iron soul" (111,438). Even his ship, the Pequod, has a fearsome nobility, apparelled like an "Ethiopian emperor" and hung with "trophies" (67).

Ahab bears a royal name, and the narrator refers to him as "King Ahab." At his solemn cabin table, he presides like the German emperor at the coronation banquet; he is compared to Belshazzar, King of Babylon, and to Caesar. As with Nicholas the Czar, so too with Ahab, ". . . the plebeian herds crouch abased before the tremendous centralization" (129). Ahab is "a Khan of the plank, and a king of the sea, and a great lord of Leviathans" (114). He is hedged about with prophecies and predictions: Tistig the squaw, Manxman, Elijah, Gabriel and Fedallah all utter oracular pronouncements about him and his voyage. He is one of mankind's "great hearts" and "noble natures" and is burdened with suffering, displaying "the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe" (451,111). The narrator hints that Ahab is referred to in a passage describing a man who ". . . makes one in a whole nation's census--a mighty pageant creature, formed for noble

tragedies" (71).

Ahab's grandeur and his glory are matched with indomitable courage. Whale-hunting is known to be a pursuit which is "bloody" and "full of rage and wildness," and the courage of whalers is legendary (162). Yet even they are reluctant to hunt the sperm whale, and of all sperm whales, the most notorious is Moby Dick, fabled in report, rumour and superstition. How extraordinary, then, must be Ahab's courage in setting out to slay him, and all the more so after Ahab was cruelly maimed in a violent attack upon the mammoth whale. Yet the terrifying creature does not daunt Ahab, even though the searing experience must still be vivid in Ahab's memory when the Pequod sets sail, for it is within the year that he suffered the crunched whaleboats, the scattered limbs of comrades, the laceration of leg from body, the months of dazed agony. Captain Boomer would never again lower his boats to attack Moby Dick, but Ahab, daring all, ventures forth to risk death.

Even if Ahab is misguided and deluded in his belief that the White Whale is the incarnation of evil, his awesome courage is not thereby diminished, for the very idea of setting out to hunt and slay such a monster is superhuman in the daring of its conception and execution. Not fears, nor omens, nor superstitions, nor warnings succeed in deterring Ahab from his attempt. His is courage of the highest order. Pip may be right when he says that Ahab is one of those men "that have no bowels to feel fear" (155), but it is equally possible that Ahab's fears

are those of everyman, and that the measure of his courage is his ability to conquer fear. Whatever the truth, Starbuck speaks for all when he acknowledges that Ahab reveals a "heart of wrought steel" in lowering his boat among the "ravening sharks" that follow him to the chase with open mouths (463).

Ahab is capable of great endurance and indomitable steadfastness and determination: "'I'll ten times girdle the unmeasured globe . . . but I'll slay him yet!'" (459). However, his limitless fortitude of spirit is tied to an aging and ailing body; it is his fate that "' . . . the unconquerable captain in the soul should have such a craven mate'" (458). He feels that in his "inaccessible being" he can never be so much as grazed, not by man, nor by the White Whale, nor by fiend (458). Even in the hour of death, when Moby Dick is "all-destroying," Ahab is adamant that the whale is "unconquering"; with his last breath, he still hurls defiance, and continues the battle: "' . . . from hell's heart I stab at thee . . .'" (468).

Certainly Ahab is cast in a grand and noble mould, and his courage, determination and powers of endurance cannot but be admired when he sets forth in his puny whaleboat and finally fights with Moby Dick in a three-day epic battle. Yet, admirable and important as Ahab's amazing courage is, there is more to being a hero than showing courage against the fiercest dragon: according to the criteria derived from the myths of Hero and Dragon, one must distinguish even the supremely courageous from the heroic. Ahab has much of the makings of a hero, but

not even his vast courage can expunge the momentous discrepancies between his own actions and those of the heroes of myth who encounter dragons, as may be seen if one examines the outcome of their confrontations.

The myths of Hero and Dragon celebrate not only the courage of the brave man, but also his victory over the dragon; to be a hero means to be a valiant victor. When the saviour-hero slays the dragon menacing a city, there is further celebration of the benefactor's gift of life: to be a saviour-hero means to be a valiant and victorious giver of life. The courage celebrated in the myths, then, is that which leads to victory over the dragon. In terms of the criteria derived from the myths, as has been claimed, it is essential that the hero survive the battle and, even more important, that he succeed in slaying the dragon.

Comparison of the outcome of the encounters between protagonist and dragon in the myths of Hero and Dragon and in Moby-Dick reveal three major discrepancies which, in ascending order of importance, are as follows: Ahab loses his own life in the battle; he does not succeed in killing Moby Dick; he is responsible for the destruction of the ship and the death of its crew, for all but Ishmael are drowned. Had Ahab lost only his own life but succeeded in slaying Moby Dick, the objections to his being a hero would be strong but less weighty, for his defeat would be counterbalanced by victory over his foe. Had Ahab lost only his own life and in addition failed to slay Moby Dick, the objections to his being a hero would be very strong indeed, for then there would be no victory at

all to celebrate.¹⁰¹ Yet not only does Ahab lose his own life and fail to slay Moby Dick, but he is responsible for the death of his crew, and it is therefore impossible to view Ahab as hero by the criteria derived from the myths. Rather than confer benefits upon others, Ahab brings disaster, while the White Whale is victorious-- facts which far outweigh in significance Ahab's admittedly great valour.

Unlike the life-orientated myths of Hero and Dragon, the voyage of the Pequod in pursuit of Moby Dick is a voyage of death. It may be true that Ahab does not consciously seek his own death and that of his crew, yet he does not value life highly either: in the voyage of the Pequod, Ahab is obsessed with the quest to slay Moby Dick and is utterly reckless with life, caring little for his own or the crew's. In contrast, prior to his monomania, Ahab was not willing to risk the life of his crew. Thus in an earlier voyage, when his ship was caught in a typhoon off Japan and its three masts were swept overboard, Captain Ahab had ". . . no time to think about Death then," says Peleg, adding, "'Life was what Captain Ahab . . . was thinking of; and how to save all hands . . . how to get into the nearest port . . .'" (85). In the quest to slay Moby Dick, Ahab changes his priorities, and, recklessly, is willing to risk life and limb.

It cannot be argued that the death of the Pequod's crew is simply the chance outcome of a whalehunt, the occupational hazard of a bloody and dangerous trade. Knowing of the deadly reputation of Moby Dick, and having

personally experienced the terrors of doing battle with him, Ahab could have little doubt as to the toll in lives that would be exacted in an onslaught upon him, whatever its outcome. Ahab deliberately endangers the lives of his crew beyond the normal hazards of whaling. The crew undertake the chase under Ahab's leadership and, spurred on by him, are induced to bind themselves in an oath which, under his domination, they are kept from breaking. Foreseeing that the end is near, Starbuck warns Ahab of the inevitable outcome and appeals to him to give up the chase before it is too late: "' . . . never, never wilt thou capture him, old man . . . Shall we be dragged by him to the bottom of the sea?'" (459). Yet Ahab, whose dominant concern is not for the lives of his crew, refuses to heed Starbuck's warning. From the time of the announcement of the hunt, Starbuck objects to it, and at one point considers killing Ahab or imprisoning him, as the only means of stopping him: "' . . . shall this crazed old man be tamely suffered to drag a whole ship's company down to doom with him?--Yes, it would make him the wilful murderer of thirty men and more . . . and come to deadly harm, my soul swears this ship will, if Ahab have his way'" (422). Here and in general, Starbuck has a choral function, voicing impotent opposition to the hunt. When Moby Dick rushes forward to batter and sink the Pequod, Starbuck can but lament, "'Oh, Ahab, Ahab, lo, thy work'" (467).

Ahab's dedication to his pursuit of Moby Dick coincides, to use Hawthorne's phrase, with his severing of ties with "the magnetic chain of humanity." His

willingness to risk the life of his crew is the ultimate expression of his alienation from humanity. His concern is to slay Moby Dick, with no thought of the cost to himself or others, and his actions vividly demonstrate his callousness towards himself and his crew.¹⁰² In failing to win victory over Moby Dick, and in bringing about his own death and that of his crew, Ahab proves himself no hero: the death-orientation of his actions is incompatible with the life-orientation of the heroes of the myths. Ahab's failing is moral in the most basic sense of the term, that in which the moral is the life-giving.¹⁰³

As has been mentioned, in Moby-Dick the myths of Hero and Dragon are "free-standing," being of indeterminate application to the events of the novel, and hence the myths function as archetypal backdrop to these events. The extraction of criteria from these myths has enabled the reader to compare and contrast Ahab's pursuit of, and encounter with, Moby Dick with the encounters of the heroes and dragons of myth. Comparison reveals neither complete coincidence nor complete disparity, but something of both. Thus Moby Dick conforms to the pattern of the dragon living remote from mankind, for he resembles the archetypal dragon or monster from the sea, even though he does not breathe out flames. So too, in setting sail to encounter Moby Dick and do battle with him, and in Ahab's superb courage, Ahab initially resembles the archetypal hero, although there is a suspicious disparity in his scant respect for the sanctity of human life. However, the resemblance proves to be only partial, for the outcome

of Ahab's encounter with Moby Dick reveals an absolute contrast to the outcome of the archetypal encounter of hero and dragon. The ultimate discrepancy is greater, more significant than the initial resemblance, and is sufficient to deny Ahab the status of hero.

If the events of the novel are viewed against the backdrop of the events of the myths of Hero and Dragon, it must therefore be concluded that the latter are not re-enacted in Ahab's encounter with Moby Dick. Daniel Hoffman comes to a similar conclusion, although the evidence presented in this chapter is totally different from his:

The narrative of the hunt . . . embod [ies] the seminal myth of a divinely endowed hero who in hand-to-hand combat rids his people of the evil monster that was their scourge. Ahab appears to belong in the company . . . [of] Perseus, Theseus, and Saint George. . . . But Ahab in fact differs from these prototypical figures in being a false culture-hero, pursuing a private grievance (rather than a divine behest) at the expense of the mankind in his crew (Form 234).¹⁰⁴

In the words of James E. Miller, Ahab is one of Melville's "crusaders destroying the world in an attempt to set it right" (Guide 5). Yet, whatever the conclusion of the enquiry, viewing Ahab's pursuit of and encounter with the White Whale against the backdrop of the archetypal encounter of the myths reveals the amazing richness and significance of the novel, and illuminates, for the reader, Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick, enabling the reader to assess the momentous events of the novel by the touchstone of ancient myth.¹⁰⁵

Northrop Frye contends that Moby-Dick is a romance-

quest, one displaying "the romantic theme of the wild hunt" (Anatomy 313).¹⁰⁶ Frye discusses the myths of Perseus and St. George as archetypal quests, but for him the quest rather than its outcome is important (Anatomy 189). Hence he argues that the protagonist in battle with his foe ". . . prove[s] himself to be a hero even if he does not survive the conflict" (Anatomy 187). It is evident that romance criteria of the hero differ from those suggested in this thesis as implicit in the myths of Hero and Dragon.

In his book, Meditations on the Hero, Walter L. Reed argues persuasively that Ahab is a hero according to the Romantic conception of the term, one of the main criteria of which is that the hero is "beyond good and evil" (4-5, 145-165).¹⁰⁷ According to Reed, the Romantic hero is an aesthetic phenomenon rather than an ideal; above all, he is not a moral ideal: ". . . the hero is not heroic because of any moral excellence . . ." (Meditations 4). However, I argue that Melville's references to the heroes of myth--Perseus, Hercules, St. George--suggest that Melville's standards differ from those of the Romantic writer who, according to Reed, considers the moral excellence of his hero irrelevant to his heroic stature; if Reed is correct, it is abundantly clear that the Romantic conception of the hero differs fundamentally from that implied by the myths of Hero and Dragon. I argue that the narrator's references to the heroes of myth function in Moby-Dick as the touchstone of the hero, and provide the reader with the criteria whereby to assess

Ahab's actions--and judge them wanting

It is noteworthy that Reed overlooks the significant function of the narrator's references to the heroes of myth, commenting on them as follows: "By a characteristic stretching of definitions, Ishmael is able to enroll Perseus, St. George, and Hercules in the ranks of whalemens. The genuine, mysterious heroism of Ahab is counterpointed by Ishmael's penchant for the tall tale" (Meditations 152). To Reed, these allusions are trivial; he regards them as given by Ishmael within the tradition of the American folk-tale.

If, in Ahab, Melville gives a masterly portrayal of the aesthetic creed of the Romantic writer, he (Melville) also displays its moral bankruptcy. He shows the absolute freedom of the "beyond good and evil" to be marvellously engaging to the imagination, yet dangerous in its appeal and disastrous in its consequences--hence the necessity of the survivor Ishmael's liberation from Ahab's oath. In Ahab, Melville portrays magnificence and splendour, glory and magnetic power, yet their sum total is a fatal addiction to death and destruction for himself and his crew.¹⁰⁸ As Raney Stanford puts it, "Melville's triumph is to depict Ahab clearly, in all his terror as well as glory, leading his world to destruction" (443). In contrast, the faces of Perseus, Hercules and St. George are turned towards life and salvation for others, yet they have no less aesthetic and imaginative appeal than the Romantic hero, nor less courage and strength. In the fate of Ahab and the Pequod, Melville demonstrates the

poverty of the Romantic concept of the hero, if he be "beyond good and evil"; in Ishmael's references to the heroes of myth, Melville demonstrates his own allegiance to a more ancient and more abiding concept of the hero.

Discussing tragedy in Moby-Dick, Richard B. Sewall claims that ". . . the book neither justifies nor condemns Ahab. Tragedy is witness to the moral ambiguity of every action . . . The book does not pronounce [Ahab] good or evil . . ." (102-103). In his emphasis on moral ambiguity, Sewall overlooks the characters' comments upon Ahab. For instance, when Starbuck on the third day of the chase exclaims, "'Oh, Ahab, Ahab, lo, thy work'" (467), surely he is pronouncing Ahab guilty of the disaster, and hence, since he sought out Moby Dick, evil. Sewall also overlooks the function of the allusions to myth in enabling the reader to judge Ahab's actions: the Eden myth's prediction of enmity reveals Ahab's hubris; the myths of Hero and Dragon reveal Ahab as the wilful destroyer of his crew. Thus even if it be true that the novel does not "pronounce" Ahab evil, it implies that he is.

The myths of Hero and Dragon, then, serve in the judgement of Ahab's actions. There is a prima facie case that they also function in illuminating Ahab's conception of Moby Dick and the hunt for him, as does the Eden myth's prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent. This suggestion must now be examined; it will be found untenable.

I have argued that the prediction of enmity throws light on Ahab's conception of Moby Dick in that Ahab sees him as a figure coalesced with the Serpent-Satan, whose power and importance are very elevated indeed, for, as the narrator expresses it, ". . . to [his] dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds . . ." (160). This is the magnitude of the evil which Ahab, "deliriously transferring its idea to the abhorred white whale," identifies with Moby Dick (160).

Yet if this is so, then the magnitude of Ahab's conception of Moby Dick's evil cannot be accommodated within the myths of Hero and Dragon, for the evil which Ahab claims of Moby Dick far exceeds that of these dragons. The latter, whether they live remote from mankind or menace cities, are not incarnations of evil. The Hero and Dragon myths do not present a synoptic view of reality: if a hero slays a dragon remote from the cities of man, or saves a city by slaying a dragon which is menacing it, another dragon may yet emerge from the sea. In the words of Peter Hogarth and Val Clery, ". . . the original myths usually involved only one monster, slain by a single god; in Greece many dragons arise, and are slain by equally numerous gods or heroes. . . . their frequency seems to diminish their significance" (Dragons 80). The myths portray battles in which the victory of hero over dragon is a symbolical or an archetypal victory of life over death, but not the climactic, unique and eschatological event which the slaying of Moby Dick would be to Ahab. Hence these myths do not function in illuminating Ahab's

conception of Moby Dick and the hunt for him.

As has been argued, the reader may judge Ahab's actions by reference to the myths of Hero and Dragon, and also by the traditional Christian interpretation of the Eden myth's prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent. The myths of Hero and Dragon, and the Eden myth's prediction of enmity, therefore, serve partially parallel functions in the novel, illuminating for the reader the same event--Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick--a fact which suggests that these myths may have structural or other links. What, it may be asked, do these myths have in common with one another?

As has been pointed out, there are good grounds for regarding the myths of Hero and Dragon, whether the dragon be remote or menacing a city, as derived from the prototype Combat myth between Marduk and Tiamat, which is both theomachia and part of the Babylonian creation myth. The hero and the dragon living remote from mankind, literary descendants of mighty literary ancestors, fight a battle which is, like themselves, proportionately diminished in scale. Thus the protagonist is courageous, but is generally a mere demi-god, until all-powerful Marduk, while the antagonist is a fearsome dragon, often emerging from the sea, but less terrifying than Tiamat. The battle between saviour-hero and dragon menacing a city is also reduced in scale, and St. George is not even a demi-god but a mortal.

The evolution of the Combat myth into the myths of Hero and Dragon is logical, if one bears in mind that their setting is that of the created world. The premise which facilitates their evolution is that the forces or principles locked in deadly combat in the original theomachia at the time of creation are both extant as powerful forces in the created world. However, their opposition is no longer on the vast and epic scale of creation, but on one greatly reduced. In all the myths of Hero and Dragon, the stakes of battle are therefore not the creation or destruction of the world, or its return to chaos, which are the prizes of the theomachia; instead, the battle is one between, on the one hand, the forces or principles associated with creation--light, goodness, life--and, on the other hand, those of destruction and chaos--darkness, evil, death. What is always at stake between protagonist and antagonist is a symbolic victory. In the battles between saviour-hero and dragon menacing a city, the stakes are higher--the survival or destruction of the city itself. The protagonist of the Combat myth, he who fought for the creation of the world, has here evolved into the saviour-hero who fights to save the city and its people; the antagonist of the Combat myth, opponent of the creation of the world, has here evolved into the dragon menacing the city and trying to destroy its inhabitants. The addition of the figure of vulnerable humanity to the myths of Hero and Dragon is the final stage in the evolution of the Combat myth's theomachia and creation epic into a salvation myth.

The myth of saviour-hero and a dragon menacing a city has great literary potential, owing to the fundamental questions posed about the human condition, destiny, and the existence of evil, questions implicitly posed by the myth's structure, which juxtaposes three constituent figures-- a saviour who is a semi-divine or mortal hero, an evil power symbolized by a dragon, and suffering humanity, whose fate is at stake in the battle between saviour-hero and dragon.

The book of Genesis has no theomachia, and hence there can be no evolution, which there is in pagan mythology, from the theomachia of the creation myths to a salvation myth. Nevertheless, the link between the concepts of victor, creator and saviour is to be found in the traditional Christian interpretation of the events of Genesis. Thus in Paradise Lost the battle in heaven of Book 6 corresponds to the pagan theomachia, since the confrontation between Satan's angelic cohorts and those of Michael and Gabriel issues in a prolonged battle-- ". . . in perpetual fight they needs must last / Endless, and no solution will be found" (693-94)--until the war is speedily brought to an end by the might of Christ. The victorious conclusion of the battle in heaven is followed by the creation of the earth, executed through the agency of Christ. The victor and creator is also conceived of as saviour, both in the crucifixion and resurrection, and in the prediction of enmity, read as¹⁰⁹ a salvation myth: in the eschatological battle between Christ and the Serpent-Satan ushering in the millenium,

humanity is caught up in the ancient battle between the embodiments of two opposing principles, as in the myths of saviour-hero and dragon--between the protagonist creator, source of light, goodness, life, and the antagonist destroyer, demon of darkness, evil and death.

The structure of the prediction of enmity myth, like that of the myths of saviour-hero and dragon menacing a city, reveals the juxtaposition of three constituent figures: Christ is the saviour figure, held to be divine; the Serpent, mythologically related to Tiamat or cognate figures, and coalesced with Satan, is the evil principle; the descendants of Adam and Eve comprise suffering humanity ("Adam" is man; "Eve" is life or living). The context of the prediction of enmity in Genesis reveals that it is precipitated by Adam and Eve's Fall: in Christian terms, Christ's battle with the Serpent-Satan is undertaken for their sakes and for that of their descendants. In the pre-millennial battle between Christ and the Serpent-Satan, the fate of the created world is not at stake, but that of humanity is.

The perception of links between Christ's battle with the Serpent-Satan, and the saviour-hero's battle with the dragon menacing a city, is facilitated by Christian hermeneutics and belief, whereby classical myths are interpreted analogically, while the Old Testament is interpreted typologically, that is to say, both are interpreted with reference to Christ. Indeed, the very co-existence of the analogical and typological methods of interpretation would tend to stimulate those using them to search for

links between classical and Old Testament texts. It is therefore possible that the traditional Christian interpretation of the Eden myth's prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent may well itself have been influenced by familiarity with the myths of Hero and Dragon, although such a possibility must remain speculative. In such an event, the discrepancies between these myths are regarded as insignificant and attention becomes focussed on their structural resemblance, which is what occurs in the coalescence of myths.

In this chapter on Moby-Dick, some of the functions of myth in the novel have been discussed. I have argued that the myths of Eden and the Golden Age provide an interpretative framework for sets of symbols--images and concepts which have become myth-laden--and that the Eden myth also provides an interpretative framework for the contrasting adventures of the protagonist Ahab and the narrator Ishmael. In his use of these myth-laden symbols, and in the contrast of Ahab's tragedy and Ishmael's Bildungsroman, Melville explores the condition of civilized man.

I have argued further that, in portraying Ahab's hunt for Moby Dick, Melville explores the eternal human predicament in confronting evil, and that, in this exploration, he alludes to the Eden myth's prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent, in order to illuminate, among other things, Ahab's conception of

his hunt for Moby Dick. Melville also alludes to the myths of Hero and Dragon, which function as a touchstone for the reader, providing him with a critical perspective upon the hunt, upon Moby Dick, and upon Captain Ahab.

Chapter 3.

Billy Budd, Sailor

Critical scrutiny of Billy Budd, Sailor points to its many allusions to myths and archetypal figures, pagan as well as biblical, and many critics, rightly, perceive that the most striking and significant set of allusions refers to the Eden myth. However, in examining the function of myth, critics have ignored the bipartite structure of the novel which, this chapter contends, determines a use of myth in the first part different from that employed in the second.

If one excludes the brief introduction (ed. Hayford, Billy Budd 43-50),¹ which supplies the historical context and gives an account of Billy's impressment, and the even briefer conclusion or "sequel" (128-132), which records responses to Billy's death, the body of the novel can be seen to have two parts: one is predominantly narrative, the other conducts a debate. The first part, covering events from the time of Billy's arrival on the Bellipotent to his striking the fatal blow, dramatizes the conflict between Billy and Claggart (50-99). The second part, presenting the consequences of Claggart's death, that is, the condemnation and hanging of Billy, dramatizes the opposition of "natural justice" and martial law and, so, examines two opposed criteria of judgement (100-28).²

The novel exhibits remarkable unity of plot, time and place: the trial and hanging are directly consequent on, and subsequent to, Billy's slaying of Claggart, and all events occur aboard the Bellipotent.³ The novel is also unified by the pervasion of myth but, inasmuch

as the central concern of the first part (the opposition of Billy and Claggart) differs from that of the second (the opposition of "natural justice" and martial law), it is important to examine the use of myth--the Eden myth in particular--in the presentation of these distinct, though linked, concerns. Such an examination reveals that although the Eden myth is evoked in both parts, the element of that myth (Adam versus the Serpent) that is called to illuminate the first part differs from that (the nature of the Fallen World) which, although acknowledged in the first part, in the second supports the argument and accounts for the conclusion.

In the first part of the novel, Melville repeatedly alludes to the Eden myth. The figures of Billy--positively good and ignorant of evil--and Claggart--evidently evil and cunning--are deliberately related to the figures of Adam and the Serpent, identified with Satan by Christian commentators. Such allusions inevitably heighten the reader's awareness of the archetypal principles invoked in the conflict between Billy and Claggart.

The outcome of their confrontation, however, differs from that of Adam and the Serpent-Satan. Here, I suggest, Melville, while still concerned with the conflict between good and evil--between a "hero" and a "reptile"--evokes, instead of the Eden myth, the myths of Hero and Dragon, in which the protagonists overcome and slay their antagonists. So, in the first part of Billy Budd, Melville brings to bear a composite myth which he has devised: Billy and Claggart, in their characters and relationship

allude to the Eden myth, while the outcome of their confrontation alludes to the Hero and Dragon myths.

In the second part of the novel, there are no allusions (apart, perhaps, from those afforded by the continued presence of Billy) to Melville's composite myth. Nevertheless, the fact that it has been presented largely determines the reader's shocked and horrified response to Billy's trial and hanging. As Charles A. Reich puts it, "To read Billy Budd is to feel an intense and indelible sense of helplessness and agony" (368).⁴ Nothing in the composite myth has prepared the reader for this; on the contrary, the expectations its patterning raised are dashed, thereby exacerbating the pain and poignancy of Billy's trial and execution, and ensuring the reader's conviction of their revolting injustice.

It is possible that a reader, influenced by Melville's composite myth, might sense in the Billy who slays Claggart a type of the Christ victorious--the ideal "second Adam"--who, in the wilderness, and at the end of time and this world, defeats the Serpent-Satan. However, the latter part of the novel cancels this visionary response by insisting that the story concerns real events occurring in time and in the extant world. In the second part of the novel, if the reader finds an analogy between Billy and Christ, the Christ considered must be the one who--although also the "second Adam"--is not the executor of justice or the avenger but the sacrificial victim.⁵

The clash between the archetypal principles of good and evil which is fundamental to the Eden myth, and is

presented in the juxtaposition of Billy and Claggart in the first part of the novel, reappears in the second in other guises--as the conflict between "natural justice" and martial law and, within Vere, as that between the "father" and the military disciplinarian. Yet whereas in the first part Melville's composite myth serves to aggrandize the import of Billy's blow--evil is destroyed with Claggart--in the second part the evocation of the Fallen World, in which evil prevails and death is inevitable, infinitely deepens the despair induced in the reader by the hanging, for the good is victimized in Billy.

Throughout Billy Budd, its symbols are grounded in, and their significance clarified by, the contrast of Eden and the Fallen World, and it is the myths of Eden, and Hero and Dragon, that substantiate and give resonance to the profound pessimism which characterizes the novel, Melville's last critique of civilization, his last portrayal of the confrontation with evil.

Billy is one of the two characters dominating the first part of the novel, but his person spans the entire book. It is accordingly justifiable to go beyond the confines of the first part in support of an analysis of Billy by quoting, where relevant, additional passages taken from the introductory section, the second part of the novel, and from the "sequel." The ease with which passages taken from anywhere in the novel may be paralleled

demonstrates the constancy of Billy's qualities. Although the narrative develops dramatically, it may be questioned whether Billy's character does: aboard the Rights-of-Man, aboard the Bellipotent, harassed and accused by Claggart, standing trial, awaiting death--even in his remembered image after death--Billy is the same. It is further to be noted that Billy is amazingly passive: by this is meant, not that he never acts, but that he hardly ever initiates action. Almost all his actions, from the time of his impressment until his hanging--both of which he accepts without demur--are simply evidence of his response to a situation in which he finds himself, a situation in which someone else takes the initiative.

Billy is presented as a prelapsarian Adamic figure whose moral nature is compounded of goodness and ignorance of evil.⁶ As Claggart perceives, Billy has "never willed malice" (78). His face has a "humane look" and his expression is one of "reposeful good nature"; he is quite devoid of conceit and vanity (51). He is completely honest and incapable of slyness: "To deal in double meanings and insinuations of any sort was quite foreign to his nature" (49). In the eyes of the drumhead court, he is "frank" and has an "aboveboard manner" (106). Vere, in concluding his address to the court, acknowledges that Billy is "of that generous nature that he would feel even for us" and indeed Billy's last words confer a benediction on his captain (113). After Billy's death the sailors remember that his face was never deformed by sneers.

Allied to Billy's moral goodness is his innocence,

his ignorance of evil: ". . . he had none of that intuitive knowledge of the bad which in natures not good or incompletely so foreruns experience . . ." (86). Having little conception of "aught outside of the honest and natural," he has no awareness in his "ignorant innocence . . . of the proximity of the malign" (81,88). His nature remains "simple" and "unsophisticated by . . . moral obliquities" (52). His very innocence exposes him dangerously to evil designs: ". . . innocence was his blinder" (88). Nothing in Claggart's behaviour towards him arouses his suspicion, nor does the behaviour of the two petty officers, Claggart's messmates, who cast "peculiar glance[s]" at him (89). Billy remains "immature"; to such natures, says the narrator, ". . . forewarning intimations of subtler danger from one's kind come tardily if at all" (98). In spite of the Dansker's repeated comment that Claggart is "down on" Billy, he suspects nothing amiss even when he is summoned to Captain Vere's cabin and sees Claggart there as well.

Billy's innocence and his inexperience of life is expressed by the use of imagery evoking childhood and adolescence: the narrator calls Billy a "child-man," while Dansker calls him "Baby," a nickname which catches on with the rest of the crew (86). His youth is frequently referred to and he is said to look even younger than he is "owing to a lingering adolescent expression in the as yet smooth face" (50). Billy is almost totally lacking in self-consciousness. Even on the eve of his death, lying asleep, he has an expression "akin to the look of a

slumbering child in the cradle" (119); he lies with an expression of serenity and an occasional smile flits across his face. Although he understands that his death is at hand, he conceives of it "in the way that children will refer to death in general" (120).

Animal imagery throws further light on Billy's nature. The animals to which he is likened are all gentle or noble. The imagery of birds--the gamecock, the nightingale, the goldfinch, the singing bird--suggests Billy's simplicity, his spontaneous happiness and the freedom of his spirit, and also his vulnerability. The heifer image reinforces the suggestion of Billy's meek harmlessness. The Saint Bernard and the "dog of generous breed" suggest Billy's faith and confidence in others as well as his own trustworthiness and good-heartedness, while the young horse and the "blood horse" suggest his nobility, both of appearance and descent (107,52).

The animal imagery relating to Billy has further implications. It suggests that he has little alternative to acting as he does; it appears to be his destiny to act instinctively, according to the dictates of his nature. Like animals and children, Billy is not critically reflective. The equation of Billy to animals suggests that he has little influence over events, for both appear to be determined by factors beyond their control: "Like the animals, though no philosopher, he was, without knowing it, practically a fatalist" (49). The animals associated with him are generally the hunted rather than hunters, and Billy's psychology is, correspondingly, that

of the victim rather than that of the aggressor. There is a consequent passivity and helplessness in his behaviour. At the time of his impressment, for instance, ". . . Billy made no demur. But, indeed, any demur would have been as idle as the protest of a goldfinch popped into a cage" (45).

Billy has not only the moral characteristics of an Adamic figure: physically he partakes of Adam's legendary beauty (Milton 4:288-305,321-24; ed. Des Maizeaux 102, note E). Vere sees him as "such a fine specimen of the genus homo, who in the nude might have posed for a statue of young Adam before the Fall" (94). Certainly his handsomeness is given great emphasis. The novel begins by presenting the Handsome Sailor, a type of which Billy is an example. The Handsome Sailor is a "superior figure" to whose "natural regality" his shipmates pay "spontaneous homage"; the sailors would "flank, or like a bodyguard quite surround him" (43). The spontaneity with which they --"his less gifted associates"--pay homage to the Handsome Sailor indicates their conviction that it is due to him as a natural right (44). Billy has "as much of masculine beauty as one can expect anywhere to see" (53). He is compared to the young David in comeliness; his Saxon appearance suggests that type of handsomeness which Pope Gregory deemed angelic. The fine cut of his features hints at mysterious aristocratic ancestry and even conjures up visions of the ancient gods.

In the novel there is an insistence--virtually neo-Platonic--that physical beauty is the manifestation of

spiritual beauty. When the Handsome Sailor is related to the brilliant Aldebaran, and Billy to the sun gods Apollo and Hyperion, then images of light are employed, not only to emphasize beauty but also to imply spiritual radiance. As in unfallen Adam beauty is but the visible expression of spiritual perfection, so handsomeness is evidence of moral excellence in both Billy and the Handsome Sailor, in whom "the moral nature was seldom out of keeping with the physical make" (44). The homage that his shipmates pay the Handsome sailor indicates their recognition of his moral superiority but, aboard the Bellipotent, although Billy enjoys general popularity, there are only two men --Vere and Claggart--who are "intellectually capable of adequately appreciating the moral phenomenon presented in Billy Budd" (78). Claggart senses that it is ". . . the spirit lodged within Billy . . . that ineffability . . . which made the dimple in his dyed cheek . . . and dancing in his yellow curls made him pre-eminently the Handsome Sailor," and the proverb Claggart applies to Billy-- "'Handsome is as handsome does'"--presumes a correlation of physical beauty and moral goodness (78,77). Similarly, the quality of Billy's voice is correlated with the calm and equilibrium of his nature: his voice is "singularly musical, as if expressive of the harmony within" (53).

Billy Budd, then, is presented as a type of unfallen Adam--a specimen of ideal manhood--and he is so in all regards but one. Although he has no visible blemish, he does have one physical defect, one imperfection: when under emotional stress, he stutters severely. If Billy's moral

qualities, his handsomeness, his inner harmony and his musical voice attest to the divinity of his creator, his stutter the narrator cites as evidence of the intrusion of the devil in this world: "In this particular Billy was a striking instance that the arch interferer, the envious marplot of Eden, still has more or less to do with every human consignment to this planet earth. In every case, one way or another he is sure to slip in his little card . . ." (53).

Claggart, so dominant a figure in the novel, is dead by the end of the first part: indeed, his death signifies its conclusion. Accordingly, it is hardly necessary to go beyond the confines of the first part of the novel in examining him, except to consider comments on him made during Billy's trial. Like Billy's, Claggart's essential nature does not change in the course of the novel, but whereas the reader, from the beginning, is assured of Billy's goodness, the revelation of Claggart's evil, and its intensification, is conducted dramatically: his concealed nature is fully exposed only when he accuses Billy in the presence of Vere. Unlike Billy, Claggart is a character who initiates action, much of which is directed towards, or rather against, Billy, target of his emotional energy.

Claggart is presented as a Satanic figure.⁷ His evil is an "elemental" force within him and he affords an instance of "the diabolical incarnate and effective in

some men" (78,119). Strikingly like the Serpent-Satan, Claggart dissembles. His evil remains unsuspected by the crew largely because diabolical evil is secretive and, so, deceptive: Claggart takes care that his behaviour does not betray his nature.

True, there are intimations that some of his fellow characters suspect Claggart's motives. The Dansker, for instance, is aware that the master-at-arms is "down on" Billy, but he refuses to explicate that enigmatic remark; similarly Squeak is aware that his master has "no love" for Billy (79); Captain Vere finds Claggart "repellent," suspects his good faith, and warns him against committing perjury when he lodges his accusations (91). However, the suspicions of the few remain undeveloped and, in spite of the Dansker's warnings, Billy--the innocent--is, inevitably, entirely deceived; he is prepared to believe that almost anyone but Claggart is responsible for the troubles he has on account of the disposition of his kit. When at his trial Billy is asked if there were any malice between him and Claggart, he replies negatively. Billy thinks no more of Claggart's behaviour than that he acts "rather queer at times" (88). It is only too easy for Claggart to deceive Billy, for whom ". . . the occasional frank air and pleasant word went for what they purported to be . . ." (88). As Billy puts it, "'I seldom pass him but there comes a pleasant word'" (71).

If Claggart's evil is not exhibited to his fellow characters, no more is it dramatically exhibited, revealed in action, to the reader until the master-at-arms accuses

Billy. Prior to that the reader, judging on the basis of Claggart's actions alone, would not readily suspect the presence of diabolical malice and, even were his suspicions aroused, the full extent of Claggart's evil could not be divined, and certainly not verified. The strongest dramatic hint of its presence is given the reader by the incident in which Billy spills the soup. Yet in this, Claggart's behaviour and the unguarded, disconcerting expression which flits across his face are far from evidencing "elemental evil": they suggest rather vindictiveness and spite.

The fact that Melville, in presenting evil in Claggart, insists on its secretive, deceptive nature determines the mode by which he communicates its true enormity to the reader: he exploits the device of an omniscient narrator. In Billy Budd the employment of such a narrator is neither accidental nor merely typical of the mode of many nineteenth century novelists; it is essential since it informs the reader of Claggart's covert evil. Although Claggart's behaviour and the intuitions of some of the crew may arouse suspicions in the the reader, they remain mere suspicions and cannot compete in import with the profound insights into the depths of Claggart's evil which the narrator offers in speculative "asides"--passages which serve a function not dissimilar to that of the soliloquies of Iago, another exemplar of secret, deceptive, and incomprehensible evil.

In Chapters 11 and 12 the narrator contemplates Claggart's nature and examines how it is that wanton

malignity can assume the disguise of reason:

But the thing which in eminent instances signalizes so exceptional a nature is this: Though the man's even temper and discreet bearing would seem to intimate a mind peculiarly subject to the law of reason, not the less in heart he would seem to riot in complete exemption from that law, having apparently little to do with reason further than to employ it as an ambidexter implement for effecting the irrational. That is to say: Toward the accomplishment of an aim which in wantonness of atrocity would seem to partake of the insane, he will direct a cool judgment sagacious and sound. These men are madmen, and of the most dangerous sort, for their lunacy is not continuous, but occasional, evoked by some special object; it is protectively secretive, which is as much as to say it is self-contained, so that when, moreover, most active it is to the average mind not distinguishable from sanity, and for the reason above suggested: that whatever its aims may be--and the aim is never declared--the method and the outward proceeding are always perfectly rational (76).

Claggart's hatred, being "but occasional, evoked by some special object"--Billy's moral and physical beauty--becomes a monomania which drives him to pursue insane ends with "cool judgment" (90). The language employed in the above passage strongly stresses dissemblance: the "riot" in the soul's recesses does not accord with the rational "outward proceeding," "lunacy" is "not distinguishable from sanity," and the phrase "would seem" is iterated thrice. Claggart's "uncommon prudence" and his "secretiveness" are indispensable to a nature which "has everything to hide" (80).

The narrator insists that the evil in Claggart must perpetually baffle comprehension: "His portrait I essay, but shall never hit it" (64). When Billy at his trial is

asked if he can account for Claggart's malice, Vere comments: "The question . . . comes naturally enough. But how can he rightly answer it?--or anybody else . . ." (107). Claggart's evil is shrouded in the mysterious: ". . . what can more partake of the mysterious than an antipathy spontaneous and profound such as is evoked in certain exceptional mortals by the mere aspect of some other mortal . . ." (74). The narrator cites the books of wisdom of ancient cultures to show that men have never succeeded in accounting for what the Bible calls the "mystery of iniquity" and what Plato reputedly terms "natural depravity" (76,75). (The very circularity of Plato's supposed definition, in the "authentic translation," of "natural depravity" as "'a depravity according to nature,'" indicates how little even Plato comprehended it.) Claggart possessed ". . . the mania of an evil nature, not engendered by vicious training or corrupting books or licentious living, but born with him and innate, in short 'a depravity according to nature'" (76).

As in his presentation of Billy, Melville uses animal imagery to throw light on Claggart's nature. The animals evoked to suggest it are all notoriously repellent and noxious--the rat, the scorpion, the creatures of the deep--and, as befits his Satanic role, in death Claggart is compared to a serpent. The conduct of his work, both his own spying activities and those of his "cat's paw," Squeak, associates him with the sly, the cunning, the sharp-witted of the animal world. Claggart has "a peculiar ferreting genius," enabling him to exercise an

"underground influence" on the crew, while Squeak suggests to the sailors "the idea of a rat in a cellar" (67,79). The chthonic nature of Claggart's activities further suggests his slyness and secretiveness and, by verbal association, the fact that he does not "come out in the open," that he is not "above-board."

The animal imagery used of Claggart has further implications: as with Billy, it suggests that Claggart has little alternative to acting as he does; he, too, must act out the dictates of his moral nature. Far more than Billy, Claggart appears to be in the grip of the deterministic forces of his being, forces which he is nigh powerless to combat and over which he eventually has so little control that he seems not to be responsible for his actions:

With no power to annul the elemental evil in him . . . apprehending the good, but powerless to be it; a nature like Claggart's . . . what recourse is left to it but to recoil upon itself and, like the scorpion for which the Creator alone is responsible, act out to the end the part allotted it (78).

Claggart's evil is the donné which cannot be changed: at best it can be no more than suppressed. His ability to hide the "elemental evil in him" delineates the utmost limits of his control over it and signifies the sole alternative to its overt expression.

As a Satanic figure, Claggart embodies the principle of evil, that which is inimical to, and destructive of,

life. He is the fore-ordained antagonist of Billy who, Adamic, and prelapsarian, embodies the principle of the good, that which is life-enhancing. Claggart's hatred of Billy, expressed initially only in his "worriment" of the youth, manifests its murderous intensity when he accuses him: it is Billy's death he desires, and, like Satan, it is by means of lies that he plots his end. Billy will hang as a mutineer on the strength of Claggart's false witness.

According to the narrator, it is Billy's "significant personal beauty" that "first moved" Claggart against Billy (77), and in an analysis of the novel in psychological terms Claggart's response of hatred to Billy's handsomeness could well be accounted for as the consequence of frustrated homosexual passion; many critics have pointed out the sexual symbolism involved in the incident in which Billy spills the soup (Levin, Power 195; Auden 146). Yet Billy's handsomeness, it will be recalled, is the correlative of his moral goodness, and so Claggart responds not only to the physical, but also to the spiritual, quality of Billy's being--not only to his beauty but also to his goodness. Claggart is aware that Billy's good looks go along with a nature that "never willed malice" (78). Billy's innocence arouses in Claggart "cynic disdain, disdain of innocence," even though he sees its aesthetic "charm"; it is strongly suggested that Billy's "very harmlessness" arouses Claggart's antipathy (78,74). Claggart's evil disposition is that of the instinctive victimizer in whom evil--the destructive urge--

is evoked by the presence of the good--the vital, the joyous, the gentle. As Irene Friedman puts it,

Claggart's attraction toward Billy suggests the fallen man's recognition of the Adamic man's purity of nature, or the civilized man's nostalgia for the apparent simplicity and truth of the primitive man's existence. His malice grows out of the recognition of his own inability to emulate it (91).

The counterpart of Claggart's aggressiveness is Billy's vulnerability. Like Adam's, Billy's moral nature is not without its frailties: in the words of the narrator, ". . . Billy, like sundry other essentially good-natured ones, had some of the weaknesses inseparable from essential good nature . . ." (81). In particular, his ignorance of evil is highly dangerous to him in the Fallen World: when the Dansker first sets eyes on the young sailor, he senses that Billy's presence is alien to the spirit of the Bellipotent; he feels there is "something which in contrast with the warship's environment looked oddly incongruous in the Handsome Sailor" and he divines that trouble lies ahead for him (70). When he sees Billy he sometimes wonders what might ". . . befall a nature like that, dropped into a world not without some mantraps and against whose subtleties simple courage . . . is of little avail . . ." (70). The phrases "mantraps" and "subtleties" are reminiscent not only of Satan who, in the form of the "subtil" beast, trapped Adam, but also of Claggart, who subtly sets his trap for Billy: when he springs it, his claim that Billy is a "mantrap under the daisies" is tellingly ironic (95).

Claggart's evil is an active principle: the more he sees of, or has to do with, Billy the more his hatred of him grows, intensifying until it must manifest itself in deed. The confined nature of shipboard life ensures that Billy and Claggart often meet and so Claggart's control over his feelings, which he "in general covered over by his self-contained and rational demeanor" (90), is severely strained, as is apparent when, immediately after the soup incident, he--involuntarily--grimaces and slashes viciously at the drummer boy. The fire of hatred that rages within Claggart is suggested by imagery reminiscent of that in Jonathan Edwards' hellfire sermons: coming across Billy, ". . . a red light would flash forth from his eye like a spark from an anvil in a dusk smithy. That quick, fierce light was a strange one . . ." (88). Claggart's emotional state eventually attains the intensity of "monomania" which, ". . . like a subterranean fire, was eating its way deeper and deeper in him. Something decisive must come of it" (90).

It is evident that Billy and Claggart manifest moral and instinctual polarities: Billy is totally good and ignorant of evil while Claggart is totally evil; Billy is open and trusting and "above board" while Claggart is deceitful and secretive and suspicious; Billy is universally loved, Claggart universally hated; Billy is happy, Claggart wretched; Billy is associated with light (solar and stellar), air and sky, Claggart with darkness, etiolated pallor and

the underground; Billy is the "peacemaker" whose benevolent effect on the quarrelsome crew of the Rights-of-Man was like that of "a Catholic priest striking peace in an Irish shindy" (47), while Claggart, the master-at-arms, plots destruction.

In the twentieth century the contrast between the will to life and the will to death as embodied in Billy and Claggart respectively can be realized in terms of the opposition of Eros to Thanatos, but Melville, a nineteenth century New England novelist steeped in the Bible and Milton, in presenting that contrast exploited, almost inevitably, the Eden myth with its contrast of the good, and the way of life--personified by prelapsarian Adam--and evil, and the way of death--figured in the Serpent-Satan.⁸

Billy's status as an Adamic figure, embodying the life-enhancing principle, is confirmed by elliptical remarks to the effect that his moral nature is not to be accounted for in the normal manner. The assumption implicit in the novel is that in the Fallen World, a moral nature such as Billy's does not ordinarily exist. If it does, it seems not to be derived in any way from civilized upbringing but rather from a quite different, extraordinary source:

. . . where certain virtues pristine and unadulterate peculiarly characterize anybody in the external uniform of civilization, they will upon scrutiny seem not to be derived from custom or convention, but rather to be out of keeping with these, as if indeed exceptionally transmitted from a period prior to Cain's city and citified man (53).

Billy's characteristics are so rare that the narrator must account for them in terms of what he views as an earlier phase of human culture--a clear reference here to the lost state of man in the Garden of Eden. To the narrator, such virtues pristine and unadulterate ". . . apparently . . . corroborate the doctrine of man's Fall . . ." (52). The ascription of Billy's nature to an Edenic source is repeated several times in the course of the novel: Billy is referred to as ". . . a sound human creature, one to whom not yet has been proffered the questionable apple of knowledge"; he is referred to as ". . . a sort of upright barbarian, much such perhaps as Adam presumably might have been ere the urbane Serpent wriggled himself into his company"; Claggart perceives that Billy has never "experienced the reactionary bite of that serpent" (52,78).

Coupled with the mysterious derivation of Billy's moral nature is the mystery of his descent. He knows neither his parentage nor his place of birth.⁹ Only "'God knows'" who he is, for he is a foundling and without any ties of blood (51). He is surely illegitimate, and his physical appearance suggests nobility of blood, while the mystery of his unknown descent gives him a romantic aura.

The problem posed by Billy's moral nature is its derivation, but no such problem is posed by Claggart's Satanic nature. The assumption of the novel appears to be that in the Fallen World it is hardly surprising to

find beings whose nature is evil: one can accept with ease, if not with equanimity, the fact that there are evil people in the world. Yet if the derivation of Claggart's moral nature is not problematic, his nature itself is, for in the novel the "mystery of iniquity" is spoken of as a perennial problem (76). The intensity and ferocity of Claggart's evil and his motivation in attempting to destroy Billy lead the narrator to imply that Claggart is diabolic. He had no knowledge of Billy prior to seeing him aboard the Bellipotent, and his hatred of him is held up as a true example of that disturbing phenomenon, motiveless malignity.¹⁰ Claggart's status as a Satanic figure is reinforced by the serpent imagery used of him when he accuses Billy before Vere, and when his dead body is lifted up.

If Billy's descent is mysterious so, too is Claggart's past. He never alludes to his life ashore, but seems to be ". . . a man of high quality, social and moral, who for reasons of his own was keeping incog. Nothing was known of his former life" (64-65). Precisely because Claggart's past is as little known as the unobservable travels of a comet, there was "unfavorable surmise" about him among the sailors (65). Gossip whispered that he went to sea to escape justice, yet the narrator discredits gossip, particularly about the bearer of an unpopular office. Nonetheless it is apparent that the sailors are prepared to believe the worst of Claggart, and the mystery of his past serves, unlike Billy's, to make him a sinister figure with something to hide.

The allusions, both explicit and implicit, to Adam and the Serpent Satan might be thought to serve several functions in the novel, but at least two of these are questionable. The narrator implies that his allusions offer explanations for the uncommon natures of Billy and Claggart but they cannot do so since assertions, no matter how frequently repeated, are not explanations: the narrator's "explanations" merely endorse the mysteries. Do the allusions, then, occasion the supposition that Billy and Claggart are avatars of Adam and Satan respectively? Such a supposition, involving abstruse theories of re-incarnation and of identity in rebirth, is not warranted. The resemblance between Billy and Adam and between Claggart and the Serpent-Satan are close enough to suggest, but not close enough to postulate, identity.¹¹ Besides, the notion of avatars merely compounds mysteries rather than explains them.

The functions the allusions do, indisputably, perform is to enable Melville to present Billy and Claggart as myth-enhanced characters and the conflict between them as a myth-endorsed event: the evocation of myth enables the reader to perceive ancient archetypes in modern dress and heightens his sense of archetypal principles at play. As Robert L. Perry observes, "Melville's unique gift . . . is the gift to invest real-life characters and situations with all the significance and mystery of great myth" (178-79).

As the Serpent-Satan hated Adam and plotted his downfall, so Claggart hates Billy and seeks to effect

his destruction. Wyn Kelly suggests in Claggart's hostility to Billy the archetype of Cain's hostility to Abel (38-39). The reader has a sense that Claggart's opposition to Billy is a re-enactment in contemporary terms and setting of primordial events. In the words of Nathalia Wright, ". . . the entire sequence of events is thrown backward to the beginning of time" (Use 180). The allusion to Adam and the Serpent-Satan suggests that the confrontation between Billy and Claggart is part of a continuous process, begun in the dawn of history and still persisting--"the eternal contradiction of . . . the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness" (Chase, Novel 115), "one act in the eternal drama of the war between good and evil, innocence and guilt" (James Miller, Guide 223). In Claggart's attempt to destroy Billy one may see the elemental aggression of the evil principle, inimical to life, against the good principle, which is life-enhancing.

Billy and Claggart are so infused with, or so effectively embody, the principles that moved the two mythical figures that Billy is seen as an Adamic, and Claggart as a Satanic figure. As characters both are removed from the common run of humanity: they contain in relatively unadulterated form characteristics generally found admixed, even though certain details, which may function symbolically--such as Billy's stutter and Claggart's beardless chin--particularize them and, to that extent, make them less "mythical."¹² Many mythical figures--Adam, Satan, Oedipus, Narcissus, Doctor Faustus--are archetypal by virtue of their embodying in pure

form principles or human tendencies or attributes, while everything else is excluded as irrelevant. In the same way Billy Budd and Claggart themselves attain the status of archetypal characters.

"Something decisive" does eventually come of Claggart's monomania: his control over his secret nature ultimately breaks down and he openly vents his hostility to Billy at last, accusing him to his face, in the presence of Captain Vere, of mutiny. No longer shrouded in secrecy, his animosity towards Billy is at that point revealed in a corresponding change in the character of the animal imagery--from expressing the cunning of the rodent to evoking the deadly fixation of the predator. Approaching close to Billy, Claggart transfixes him with a stare. In this scene--one of the novel's two most horrific (the other being Billy's hanging)--Claggart loses all human control:

. . . the accuser's eyes . . . underwent a phenomenal change, their wonted rich violet colour blurring into a muddy purple. Those lights of human intelligence, losing human expression, were gelidly protruding like the alien eyes of certain uncatalogued creatures of the deep. The first mesmeristic glance was one of serpent fascination; the last was as the paralyzing lurch of the torpedo fish (98).

Claggart's consciousness subsides to a reptilian level, as is evident in the "muddy purple" of his eyes, which lose all "human expression." The full fury of his unrestrained hatred is presented in the image of a cold-

blooded, savage creature, in the grip of the force of its predatory instinct, about to make a kill.¹³

When Billy goes into Vere's cabin, he expects to hear of his impending promotion on the basis of Claggart's recommendations. His shock on hearing instead Claggart's accusation is immense. Coupled with shock is outrage at Claggart's lies: "' . . . he foully lied to my face and in presence of my captain . . .'" explains Billy at his subsequent trial (106). Billy's powers of speech are paralysed; his face has "an expression which was as a crucifixion to behold" (99). For Billy the whole experience is one of agony, a traumatic encounter with "the diabolical incarnate and effective in some men" (119). It will be recalled that Billy's stutter is the sign of his inability to function adequately under stress; under the impact of Claggart's charges he is unable to speak at all: "'Could I have used my tongue I would not have struck him'" says Billy to the court (106).¹⁴ When provoked aboard the Rights-of-Man Billy struck his tormentor "quick as lightning" (47). This earlier response prefigures that to Claggart; the imagery of a violent and deadly flash is repeated when he lashes out at Claggart: ". . . quick as the flame from a discharged cannon at night, his right arm shot out, and Claggart dropped to the deck" (99). The imagery of flame also recalls that of "subterranean fire" used to convey Claggart's condition of volcanic rage: Billy answers aggression with violence. Claggart had attempted to bring about Billy's destruction yet, ironically, he himself is destroyed.

Indeed, the whole situation in which Claggart accuses Billy is rich with irony. To lodge any charge against Billy is ironic and to lodge a false charge more so, for Billy had an "innate repugnance" to playing the part of informer against his shipmates (106). Thus "uninstructed honor" leads him to refuse to report the afterguardsman's approach either at that time or at his trial; to do so would "savor overmuch of the dirty work of a telltale" (85). Yet while Billy refuses to inform about true events, Claggart does not scruple to invent falsehoods and "inform" Captain Vere of false facts about Billy.

The charge of mutiny is a particularly significant one to make against Billy as an Adamic figure, for it is the naval equivalent of the sin of which Adam was accused --disobedience of, or rebellion against, authority. However, when the afterguardsman had offered Billy a bribe to join a gang of impressed sailors in a mutinous plot, he had indignantly rejected the suggestion. Indeed, after witnessing a flogging aboard the Bellipotent, Billy had consciously resolved never to do anything that might warrant punishment or even a verbal reproof.

It is further ironic that it is Claggart who lays the charge: Claggart, whose appearance, until that moment, had belied his reality, accuses Billy, the soul of openness, of deceit. For Claggart, his accusation of Billy is both the climax and the finally outward manifestation of his foremerly secret antipathy to Billy. For Billy, Claggart's accusation affords a moment of truth, the shock of which

induces a leprous pallor in his cheek. Billy, whose appearance had never belied his reality, had until that moment failed to realize that Claggart's pleasant manner was a mere façade.

Since Melville alludes to the figures of Adam and the Serpent-Satan in relation to Billy and Claggart and Claggart's harassment of Billy, it is understandable that some critics should see in the outcome of the confrontation between the antagonists a further allusion to the Eden myth. Those critics view Billy's slaying of Claggart as a re-enactment of, or an event parallel to, Adam's Fall.

Such a claim is made, for example, by R. W. B. Lewis, F. O. Matthiessen and Harry Levin. Lewis argues that ". . . Claggart's goading . . . precipitate[s] the disaster; and Billy falls, as the mythological Adam had fallen . . ." (148). Matthiessen points out that ". . . Biblical parallels . . . have been suggested at crucial points throughout this story . . . Billy is young Adam before the Fall, and Claggart is almost the devil incarnate . . ." (509-10). Since Matthiessen emphasizes the Biblical parallels, and asserts that Melville was preoccupied with the Fall (502), he implies that, in striking Claggart, like Adam Billy falls. Harry Levin, too, suggests that Billy falls: ". . . we infer that the original sin was to strike back in revenge against dire provocation . . ." (Power 196).

Yet, is it correct to refer to Melville's use of the Eden myth in this novel as indicating a preoccupation with the Fall? The term "the Fall" can be variously

understood. If, on the one hand, the Fall refers to the entire record of events from the temptation of Adam to the expulsion from Eden, then it is too broad a term to be very illuminating for Billy Budd. In Billy Budd, as in other works, Melville selected and used only those elements of the Eden myth that were of particular interest to him at the time.¹⁵ If, on the other hand, the Fall refers specifically to Adam's succumbing to the Serpent-Satan's temptation, then it is too narrow and specific a term to be accurately used to refer to Billy's encounter with Claggart. At the least it would have to be pointed out that although Billy's encounter with Claggart does have some resemblance to Adam's encounter with the Serpent-Satan, there are nevertheless important modifications of events in Billy Budd.

The concept of the Fall implies temptation; the Serpent-Satan tempts man. Yet Claggart's relationship with Billy is not that of a tempter--tempting him to what?--but rather, as has been seen, one of an opponent whose aim is to destroy. It may conceivably be claimed that the afterguardsman who offered gold to Billy as an enticement to mutiny adopted the role of tempter. Insofar as the sailor was one of Claggart's underlings, could it not then be argued that Claggart was, indirectly, a tempter too? However, if Billy be regarded as having been tempted, and Claggart as indirectly the tempter, it must be acknowledged that the temptation, such as it was, failed miserably. Nobody could claim that Billy fell for the offer of gold; instead of falling, he threatened to toss the afterguardsman

over the rail.

Even though Billy could not be tempted to mutiny, Claggart nevertheless appears before Vere as Billy's accuser out to destroy him. With irony and great malice, Claggart accuses Billy of plotting the very crime that the latter had rejected out of hand. Certainly Claggart is no tempter at this point. Yet even if, for the sake of argument, Claggart were viewed in that light, can Billy's response to him on this occasion be termed a "fall"? Surely not, for if Billy's action in striking a man be seen as a fall, then Billy's fall occurred long before he set eyes on Claggart. If striking implies falling, Billy fell at the beginning of the novel when he aimed a well-placed blow at his red-whiskered tormentor aboard the Rights-of-Man. However, it may be objected that the slaying of Claggart, rather than the mere striking of him, is the grounds for Billy's response being viewed as a fall. Is such an argument valid?

It is surely a distortion of the facts to view the slaying of a tempter--or an opponent--as falling into temptation. On the contrary, Billy's striking and slaying of Claggart implies his absolute rejection of the principles represented by the latter's person. The rejection is absolute whether the death of Claggart is intended or not. In the words of John W. Rathbun, "Billy becomes the Adam who does not fall . . ." (25). Irene Friedman argues that, ". . . if Billy's encounter with Claggart represents the universal conflict between Good and Evil, it also points to the power of Good to undermine

Evil. . . . Billy remains essentially an unfallen hero" (92-93).¹⁶ Nor can it be argued that the slaying of Claggart is immoral,¹⁷ and hence entails a "moral fall" for Billy, since, in fact, killing was not intended (106, 111). In any event, whatever the purpose of Claggart's supposed "temptation," there is no evidence to suggest that it was designed to make Billy slay Claggart: Billy's response must therefore have been not the one intended by Claggart. Yet the essence of a fall to temptation is that the behaviour of the tempted is planned and willed by the tempter and successfully effected; the story of the Fall in Eden is the story of Adam and Eve falling into temptation in doing what the Serpent wanted them to do.

Barbara Johnson suggests that in the confrontation between Billy and Claggart, "innocence and guilt, criminal and victim, change places . . ." and so contends that Melville is less preoccupied with ". . . the static opposition between evil and good than the dynamic opposition between a man's 'nature' and his acts . . ." (572).¹⁸ Using the language of structuralism, Johnson examines "the linguistic implications of the murder":

If Claggart's accusation that Billy is secretly plotting mutiny is essentially an affirmation of the possibility of a discontinuity between being and doing, of an arbitrary, nonmotivated relation between signifier and signified, then Billy's blow must be read as an attempt violently to deny that discontinuity or arbitrariness. . . . Billy . . . whose sudden blow is a violent denial of any discrepancy between his being and his doing, thus ends up radically illustrating the very discrepancy he denies (574-75).

Johnson implies that Claggart is sincere when he ". . .

reverses the value signs of appearances and takes a daisy for a mantrap . . ." (573). Hence his accusation against Billy could affirm the possibility of discontinuity, of an arbitrary relation between signifier and signified of Billy. Johnson acknowledges that Billy's blow is his way of denying any discrepancy between his being and his doing, but does it follow that his blow illustrates the denied discrepancy? Johnson's assertion that it does rests on the assumption that Billy's blow is evil. It is true that Billy is guilty of crime by martial law--perhaps by any law--but I contend that guilt in martial law is determined by very specific, rigid criteria and does not in any way imply that the guilty person is evil. (Guilt in law other than martial would similarly not imply evil, for then Billy's intentions would be taken into account, and death was not intended.) I contend, rather, that resistance to evil is itself not evil, nor is accidental homicide, however regrettable and unfortunate, evil.¹⁹ Hence I contend that Billy's blow does not point to any discrepancy between being and doing, signifier and signified. Claggart's exterior belies his monomaniacal evil, but I argue that Billy's manifests his goodness. On Johnson's reading, the novel implies that appearances are deceptive and that Billy is no exception to this general maxim. To read in this way, I suggest, is not to respond to the mythical dimension of the novel, which invokes the archetypal and eternal conflict of good and evil.

In the first part of Billy Budd, then, Melville focusses on a specific element of the Eden myth and

proceeds to modify it in certain ways. He focusses on the polarization of principles--the opposition of Adam and the Serpent--which he develops in the contrast between, and the conflict of, Billy and Claggart. His interest in the myth, for the purposes of Billy Budd, lies in the warring principles rather than in the drama of Adam's choice. The consequence of Melville's emphasis is that the temptation of Billy--the incident involving the after-guardian--is reduced in importance, and is seen to be merely one of the tactics of Claggart's aggression. Initially harassing Billy, ultimately accusing him falsely before Vere, Claggart is always an aggressor, covert or overt, towards the young sailor, and plots his destruction. It could be argued that Melville's treatment of Claggart as a destroyer does not so much modify the Eden myth as make explicit what is implied in the Serpent-Satan's attitude towards Adam. The figures of Genesis are enriched with the motivation ascribed to Satan in Paradise Lost.

Henry F. Pommer enunciates a principle important for the analysis of texts in the light of myth:

To notice similarities leads . . . only half the way to wisdom's house. The rest of the way is reached by recognizing the significance of dissimilarities (61).

Herbert Weisinger expresses a similar principle: the analysis of a text in terms of myth may ". . . reveal not only the presence of the pattern . . . but what is much

more rare, and perhaps even more illuminating, where the pattern has been deliberately distorted and even denied" (265). Like any other creative author, Melville has the right of artistic license to modify myths as he pleases. As I have argued, he does not follow the Eden myth in the outcome of the confrontation between Billy and Claggart. Instead he modifies the myth in portraying the response of Adamic Billy to the Satanic Claggart. Thus Billy suffers no fall; his blow against Claggart expresses fierce repudiation of his accuser. The blow is fatal and Claggart dies instantly.

The outcome of the confrontation of Billy and Claggart, then, differs from that of Adam and the Serpent-Satan since Billy, the protagonist, slays his antagonist. This modification accords with the outcomes of the confrontations in the myths of Hero and Dragon in which the protagonist overcomes and slays the antagonist. What Melville has done, therefore, is devise a composite myth in the first part of Billy Budd in which the figures and their interrelation allude to the figures of the Eden myth, while the outcome of their confrontation alludes to the myths of Hero and Dragon and cognate myths. That Melville was familiar with the myths of Hero and Dragon is beyond question since they are evoked in Moby-Dick.

The element of the Eden myth, Adam's confrontation with the Serpent-Satan, presents the opposition of a protagonist who is innocent and good and an antagonist who is evil and inimical to life. A similar polarity of principle may be seen in the myths of Hero and Dragon, in

the opposition of good protagonists who are life-enhancing and their evil antagonists, who are inimical to life. The structural affinities of these elements of the myths of Eden and Hero and Dragon facilitates their coalescence.

As the representative of what is good and life-enhancing in human nature, Billy is, fittingly, an Adamic figure cast in an heroic mould, and is associated with the protagonists of Hero and Dragon myths--with the gods, with Hyperion, Apollo, Hercules, Achilles and David, many of whom, as Bruce Franklin has pointed out, battled with and killed serpents (Wake 192).

In contrast, Claggart, the antagonist, represents evil and that in human nature which is inimical to life. Like Billy, Claggart is associated with the Eden myth and, one could suggest, with the myths of Hero and Dragon. Thus he is presented as a Satanic figure and is also associated with serpent imagery, both when he accuses Billy and in death. The evocation of the Serpent-Satan figure to present Claggart's diabolic nature is particularly effective since in the Eden myth that figure embodies the principle of evil not only in reptilian, but also in manlike, form: the Serpent was considered to be part man, according to some traditions (Cassuto 140), and was often portrayed so in the visual arts; generally Satan, that spiritual being, was conceived of in anthropomorphic terms and it was with the human capacities for reason and speech that, according to Milton, he imbued the Serpent (9:187-90). Claggart is also associated with predatory sea creatures, suggestive of the monstrous sea dragon: when he lays his charge against

Billy, his eyes turn "a muddy purple" and lose their human expression, "gelidly protruding like the alien eyes of certain uncatalogued creatures of the deep" (98). It will be recalled that the Serpent of Eden and the dragon of Hero and Dragon myth have a common origin in Tiamat or a cognate figure.

Billy's striking and slaying of Claggart, then, even if death were not intended, is a simple and spontaneous action yet one rich in significance of the sort which is celebrated in icons and myth. Far from being an instance of the Fall of man, Billy's slaying of Claggart is contrasted to it, for it represents the symbolical triumph of the archetypal life-enhancing principle over its opponent from time immemorial, inimical to life--a victory which, microcosmically, exemplifies the Messianic vision.

I have claimed that the composite myth of the first part of Billy Budd is constituted of allusions to the figures of the Eden myth--Adam and the Serpent-Satan--coalesced with allusions to the victories of the protagonists of the myths of Hero and Dragon. If this is so, it will be obvious that the composite myth has strong affinities to the two forms of the myth of Christ victorious, one an element of the Eden myth--the prediction of enmity between the "seed" of Eve and the Serpent, interpreted by Christians as referring to Christ and Satan--and the other cognate to, or an extension of, the Eden myth--the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. In these myths, an Adamic protagonist--Christ, the second Adam--confronts and defeats his antagonist, the Serpent-Satan, unlike Adam,

who submitted to its temptation; the Serpent-Satan with which Christ does battle is, by Christian belief, none other than that which confronted and defeated Adam so disastrously in Eden. Hence these myths of Christ victorious celebrate the triumphant reversal of the Fall of Adam.

Melville's composite myth certainly resembles--perhaps even alludes to--the myths of Christ victorious, and hence Billy may be viewed as a figure having affinity to Christ. It is difficult to believe that Melville remained unaware of the resemblances. Indeed, that between Billy and Christ is overtly contemplated in the second part of the novel when Billy is hanged. Yet whether Melville intended to portray such a resemblance, or stumbled upon it and became conscious of its possibility in the course of writing the novel, is difficult to determine from analysis of the text.

In the second part of the novel, the account of Billy's trial and hanging, there are no allusions to Melville's composite myth. Yet the absence of allusion does not diminish the importance for the second part of the novel of the composite myth since, as will be shown, its impact and significance are carried over from the first part.

As I have argued, Melville, in the first part of Billy Budd, coalesces the figures of Adam and the Serpent-Satan with the victorious protagonist and the defeated antagonist of the Hero and Dragon myths; the Eden and Hero and Dragon myths have in common (among other things) a

protagonist who confronts a reptilian antagonist, inimical to life. In the outcome of these confrontations the myths differ significantly: in the Eden myth, the protagonist is defeated, succumbing to the temptation of his enemy, who succeeds in bringing about his downfall; in the Hero and Dragon myths, the protagonist slays his deadly opponent. The Eden myth introduces the concept of punishment of the protagonist for his defeat, a defeat for which he is considered morally culpable. The Hero and Dragon myths involve no such concept for the reason (among others) that the protagonist is victorious.

I contend that the author determines the reader's response to the events of the second part of the novel by means of the expectations aroused by the composite myth and its constituent myths. If the Eden myth does not prepare the reader for the killing of Claggart in the first part of the novel, the Hero and Dragon myths do not condition the reader to expect Billy's trial and execution in the second part. Billy is in no sense defeated by Claggart; unlike Adam he is not ensnared by wiles, and he slays his antagonist as a hero does a dragon. Nonetheless, in the second part of the novel, not only do no benevolent consequences proceed from the death of the antagonist Claggart, but the protagonist Billy is held up for trial and punished by hanging--events which shock the reader. The Eden myth could have prepared the reader for the punishment of Billy had he been tempted or defeated, but he was neither; the myths of Hero and Dragon prepare the reader even less for Billy's punishment, let alone death.

Hence the horror of witnessing the victorious Billy put on trial and punished by death. The patterning of the composite myth, fashioned as it is out of the myths of Eden and Hero and Dragon, arouses expectations which, in the second part of the novel, are dashed. The response to Billy's fate of a reader quite ignorant of the myths alluded to in the novel would doubtless be one of grief and shock, but the sentiments of a reader who is familiar with them are more violently outraged: since the myths have provided models of values and consequences which are shattered in the "real" (as opposed to mythical) world of Billy Budd, knowledge of them exacerbates and makes more conscious the poignant injustice and horror of Billy's trial and hanging.

The impact of the composite myth on the second part of the novel not only determines the reader's response to Billy's trial and hanging, but also provides a perspective for the appreciation of the significance of these events. The conflict between Billy and Claggart dramatizes the opposition of archetypal principles: Billy's slaying of Claggart signifies the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, the life-enhancing over that which is inimical to life. Yet if Billy's slaying of Claggart signifies the triumph of these values, it follows that the trial and hanging of Billy signifies their defeat. The imposition of the martial code of the Bellipotent manifests the triumph of evil over good, and of darkness over light. To destroy the pattern of the myths of Eden and Hero and Dragon, and shatter the expectations aroused by these myths,

as is effected in the trial and hanging of Billy, is to deny their validity or relevance within the world of the Bellipotent.

The myths of Eden and Hero and Dragon do not portray a perfect world: the very existence of the Serpent-Satan and of dragons militates against the suggestion that they do, as does the fallibility and the vulnerability of mankind, represented by Adam and Eve, and by maidens tied to rocks with weeping onlookers at a distance. Yet if these myths portray the human predicament, pointing to the existence of forces of death and evil, and to human vulnerability, they also point to ideal resolutions of the human predicament. The Garden of Eden represents the potential for human perfection in harmonious relation to the divine; it is in, yet not of, the world. Adam and Eve's Fall affords only a temporary victory for the Serpent-Satan, for the enemy of mankind is immediately cursed and punished for his misdeed. Adam and Eve are punished for submission to his wiles, yet their punishment, like that of the Serpent, points to the efficacy in the world of divine justice and order, an order left intact despite its violation by the Serpent-Satan and Adam and Eve. The values of goodness, of light, of the life-enhancing, are also asserted in the myths of Hero and Dragon, which may also be said to point to an ideal resolution of the human predicament. In spite of the horrific power of the dragons portrayed in these myths, the dragons--causes of death and destruction--are slain. The myths of Hero and Dragon present a vision of reality

in which good overcomes evil and life is victorious over death. Where the dragon menaces a city, its death represents the advent of salvation and a new lease of life.

If the Eden myth and the myths of Hero and Dragon present ideal resolutions of the human predicament in the face of death, evil, and human weakness, Melville, in his presentation of life--and death--aboard the Bellipotent portrays a brutal situation in which the ideal is not only not imitated, but the values of the ideal are totally abolished. Aboard the Bellipotent, the ideal order of law and justice is irrelevant, since it is the principle of evil, that which is inimical to life, which dominates. Kingsley Widmer suggests that Melville portrays a world in which ". . . the injustice . . . is so total as to go beyond comprehension, much less efforts at correction" (27). The Bellipotent--the power of war--is dedicated to the inhuman values of war and its ruthless god, Mars. As the narrator puts it, warfare is "the abrogation of everything but brute Force" (122).

The trial and hanging of Billy demonstrate dramatically that the values of the myths of Eden and Hero and Dragon are impertinent aboard the Bellipotent: the opposition of the archetypal principles of the Eden myth, seen in the conflict between Billy and Claggart, is witnessed again in the clash of the values of "natural justice" and martial law at Billy's trial, yet on the Bellipotent, martial law--the law of Mars--reigns supreme and sentences Billy to death.

In his trial, the drumhead court deals simultaneously with two charges against Billy--the accusation of mutinous intent, as advanced by Claggart, and the charge of killing Claggart. It will be recalled that Vere had intended to deal, at least preliminarily, with the accusation of mutinous intent, without resort to summoning a court. It is clearly, therefore, the charge of killing Claggart which occasions the formal trial. However, in dealing with the latter charge, the accusation of mutinous intent is of necessity also considered, so that both charges are the subject of enquiry in that part of the trial devoted to the establishment of the facts.

Elementary questioning of Billy soon convinces the court of his innocence of plotting mutiny. Billy denies any such intent: ". . . it is not as the master-at-arms said. . . . I am true to the King" (106). Billy also denies knowledge or suspicion of "incipient trouble" among the members of the crew (106). Vere and the members of the court proceed no further with Claggart's accusation and the charge is dropped. They are persuaded by Billy's truthful and "aboveboard" manner"; besides, the enquiry can proceed no further owing to the lack of evidence since Claggart is dead. In any event, the court appears satisfied that no mutinous deed was performed. For the remainder of the trial, the court's attention is devoted exclusively to the charge of killing Claggart.

In a sense, Billy's death sentence is sealed before his trial began. On hearing the surgeon confirm Claggart's death, Vere exclaims: "'Struck dead by an angel of God!

Yet the angel must hang!" (101). This remark is the kernel from which springs the second part of the novel, for the trial develops Vere's argument for Billy's conviction, and the hanging shows Vere's execution of his martial duty. Certainly Vere's pronouncement anticipates the outcome of the trial; the verdict is determined even before the trial has commenced. Accordingly it could be suggested that the case against Billy, as argued at his trial, is suspiciously like the rationalization of a spontaneous decision.²⁰ At best, Vere's remark that Billy must hang may be seen as a prediction of his sentence. The omniscient narrator and hence the reader know of Vere's remark about the "angel"'s having to die, and although the members of the court do not overhear it, they nonetheless sense a "prejudgment" on Vere's part. It is clear that owing to his position as captain and presiding officer of the drumhead court, Vere has little trouble in persuading the assessors to adopt his criteria for judging Billy--and the outcome of the trial depends largely on the criteria chosen.

Since Billy's deed is undeniable, the court has little to discuss in establishing the facts of the killing. According to the narrator, Vere reported the facts concisely and Billy verified them. The narrator need not add any further details of the event, for he has previously presented it dramatically, letting the reader witness it for himself. A brief statement by Billy yields important information to the court: he reveals that Claggart's lies paralysed his powers of speech (" . . . I had to say something, and

I could only say it with a blow . . . " (106)); further, Billy disclaims homicidal intent in striking Claggart, and adds that there was no malice between them.

The procedure of the trial at this point changes subtly from the establishment of the facts to a discussion of the criteria for judging Billy's slaying of Claggart. The transition from one part of the trial to the other comes when Billy's remark about the absence of malice between himself and Claggart is taken up by the officer of the marines, who proceeds to ask Billy why Claggart should then have lied. At this point, since Billy cannot reply to the question, Vere comments upon it. He reminds the members of the court that they constitute "a martial court" and must implement martial law. In accordance with this admonition, both the motive animating the master-at-arms and the provocation that elicited Billy's blow are alike irrelevant: ". . . a martial court must needs in the present case confine its attention to the blow's consequence, which consequence justly is to be deemed not otherwise than as the striker's deed" (107). With Vere's comment, the question is raised about the grounds for the admissibility of evidence, and the interest shifts from the establishment of the facts to the consideration of this topic. Vere's comment is indeed pertinent, for the establishment of the facts can proceed no further until agreement is reached on the logically prior question as to what constitutes a relevant fact: what is deemed so by one criterion may not be by another. Billy himself has nothing to add--"I have said all, sir" (108)--and the establish-

ment of the facts has come to an end.

Underlying Vere's comment is a deadly clash of principles and values, and henceforth the narrator's interest in the trial focusses on the criteria to be employed in judging Billy. It is noteworthy that the remarks and responses of the three appointed members of the court indicate that they automatically assume one criterion of judgement--"natural justice"-- while Vere regards it as his function to remind them that, as a martial court, they are to judge by another criterion--martial law. In terms of the latter, Claggart's motivation in accusing Billy of mutiny is not pertinent, and the provocation that Billy suffered and his disclaimer of homicidal intent in killing Claggart are also dismissed as irrelevant. Vere repeats the drift of his previous assertion with the words, "'The prisoner's deed--with that alone we have to do'" (108).

Captain Vere distinguishes between a man in his private capacity, with his individual convictions, and an officer dedicated to the performance of his official duties--a variation of the familiar distinction of the demands of private and public duty. In his view, there can be no question as to which must take precedence: "private conscience" must yield to "that imperial one formulated in the code under which alone we officially proceed" (111); the officer must pay absolute and single-minded allegiance to the code of martial law. To Vere, donning the uniform symbolizes the acceptance of military duty as the "paramount obligation" of the officer: "'. . . these buttons

that we wear attest that our allegiance is . . . to the King'" (110). Vere reminds the court that what is true of the officer is also true of the impressed soldier: "' . . . there are Englishmen forced to fight for the King against their will. Against their conscience, for aught we know'" (112). The officers and men who swear allegiance to martial law may no longer judge according to the dictates of their consciences and are obliged to renounce individual moral responsibility. Instead they become agents of the law which "operates" through them. As Vere puts it, "'For that law and the rigor of it, we are not responsible. Our vowed responsibility is in this: That however pitilessly that law may operate in any instances, we nevertheless adhere to it and administer it'" (110-11).

The supreme manifestation of the pitiless nature of martial law in the novel is that, by it, Billy is sentenced to death.

It is clear that the judgement of Billy by martial law precludes his judgement by moral criteria. The narrator points this out when he says,

The essential right and wrong involved in the matter, the clearer that might be, so much the worse for the responsibility of a loyal sea commander, inasmuch as he was not authorized to determine the matter on that primitive basis (103).

Captain Vere is aware that by the criteria of "natural justice" Billy is innocent: "'How can we adjudge to summary and shameful death a fellow creature innocent before God, and whom we feel to be so?'" (110). The moral

criteria of "natural justice" are linked to divine law, since by both Billy would be exculpated, and both are contrasted to martial law--by Vere himself:

" . . . before a court less arbitrary and more merciful than a martial one, that plea [that Billy "purposed neither mutiny nor homicide"] would largely extenuate. At the Last Assizes it shall acquit. But how here? We proceed under the law of the Mutiny Act" (111).

Thus Billy's sentence of death violates both "natural justice" and divine law. "Natural justice" may be said to imitate divine law, but aboard the Bellipotent the imposition of martial law abrogates both these. Hence Billy's sentence of death, issuing from his trial by martial law, dramatizes the total opposition of the principles involved in "natural justice" and divine law to those of martial law. The clash between these sets of values is, as has been mentioned, parallel to the opposition of archetypal principles in the conflict of Billy and Claggart. The sentence of death passed on Billy points to the fact that the principle of evil, the deathly principle, holds sway aboard the Bellipotent.

To Captain Vere, the aim of martial law is to forge an efficient fighting machine of disciplined men who accept death unquestioningly, and hence all human traits and values that counter its operation must be eradicated. He acknowledges the appeal of "natural justice" yet, in his view, it must be set aside in the circumstance of war. As one weighs up the human traits and values that Vere regards as out of place in war, one is struck by their humaneness and spiritual value. If neither "natural justice"

nor divine law can co-exist with the rule of martial law, no more can compassion be indulged. Vere acknowledges that martial law operates "pitilessly," but although his heart is moved, he warns against hearkening to the promptings of compassion (111). Conscience is also irrelevant in the implementation of martial law, and in renouncing conscience, men of war also renounce freedom of will: ". . . in receiving our commissions we in the most important regards ceased to be free natural agents" explains Vere (110); the militia is not consulted when war is declared and they have to fight on command. Another intrusive characteristic that conflicts with martial law is sympathy for the sufferings of others. Thus the rule of martial law has a dehumanizing effect on those who owe allegiance to its code, for they are forced to suppress their essential morality, individuality and "human kindness" in order to become the ruthless agents of a pitiless code. Obviously a man-of-war, with its men trained to kill, is designed to be deadly to the enemy, but what the novel makes clear is that the code by which it operates--martial law--is, of necessity, anti-human and inflicts hideous and degrading cruelties on its crew. Institutions such as flogging and capital punishment inspire terror and horror; John W. Rathbun demonstrates how the officers use whistles and drums to control the crew (22,32-33). Yet it is not only the men who suffer the strictures of martial law who are affected by its dehumanizing code: the officers whose duty it is to administer its cruel edicts do violence to their own spirits, as may be seen in the suffering of Vere.

After informing Billy of the sentence of death, Vere's face was one "expressive of the agony of the strong," so that the narrator surmises that ". . . the condemned one suffered less than he who mainly had effected the condemnation . . ." (115).

Billy's sentence of death represents a posthumous victory for Claggart. As Billy and Claggart represent the opposed poles of good and evil, the vital and the deadly, so too are "natural justice" and martial law diametrically opposed; the principles opposed in each coupling are the same. "Natural justice," the moral criteria of which are linked to divine law, allows scope for compassion, for private conscience, for freedom of the will, and for sympathy with one's fellow human beings, and hence is benign and enhances life. In contrast, martial law has no commitment to moral criteria and divine law, and inasmuch as it dehumanizes those who owe it allegiance, whether they suffer its strictures or administer it, it is evidently evil and inimical to life.

In the novel Billy is deliberately associated with "natural justice": the characteristics of each are similar and even the terms in which they are discussed have much in common. Both are associated with moral goodness; Billy is associated with the sky-gods, the heavens, light, while the moral criteria of "natural justice" are linked with divine law. Billy and "natural justice" are associated with the primitive and the feminine: to judge by "natural justice" is to judge "on that primitive basis" while to be moved by it is to be moved by "the heart . . . sometimes

the feminine in man" (103,111).²¹ Billy is associated with peace--aboard the Rights-of-Man he is the "peacemaker" and he is "oddly incongruous" in the warship's environment (47,70)--and so is "natural justice," which is suspended in times of war. Indeed, Billy is the embodiment of those virtuous and life-enhancing traits which, like "natural justice," must be eradicated when warfare is unleashed.

By the same token, Claggart is associated with martial law and embodies its values. As the master-at-arms of a great warship Claggart functions as chief of police charged with preserving order--with enforcing martial law. In approaching Vere with the accusation of mutinous intent against Billy, it is clear that Claggart plans to use martial law as the instrument of Billy's destruction. Possibly the incident in which Billy was approached by the "cat's paw" was intended to be exploited, reinforced by a tissue of lies, but the reader does not know what precise plans Claggart had in mind, and the court knows just as little. If it is Claggart who plots Billy's destruction, it is martial law which achieves his end: owing to the unforeseen consequence of Billy's fatal blow, martial law did indeed accomplish what Claggart had hoped for, albeit in a manner that he could not have predicted.²² The code of martial law is the Mutiny Act, and in sentencing Billy, Vere invokes this Act, of which he says, "'In feature no child can resemble his father more than that Act resembles in spirit the thing from which it derives--War'" (111-12). Both Claggart

and martial law, like warfare itself, are evil, inimical to life.

The clash at the trial of Billy, then, of "natural justice" and martial law is parallel to the opposition of archetypal principles evident in the conflict of Billy and Claggart. If in Claggart's attempt to destroy Billy one detects the elemental aggressiveness of the deadly, evil principle towards the principle of vital goodness, one witnesses the triumph of Claggart's spirit in the clash of "natural justice" and martial law which issues in Billy's death. In its horror and pathos, Billy's unjust fate does violence to the expectations of the reader fresh from the composite myth of the first part of the novel, with its reverberations of the Eden myth and the myths of Hero and Dragon.

One of the functions of the Eden myth in the second part of the novel is to facilitate the recognition of the clash of "natural justice" and martial law as the opposition of archetypal principles, and to endorse the narrator's opposition to martial law and his condemnation of Billy's execution. In this way, too, the Eden myth functions in determining the reader's revulsion from martial law, and outrage at Billy's fate at its hands. Many critics argue for the narrator's condemnation of Billy's hanging, as is pointed out by Phil Withim (115), but some dissent and argue otherwise.²³ If it is possible to determine the narrator's attitude to Billy's hanging on the basis of the function of the Eden myth, it would assist in the resolution of this critical impasse.

Captain Vere views Billy's condemnation by martial law as regrettable, but necessary for the discipline of the ship, and so attempts for this reason to justify it. In his justification he appeals to the propriety of law and order as opposed to the horror of chaos, evincing those preferences which even a repressive code such as martial law maintains in common with more enlightened systems of human government.²⁴ The narrator shows much compassion for Vere in his predicament, stating that Vere regarded himself as having no choice but to try Billy by martial law, an opinion with which the narrator concurs, saying, in mitigation of Vere, that he was "not authorized" to judge Billy by "the essential right and wrong" of his deed (103). Moreover, the narrator appears to share Vere's abhorrence of chaos, and cites the case of the brig-of-war Somers in which the sailors were executed for mutiny, even though in time of peace, and the ship close to port, a sentence which nonetheless was vindicated by a naval court of enquiry. He is aware that a military commander in the thick of battle has to make decisions as in a fog. Besides, it was common practice in time of war for the death sentence to be carried out immediately, without appeal.

However, the narrator's sympathy for Vere does not imply moral approval of his sentence of death on Billy. As Peter A. Stitt argues: "Man, a man like Vere, must be

sympathized with, for his dilemma is a real and acute one.

. . . But while Melville sympathizes with Vere as a man, he cannot accept the system of civil law which so perverts Vere's good natural instincts" (54). Vere's attempted justification of the necessity for martial law is rejected by the narrator, by implication if not explicitly. The general impression is not that he--the narrator--draws attention to the good features of martial law but rather that he exposes its worst. Its inhumanity is emphasized and its harshness and cruelty, witnessed in the regimentation of and tyranny over the men, are shown to be self-evidently evil. The climax of its cruelty is displayed in the death sentence, so ruthlessly carried out on Billy.

The opposition of the archetypal principles of the Eden myth, seen in the conflict of Billy and Claggart, and in the clash of "natural justice" and martial law, is also seen in the conflict between the two aspects of Vere's nature, that of the father and that of the military disciplinarian. The transition from one aspect to the other follows immediately on Claggart's death. It is portrayed in a striking passage which can be said to open the second part of the novel:

Slowly he uncovered his face; and the effect was as if the moon emerging from eclipse should reappear with quite another aspect than that which had gone into hiding. The father in him, manifested towards Billy thus far in the scene, was replaced by the military disciplinarian (99-100).

Matthiessen expresses the parallelism of conflict as follows: ". . . the struggle between Claggart and Billy

is re-enacted on a wholly different plane within the nature of Vere himself" (509). Milton Stern uses similar terminology to express this idea: "The war between Claggart and Billy is the internal war between heart and mind which constantly tears Vere apart . . ." (Steel 233).²⁵ In the words of Joyce S. Adler, "In Vere, as in civilization, there exist two potentials--the one symbolized by the devil of war operating through Claggart and the other signified by Billy as the peace-loving angel of God . . ." (178). Vere himself refers to the two aspects of his nature as "the heart" and "the head."

Billy is associated with "natural justice," and the fatherly--or heart--aspect of Vere's nature is linked with both of them. Indeed, nowhere is the father in Vere more evidently manifest than in his kindness to Billy. Billy is sensible of Captain Vere's affection for him since, on being summoned to Vere's cabin, he imagines that he may be promoted to become his coxwain, for Vere "looks kindly" on him (98). When Billy is distressed at Claggart's charges, Vere lays a "soothing hand" on his shoulder and addresses him in a "fatherly" tone (99). After the trial, when Vere informs Billy of the sentence of death, the narrator imagines that Vere may have "caught Billy to his heart, even as Abraham may have caught young Isaac" (115). Some critics hold that there is a mysterious past link between Billy and Vere and that the captain is his actual father (Stern, Steel 234). Yet to suggest so is to interpret the fatherly aspect to Vere's nature too literally.²⁶ The narrator has specifically warned against the coincidence

of Claggart having had some previous connection with Billy (73-74), and to suggest a different coincidence, one linking Vere and Billy, seems equally undesirable. Vere refers to his compassion for Billy as the moving of his "heart"--the fatherly aspect of his nature: ". . . the exceptional in the matter moves the hearts within you. Even so too is mine moved" (111). At the same time, compassion implies the judgement of Billy by "natural justice" and hence is to be set aside in Billy's trial: "But let not warm hearts betray heads that should be cool. . . . Well, the heart here, sometimes the feminine in man, is as that piteous woman [with her tearful plea], and hard though it be, she must here be ruled out'" (111). The heart is associated with "the feminine in man," and hence so too are the parental aspect of Vere's nature and also judgement by "natural justice." As Billy and "natural justice" are good and life-enhancing and thus must be eradicated in time of war, so too must the fatherly or heart aspect of Vere's nature.²⁷

The association of the father or heart in Vere with Billy and "natural justice" has its parallel in that of the military disciplinarian, or head, in Vere with Claggart and martial law. Indeed, the transition in Vere to the military disciplinarian, the head, aspect of his nature heralds the trial of Billy according to martial law. The "cool heads" that Vere admonishes the members of the court to preserve represent, to him, the appropriate moral-cum-psychological condition in which to conduct the trial. As has been argued, the invocation of moral

criteria is viewed as not pertinent to a trial by martial law, nor are compassion--the moving of the heart--, conscience, and freedom of the will. The transition of Vere the father into the military disciplinarian, the ruthless agent of a pitiless code, dramatizes the dehumanizing effect of martial law upon its officers.²⁸ Claggart and martial law are evil and inimical to life, and so too is the military disciplinarian, the head-dominated aspect of Vere's nature; the principles embodied in all three are predominant in times of war. As Charles Mitchell observes, ". . . Claggart represents Vere's potential spiritual condition, which . . . Vere realizes by contriving . . . Billy's death" (117).²⁹

One of the functions of the Eden myth in the second part of the novel, then, is to show the conflict between the two aspects of Vere's nature--father and military disciplinarian--as the opposition of archetypal principles, as in the conflict of Billy and Claggart, and the clash of "natural justice" and martial law. In this way, too, the Eden myth functions in expressing the narrator's, and determining the reader's condemnation of the transition that takes place in Vere's nature.³⁰

Not all critics condemn Vere or accept that the narrator does so. Thus Leon Howard argues that Vere did "that which was right," and compares him to Lieutenant Gansevoort, ". . . a man who had knowingly violated his individual moral impulse in obedience to a moral code required by the general welfare of society" (327-28). Howard implies that the narrator does not condemn Vere;

Wendel Glick argues that Vere is Melville's mouthpiece.

James E. Miller praises Vere, arguing that he possesses a "balance of reason and emotion, mind and heart," that he is "the man of moderation with heart and intellect in ideal balance" (Guide 225). However, I contend that Vere's transition from father to military disciplinarian, and his speech to the court in which he argues against "warm hearts"--". . . the heart . . . must here be ruled out" (111)--point to a conclusion different from Miller's: I suggest that Vere has the capacity for fatherliness, emotion, heart, conscience, mercy, justice, but it is suppressed in consequence of his acceptance of the exigencies of martial law. In vindication of Vere, Miller argues that Vere understands the "necessary separation of heavenly and earthly wisdom, and the 'impossibility' of the application of the one in the province of the other.

. . . both kinds of wisdom are right in their place . . ." (Guide 226). In his argument, Miller overlooks the significance of the Rights-of-Man: it is true that the novel focusses on the Bellipotent, and in doing so it emphasizes man's vast potential for evil, but it does not assert that life has to be modelled on the Bellipotent. The Rights-of-Man is also of the earth, not of the heavens, yet it is not ruled by martial law; earthly wisdom may imitate heavenly, and in the novel it is manifest in the Rights-of-Man. Far from the Bellipotent being the exemplar of earthly wisdom as Miller claims, it is rather, as the narrator says, "practically . . . the abrogation of everything but brute Force" (122). In further vindication

of Vere, Miller argues as follows: ". . . Vere [is] a hero of humanity who shields society from the cataclysmic consequences of [Billy Budd's] nakedly spontaneous and raw Innocence" (Guide 228). I suggest that here too Miller overlooks the Rights-of-Man, which Billy helped transform into "the happy family" (47). Its society required no protection from Billy: on the contrary, the ship's captain pleaded that Billy be not impressed. It is only the inflexible dictates of martial law that condemn Billy to death for the accidental slaying of Claggart; Vere himself acknowledges that both "natural" and divine justice would acquit the accused. Does not the novel suggest (I contend) that Billy is less dangerous to society than martial law--and Vere?³¹

Edward H. Rosenberry argues that James E. Miller's analogy, one drawn from the Plinlimmon pamphlet in Pierre--an analogy equating "chronometrical" or heavenly morality with "natural law," and "horological" or earthly morality with martial law--is false. Rosenberry points out that the chronometrical, being a Platonic idea, can only be imitated by man's law: hence neither "natural law" (or "natural justice") nor martial law can be chronometrical. However, he then characterizes the "higher morality" of "natural justice" as ". . . only a benign expedient by which this killer . . . is to be exempted from the normal (and normally correct) judgment [of the law]" ("Problem" 496-97). I contend that Rosenberry's criticism of Miller is valid, but that Rosenberry errs in assuming that martial law is the sole system of law; he does not

recognize that "natural justice" too may be a legal system, or provide the basis for one. The one governs the Bellipotent, the other, by implication, the Rights-of-Man.

A critic who springs to the defence of Captain Vere is Richard H. Fogle, who argues that

A fallen and corrupted world can only be governed by the stern provisions of the Mutiny Act . . . Vere is defending an indispensable order ("Order" 198);³²

The Original Sin has alienated man from nature, and therefore no natural code can fitly govern human society ("Order" 201).

Is the Mutiny Act, one wonders, as indispensable to orderly government of the world as Fogle says it is? Edgar A. Dryden implies that it is a sham:

The appalling truth of Billy Budd is not that innocence must be sacrificed to maintain the order of the world, but rather that innocence is destroyed by the forces of chaos and darkness masquerading as "measured forms." . . . the Articles of War merely cover with an official mask the same irrational forces which are found undisguised "across the channel" (215).

I contend that Richard Fogle, like Miller and Rosenberry, overlooks the significance of the Rights-of-Man and assumes that the martial law of the Bellipotent (termed the Indomitable in some editions of the novel) is the sole and necessary pattern of civilized society in the Fallen World. I suggest that the Rights-of-Man demonstrates --particularly with Billy aboard--how fitly a "natural code" can govern human society.

Some critics vindicate Vere; Lawrance Thompson accuses

him. He suggests that Vere is the centre of a drama which is narrated by one too stupid to comprehend Vere's evil, and that its events should be interpreted from the standpoint of Melville's supposed secret adherence to Gnosticism. Thompson argues that the triangulation of Billy, Claggart and Vere suggests that they are emblems of Adam, Satan and God, by whose means ". . . Melville creates his own allegorical interpretation of the fall of man . . ." (361). Melville's "sinister allegorical meaning" is that ". . . God is responsible not only for Adam's action but also for Satan's action"; there are "'linked analogies' between the military depravity of Captain Vere and the divine depravity of God" (Thompson 396,402). According to Tom Paine's doctrines, Billy's acceptance of his fate is disgusting, an example of ". . . the stupidity of human beings who permit themselves to be pushed around . . ." (Thompson 357). In his death, Billy is like the second Adam--a Christ-like figure (Thompson 456).

In spite of Thompson's contentions, I maintain that the Gnostic trope fits ill with Billy Budd, and results in distortion of the novel. According to Gnosticism, the Serpent-Satan opposes God (rebellious gloriously, like Prometheus against the tyrannical Zeus), whereas in Billy Budd Claggart is despicable and, as Thompson himself several times asserts, Claggart--representing Satan-- "is a permissive agent of God" (382). Again, Gnosticism postulates that Christ is not the incarnation of, but opposes, God--the Demiurge, the Creator God--no less than

does Satan, and, indeed, Christ and Satan are at times identified (Jonas 93). In contrast, Thompson claims that, allegorically, Billy is the son of Vere (364); besides, Billy Budd emphasizes the opposition of Claggart to Billy--on Thompson's scheme, Satan to Adam who is likened to second Adam. Further, Billy is submissive towards Vere and violent towards Claggart--the opposite of the Gnostic claim that Christ opposes the demiurge and identifies in purpose with Satan. The Gnostic vision is unremitting and involves a total re-orientation of traditional teachings; it is sharply opposed to the world-view of the conventional religions. I contend that the great dissimilarity of Gnostic teaching--about Adam, Christ, Satan, God--and the triangulation of Billy, Claggart and Vere makes it unwise to attempt to show that the one illuminates the other. Billy Budd focuses on this world's evil--not on divine, but rather on human, mismanagement. Even though Billy Budd proclaims that the Creator brought into being the scorpion (a fact which the conventional religions acknowledge), God is nonetheless the merciful judge of the Last Assizes, possessing an attribute which Gnosticism denies. Mars and martial law are portrayed in the novel not as divine, but as human creations, for which man alone is responsible. In the words of Tyrus Hillway, ". . . Billy Budd . . . points to man rather than Fate as the perpetrator of the tragedy" (139).

It is evident from the text that there are explicit

allusions to the ascension of Christ in the scene of Billy's death. Yet some readers may sense Billy to be Christ-like not only on the grounds of these explicit allusions. One reader may find evidence for his view in Melville's composite myth, seeing in Billy's slaying of Claggart an Adamic figure analogous to Christ victorious over Satan. To another, Billy's life and death may suggest resemblances to Christ's, even if there were no allusions to the ascension. Such readers, to whom Christ is Billy's model, will not be surprised to encounter the trial and hanging of Billy in the second part of the novel, in spite of his slaying Claggart; these events will then seem familiar rather than unexpected, modelled on the conception of the sacrificial victim. Yet the transition from the conception of Christ victorious over the antagonist to that of sacrificial victim ensures that the pathos of Billy's trial and hanging will not, for such readers, be diminished.

However, the explicit allusions to the ascension in the scene of Billy's hanging occasion dispute among critics as to their interpretation. Not all agree that they point to Billy as a Christ-like figure; some argue that the allusions should be interpreted ironically, pointing to difference rather than resemblance. In the words of Paul Brodtkorb, ". . . despite all the story's Christian imagery and allusiveness, the archetype of the crucifixion applies only unsatisfactorily and up to a point . . ." (610-11). The differences of approach to these allusions point to the problem of whether or not

Billy should be seen as a figure analogous to Christ.

One could suggest that the reasons for holding opposing opinions are to be found in the nature of the conception of a figure analogous to Christ. Such a conception is complicated by the traditional methods of Christian typology and analogy--discovering in literary figures of the Old Testament and other literature a resemblance to, or a foreshadowing of, Christ. The traditions of both typology and analogy allow a wide degree of latitude and tolerance. This must be so if Christ is viewed as a figure of divine incarnation, since the resemblance to ordinary men lacking both moral perfection and immortality can never be very close. Hence the notions of typology and analogy are dependent on the selection of significant detail. Even Old Testament figures often taken to be types of Christ in fact differ vastly from Jesus. Thus Samson, for example, is to Christians a type of Christ (ed. Bush 514), yet his passionate relationship with a woman is not one of the points of resemblance. So too Jonah, who "died" and "rose again," is often referred to as a type of Christ, yet his disobedience in fleeing from God is not a point of resemblance. Analogy to non-Biblical figures presents the same problems. Thus Prometheus is viewed as a figure analogous to Christ on grounds of his great suffering (Grant 186), yet his opposition to Zeus is not a point of resemblance; indeed, Prometheus's opposition is viewed as akin to Satan's rebellion against God (Werblowski 129-43). As C. Kerényi points out, there is "a striking resemblance and a striking

contrast" between Prometheus and Christ (Prometheus 128).

The selection of resembling features of significant detail implies overlooking other differences of detail; the line must be drawn somewhere, and the reader must choose his own criteria. Critics allowing themselves greater latitude and tolerance, and emphasizing resemblances, may see Billy as a Christ-like figure; others, with narrower and more stringent criteria, and focussing on differences, would deny this.

Certain features of Billy's life and death could point to a resemblance to the figure of Christ; other details argue against it. Thus the mystery of Billy's birth, and his remark "'God knows, sir'" in response to a question about his father, could suggest the resemblance; yet Billy's stutter argues against it, for the stutter signifies that ". . . the arch interferer, the envious marplot of Eden, still has more or less to do with every human consignment to this planet of Earth" (53). The suggestions of Billy's Adamic innocence and goodness are counteracted by those of his--equally Adamic, prelapsarian--ignorance of evil. Resemblance to Christ is suggested by Billy's being the "peacemaker" aboard the Rights-of-Man, by Billy's agony, by the Isaac image used of Billy (in the Christian view, Isaac is a type of Christ), and by the allusion to the "Lamb of God" at the time of Billy's death (124). However, these suggestions are counteracted by Billy's total unconsciousness of a mission or awareness of any significance in his death, and by the fact that it serves no purpose other than to bolster naval discipline.

Billy's death makes a great impact on his shipmates, yet the report of it in the "News from the Mediterranean" distorts the facts, and the incident is soon forgotten. The allusions to ascension may suggest resemblance to Christ, but it is evidently true, as H. M. Campbell has pointed out, that Billy's "ascending" is only to the yard-end ("Hanging" MLN 66:379-80). If the sailors revere the spar from which Billy was suspended as if it were "a piece of the Cross," it is also true that, as the narrator observes, "Everything is for a time venerated in navies" (131). Nathalia Wright sounds a cautionary note, observing that, although Biblical figures are often prototypes for Melville's characters, none of them is the basis for allegory for, in spite of the analogies suggested by them, the pattern breaks down; in spite of his resemblance to Jesus, Billy Budd strikes and kills a man (Use 75-76).

If the answer to the question whether Billy resembles Christ must be clearly affirmative or negative, then, as with all analogy, the answer depends on the choice of the criterion of resemblance. However, if one rejects the disjunctive assumptions of the question, then the answer is both affirmative and negative, pointing to both resemblances and differences.

Thus far the discussion of the importance for Billy Budd of the Eden myth has centred on its effective evocation in both the first and second parts of the novel. In addition, it may be argued that the Eden myth provides

an interpretative framework for some of the sets of contrasting images and concepts in the novel--those associated with the contrast in the Eden myth of Eden and the Fallen World. As in Moby-Dick, these images and concepts should be viewed as symbols, the significance of which may be seen in the light of the Eden myth. There are grounds in Billy Budd for asserting this claim, and for some of these symbols, the claim is reinforced by Melville's prior usage in Typee and Moby-Dick. One set of symbols is associated with Billy, "natural justice," and the fatherly aspect of Vere; the contrasting set of symbols is associated with Claggart, martial law, and the military disciplinarian aspect of Vere.

For example, Billy is associated with the set of symbols which includes primitive society or the primeval, the country, and the feminine. As John B. Noone observes, ". . . Billy may be interpreted as embodying the main outlines of the popular conception of Rousseau's 'noble savage'" (249). He is compared to various primitive or uncivilized men ("barbarian," "savage"), but in no pejorative sense, since primal man in pastoral Eden was uncivilized:

. . . Billy in many respects was little more than a sort of upright barbarian, much such perhaps as Adam presumably might have been ere the urbane Serpent wriggled himself into his company (52).

The chaplain, too, views Billy as a "young barbarian," and he is compared to a "superior savage, so called--a Tahitian, say" (121). To be a barbarian is to be unspoil, to be close to nature, to possess virtues "pristine

and unadulterate" (53). The primitive is contrasted to both the Fallen World man and civilized man, and antedates them. Hence those, like Billy, who possess qualities of purity seem to have had them "transmitted from a period prior to Cain's city and citified man" (53).

It is but a short step from contrasting the Garden and the Fallen World to opposing the country and the city: the country is easily thought of as an extension of Eden. Hence the primitive quality of purity has "an untampered-with flavor like that of berries," connoting the natural purity of the country (53). Billy is compared to a "rustic beauty . . . from the provinces" and "the good rustic out of his latitude in the Rome of the Caesars" (51,53). When he recoils in disgust from the overtures of the after-guardian, Billy is "like a young horse fresh from the pasture suddenly inhaling a vile whiff from some chemical factory" (84).³³

Billy is also associated with the feminine when compared to a "rustic beauty." The narrator describes him in feminine imagery: he is compared to those British "Angles" whom Pope Gregory thought looked like angels, and who resemble Fra Angelico's seraphs with the "rosebud complexion of the more beautiful English girls"; he is like "the beautiful woman in one of Hawthorne's minor tales"; his face is "all but feminine in purity of natural complexion"; when Claggart accuses him falsely, his expression is that of "a condemned vestal priestess" (121,53,50,99).

Billy's association with the primitive and the

feminine is shared by "natural justice" and the parental aspect of Vere, which latter are also associated with the heart. Of this set of symbols, the primitive and the country are, directly, symbols of Eden. The feminine and the heart, by association, and also by virtue of their goodness and enhancement of life, are, indirectly, symbols of Eden. These symbols in Billy Budd mutually reinforce and are reinforced by usage in earlier novels--the primitive in Typee and Moby-Dick, the heart in Moby-Dick. The country has affinities with the land in Moby-Dick. The Eden myth provides this set of symbols with an interpretative framework, giving them significance.

The contrasting set of symbols is associated with Claggart, martial law, and the military disciplinarian aspect of Vere. It is a set of symbols of the Fallen World, one which embraces civilization and the city. Cain's city is the beginning of civilization; hence Eden existed in "a period prior to Cain's city and citified man" (53); "citified man" is none other than civilized man. The association of the city and the Fallen World is reinforced by the description of the Serpent as "urbane" (52). Insofar as Claggart is presented as a Satanic figure and described in serpent imagery, he is associated with the Fallen World and thus with civilization and the city. Hence the "vile whiff from some chemical factory"--an industrial image suggesting the evil which emanates from Claggart and his underlings.³⁴

The head is also symbolic of the Fallen World, owing to its association with martial law and the military

disciplinarian aspect of Vere, and Claggart, too, is associated with the head. It is a striking feature of his appearance--"his brow was of the sort phrenologically associated with more than average intellect . . ." (64)--and when Billy lashes out at Claggart, it is his forehead that is struck, "so shapely and intellectual-looking a feature in the master-at-arms" (99).

Another symbol of the Fallen World in Billy Budd, the main one in the novel, is the ship, of which there are two--the Rights-of-Man, a merchantman, and the Bellipotent, a man-of-war, a ship associated with the city, with Claggart, with martial law, and hence evil and deadly. Billy is clearly out of place aboard the Bellipotent, as much so as a rustic in "Rome of the Caesars"--Rome, like Babylon, an archetypal city connoting the Fallen World in all its wickedness. Claggart, an officer of the ship, represents its values, the military nature of which is attested to by its name "Bellipotent." Billy on the man-of-war is a victim of Claggart's malice and a sacrifice to martial law--"a martyr to martial discipline" as the narrator puts it (121).

This set of symbols of the Fallen World--civilization, the city, the head, the ship--mutually reinforces and is reinforced by its usage in previous novels--civilization and the ship in Typee and Moby-Dick, the head in Moby-Dick. The Eden myth provides this set of symbols with an interpretative framework, and gives it significance.

It was argued in a previous chapter that the ship be viewed as a microcosm of civilized society. Melville's portrayal of the Dolly and the Pequod, both whaling ships, indicates that he thought of these ships as microcosmic. In White Jacket the narrator explicitly describes a man-of-war in terms of a city, a concept which is itself but the microcosm of a civilization, as are, say, Rome or Babylon, for civilization and the city are, as seen, virtually identified. The following are extracts from White Jacket:

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 (ed. Hayford 74);

In truth, a man-of-war is a city afloat . . . Or, rather, a man-of-war is a lofty, walled, and garrisoned town, like Quebec . . . Or it is like the lodging-houses in Paris, turned upside down . . . (ed. Hayford 74-75);

With its crew of 800 or 1000 men, a three-decker is a city on the sea (ed. Hayford 144).

The narrator also compares the Neversink to Rome. It will be noted that the links between White Jacket and Billy Budd are particularly strong: both novels present life aboard men-of-war, their thematic concerns are similar, and, significantly, Billy Budd is formally dedicated to the Neversink's captain of the maintop, Jack Chase.³⁵

In White Jacket, a man-of-war is described as being "'to whalemens, as a metropolis to shire-towns, and sequestered hamlets'" (ed Hayford 16): hamlets and towns both bear evidence of civilization, but its ruthless character is epitomized in the metropolis. Though far

greater than, the metropolis has an essential affinity with, towns and even villages in which the way of life is, relatively, gentle. Hence, in Billy Budd, not only the Bellipotent but also the Rights-of-Man can be viewed as microcosms of civilized society and hence as representatives of the Fallen World. Accordingly, it could be argued that in Billy Budd Melville presents a critique of civilization --a study of man's condition in the Fallen World.

In order to do so, Melville finds it necessary to portray two ships; the differences between them are important and instructive.³⁶ The Rights-of-Man, as its title indicates, represents values very different from those of the Bellipotent.³⁷ Yet even the Rights-of-Man had been, prior to Billy's shipping aboard her, "a rat-pit of quarrels" and had endured "black times" (46). When Billy joins the crew, there is a dramatic change:

"But Billy came; and it was like a Catholic priest striking peace in an Irish shindy. . . . a virtue went out of him, sugaring the sour ones. They took to him like hornets to treacle . . ." (47).

The Rights-of-Man, with Billy aboard, affords an exceptional glimpse of cordial life at sea: "' . . . they all love him. . . . and it's the happy family here'" (47). To the captain of the Rights-of-Man, Billy is "jewel" and "peacemaker" (47). Billy's role aboard the Rights-of-Man is that of a catalyst: he adds the essential ingredients which bring into harmony the elements aboard ship. On Billy's departure, the captain fears that conditions will revert to what they had been previously:

". . . if that young fellow goes--I know how it will be aboard the Rights. Not again very soon shall I, coming up from dinner, lean over the capstan smoking a quiet pipe . . ." (47).

In terms of the symbols of the novel, Billy aboard the Rights-of-Man restores prelapsarian qualities to the Fallen World, represented by the ship; he personifies those symbols of Eden--the primitive, the pastoral, the feminine --and is associated with the heart, another Edenic symbol. Even when he is on the Bellipotent his Edenic nature is insisted on, as it ^{is} in the second half of the novel by his association with "natural justice" and his appeal to the fatherly aspect of Vere. In a scale of values ranged between the polar opposites of deadly evil and vital good, Billy represents the latter and, as has been suggested, is motivated by the impulse of Eros, that instinct which pervaded the Garden of Eden and is, in the Fallen World, so cruelly suppressed, although its operation accounts for such happiness as is possibly attained.

In Billy Budd, Billy's Edenic presence on the Rights-of-Man has an equivalent import to Ishmael's posited return, in Moby-Dick, to the "good" tracts of the land: both insist that the cherishing of the Edenic--whether in a man or a setting--can alone secure the best possible life in the postlapsarian world. It is no accident that the Rights-of-Man, with Billy aboard, should be sailing back to land, "homeward bound" (45), and not surprising that in White Jacket the land (as opposed to the sea) is

associated with "natural justice" (as opposed to martial law):

As a sailor, he shares none of our civil immunities; the law of our soil in no respect accompanies the national floating timbers grown thereon, and to which he clings as his home. For him our Revolution was in vain; to him our Declaration of Independence is a lie (ed. Hayford 144).

A similar association is evident in Jack Chase's desertion from the Neversink for "glorious" motives: "Though bowing to naval discipline afloat; yet ashore, he was a stickler for the Rights of Man, and the liberties of the world" (ed. Hayford, Jacket 17). By the same token, the Bellipotent is "outward bound"--sailing further and further out to sea--at the time of Billy's impressment, and, prior to Billy's execution, has already been "almost at her furthest remove from the fleet" when the distance is yet increased by giving chase to an enemy ship (45,90).

If Billy aboard the Rights-of-Man represents one end of the value scale discernible in civilized society--the Fallen World--his hanging aboard the Bellipotent represents the other. Here civilization is at its worst, shown to be inexorably inimical to life. In terms of the symbols of the novel, Billy's hanging signifies the exclusion of all Edenic qualities from the Fallen World. It is the consequence of the rejection of "natural justice" as the criterion of judgement at the trial, and of the suppression of Vere's fatherly aspect. The symbols of Eden--primitive man, the pastoral, the feminine, the heart--are all then annihilated. As Charles A. Reich puts it, "The focus of

our anguish in Billy Budd is . . . the rejection of human values symbolized by his punishment" (383).³⁸ With the man-of-war, the Bellipotent, are associated Claggart, martial law and Vere as military disciplinarian, and the symbols of the Fallen World--civilization, the city, the head. When Billy is hanged, the Bellipotent represents the Fallen World in horrific and total opposition to Eden: the impulse of Eros has been entirely suppressed, and that of Thanatos reigns supreme.³⁹

Melville employs life aboard a ship to represent civilized existence, the nature of society in the Fallen World, and by contrasting two ships--a merchantman and a man-of-war--he is able to examine civilized society at its best and its worst. Inasmuch as both ships serve as microcosms of the Fallen World, both are acquainted with evil: life on the Rights-of-Man before the advent of Billy, and doubtless after his removal, was far from Edenic, but on the Bellipotent evil, as the narrative develops, is shown to be chosen, even despite indications of potential good, such as Billy's popularity, Vere's affection for Billy, and the drumhead court's willingness to evoke "natural justice" at his trial. The true nature of a man-of-war is exposed at a time of crisis: by definition it is anti-life.

C. N. Manlove incisively analyses, indicts, civilization and is rightly gloomy in discussing the Bellipotent, but in his analysis of civilization he (like many other critics) totally ignores consideration of the Rights-of-Man. Manlove argues that "the central theme in this story

may be put as the relation of nature and civilization": "civilization is at war with nature in the form of the rights of man" (275). Although he postulates that the reader is not encouraged "to read the society of the Bellipotent as a microcosm of the world outside" (285), his analysis of civilization is based precisely on the assumption that it is. Thus the Bellipotent is taken as the exemplar of civilization, and Manlove's generalizations about civilization cite as exclusive evidence Billy's treatment aboard the Bellipotent ("The trial we are given here is not only of Billy, but of civilization itself . . ." (278)). I argue that the ship for Melville--in Typee, Moby-Dick, Billy Budd--is the symbol of civilization and, if so, it follows that its gloomy indictment based upon life aboard the man-of-war may be slightly relieved by the hopefulness of civilization aboard the Rights-of-Man, at its best when Billy is one of the crew and the virtues he signifies are present.

Billy Budd is not a political tract and hence it is inappropriate to equate the Rights-of-Man and the Bellipotent with particular countries and their political institutions. Nevertheless, it may be noticed that the Rights-of-Man, an English merchantman, is associated with the democratic United States of America and the revolutionary philosophy (although not the practice) of France. Thus the merchantman is named after Thomas Paine's book, as the narrator proclaims, and is one of a class with the ships of the French American Stephen Girard of Philadelphia, who named his ships after the French liberal philosophers.

The Bellipotent with its martial code has other associations--with the militarism of Czarist Russia. The narrator compares Vere's conduct of affairs after Claggart's death with "the policy adopted . . . in the capital founded by Peter the Barbarian" (103).

In White Jacket too Melville associates the rights of man with American democracy, while martial law he, correspondingly, associates with militaristic Russia. Hence his indictment in that novel of the terrifying regime obtaining in the American navy, a reign of terror which would never be tolerated on American soil: the treatment of men in the American navy is no less brutal than aboard Russian men-of-war. Melville maintains that the naval code ". . . should conform to the spirit of the political institutions of the country that ordains it. It should not convert into slaves some of the citizens of a nation of freemen" (ed. Hayford, Jacket 144). Thus American ships should uphold the American principles of "political liberty and equality" earned in the revolution and enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. In contrast, although terrifying and inhuman, the conditions obtaining in the Russian navy are, at least, not anomalous: ". . . the laws of that Navy, creating the absolute one-man power in the Captain, and vesting in him the authority to scourge, conform in spirit to the territorial laws of Russia, which is ruled by an autocrat, and whose courts inflict the knout upon the subjects of the land" (ed. Hayford, Jacket 144).

What is important are the moral-cum-political values

implied by the portrayal of life aboard the Rights-of-Man and the Bellipotent. It is clear that the Rights-of-Man represents a society in which the individual, even if only theoretically, is of key importance, as is proclaimed by the name of the ship, for the rights alluded to are those inalienably belonging to each person in that society. By the criteria of moral philosophy--as in Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals--the concept of the unique worth of the individual is the very heart of morality. Hence it is unthinkable that martial law should operate aboard the Rights-of-Man. Certainly flogging, sanctioned by martial law, was not practised aboard her: only after his impressment does Billy first witness this cruel punishment. It may be safely assumed that the Rights-of-Man is governed by "natural justice," the code contrasted to martial law.

The Bellipotent portrays a society with very different values, one in which the efficient functioning of the group is of main importance. Thus Vere appeals to the concept of the group when he explains why Billy's death sentence cannot be either mitigated or postponed: he maintains that if the sentence were not executed promptly, the crew might think the officers afraid of them--"a conjecture . . . deadly to discipline"--and that "new troubles" would ensue (113). As John W. Rathbun observes, "The state becomes an end in itself, its citizens pawns in the intricate moves of statecraft" (24). In such a society the rights of the individual are of no importance, as may be seen in the impressment of Billy and other

sailors, in the institution of flogging and above all in Billy's death. Billy is sacrificed for the continued efficiency of the military machine. He may not have dealt in "double meanings and insinuations," yet in his farewell to his old ship--"'And good-bye to you too, old Rights-of-Man'" (49)--he spoke more truly than he knew. By the criteria of, say, Kantian moral philosophy, the concept that individuals have no value in themselves and are to be used merely as means to ends is degrading and inhuman. In addition, the rejection at Billy's trial of the principles of "natural justice" itself signifies the abandonment of moral values and of the divine quality of mercy.

Billy Budd evidences Melville's sense of the range of human nature and the complexity and variety of the forms civilized society can take: human nature can be essentially good, as in Billy, or essentially evil, as in Claggart, or, as in Vere, good and evil can contend; so too, civilized society can be wholesome, as on the Rights-of-Man with Billy aboard, or deadly, as on the Bellipotent with Billy hanging from the yard arm. The novel displays more, however, than Melville's consciousness of the varieties of human nature and manifestations of society: the portrayal of the Bellipotent suggests his despair of the human condition. That impulse which is "to death devote" overcomes the loving parent in Vere, and although Claggart is killed, it is his evil spirit which triumphs when Billy hangs. The novel focusses, not on the Rights-of-Man where life can be tolerable (though far from idyllic

as in Typee), but on the tyrannous Bellipotent, where the Edenic virtues are shown to be tragically vulnerable. The speed with which events rush to the climax emphasizes fatal inevitability: Billy is ordered off the Rights-of-Man and hastily transferred to the Bellipotent; on the man-of-war, Vere changes from father to military disciplinarian as swiftly as he uncovers his face, "natural justice" is dismissed in a brief argument, and Billy is hanged on the morning following the night he struck Claggart. The victory of Thanatos is complete: the dawn, lighting Billy's swinging corpse, only deepens by ironic contrast the reader's black despair. Billy Budd, which unflinchingly explores the workings of evil in individuals and in civilized society, may well be viewed as Melville's Heart of Darkness.⁴⁰ Yet on the merchantman Rights-of-Man, light had flickered: ". . . may it last as long as the old earth keeps rolling!"

Notes

Chapter 1. Typee

¹ Janet Giltrow makes a case for reading Typee as a travel narrative rather than a novel.

² Robert Graves cites Hesiod who, in Works and Days, adopts a fivefold scheme involving two ages of bronze. In Metamorphoses, Ovid adopts a fourfold division (transl. Innes 31-33).

³ Harry Levin cites historical examples of the hermeneutic interpretation of classical myth (Myth 35-36, 135).

⁴ Harry Levin makes the same point of the Golden Age, claiming it as an aetiological fable (Myth 4).

⁵ All further page references to Typee are given in parentheses in the text.

⁶ Milton R. Stern discusses life aboard ship (Steel 36-39).

⁷ To Milton Stern, the Marquesas are an emblem of Eden and a reminder of the Golden Age (Steel 40).

⁸ Robert Stanton mentions some of the Edenic or Golden Age characteristics of Typee valley. He suggests that ". . . Melville symbolically identifies Tommo's entrance into the Typee valley with Satan's entrance into Paradise . . ." (409).

⁹ Merlin Bowen makes a similar point in his discussion of life in Typee (51-53).

¹⁰ G. S. Kirk discusses the connection between idyllic islands and the Golden Age (Nature 132-34).

¹¹ Harry Levin discusses the portrayal of the Golden Age in the visual arts (Myth 193-99).

¹² J. B. Leishman cites further examples from classical literature (298-99).

¹³ See discussion in this thesis, pp.79-90.

14 W. H. Auden discusses examples from literature of the "classic attitude" to the sea--that "the sea is no place to be if you can help it . . ." (7-10). Auden claims that the "romantic attitude" to the sea is different --that "the sea is the real situation and the voyage is the true condition of man" (12). Auden's historico-cultural distinction of "classic" and "romantic" corresponds in import to the conceptual one in this thesis of moral and aesthetic attitudes to the voyage in Moby-Dick (discussed in this thesis pp. 100-103).

15 W. H. Auden suggests that the ship is "only used as a metaphor for society in danger from within or without" (7). Auden points out the appropriateness of the ship as symbol of humanity in an extended discussion (63-68).

16 Harry Levin discusses Montaigne and Rousseau (Myth 74-79, 157-59). Merlin Bowen suggests that Godwin is no less influential than Rousseau on Melville (55). James Baird expresses a dissentient opinion on Rousseau's supposed influence on Melville. Claiming that Melville knew nothing of Rousseau when, like Tom, he approached the Marquesas, Baird distinguishes academic from existential primitivism and argues that Rousseau and the exoticist Chateaubriand are examples of the first, Melville an example of the second (8-16).

17 Earl Miner draws attention to the identity of the city and civilization.

18 Richard Ruland argues that Typee should be read in the context of eighteenth century travel literature such as Gulliver's Travels, in which the author berates the shortcomings of his society from the standpoint of an exotic land (313).

19 George Steiner, Claude Levi-Strauss, Radio Broadcast, SABC, 10 November 1981.

20 Janet Giltrow discusses Typee as a travel narrative.

21 Edgar A. Dryden comments on the links between primitive and civilized societies in Typee (44) but his evidence is different from that of this thesis.

22 It is noteworthy that Walter Herbert traces the historical development of this notion from Hellenistic and biblical antiquity (Encounters 120-21).

23 T. Walter Herbert, Jr., suggests that the packages contained the skulls of departed kinsmen rather than of slain and eaten enemies (Encounters 170).

24 Edwin H. Miller argues that Tom rejected the importunities of the tattoo artist because, among other reasons, ". . . tattooing is intended to make a man of Tommo" (126). But, argues Miller, "Tommo will have none of it" (123). Miller's argument would be persuasive if Tom were a Typee, but since he is an alien the tattoo's significance for him is one-dimensional--acceptance of Typee identity.

25 T. Walter Herbert, Jr., draws attention to Melville's ambivalent attitude to the Marquesans: ". . . he [Melville] finds his mind radically divided between horror and profound admiration for the islanders . . ." (Encounters 158).

26 Janet Giltrow stresses that Tom's escape from the valley conforms to the narrative conventions of travel literature: "Homecoming is the proper dénouement in travel writing: Typee is not a goal, only a stage in a round trip" (26).

27 James E. Miller, Jr., makes a similar point, referring to life in Typee as "peculiarly mindless and soulless"--purely instinctive (Guide 7).

28 Milton R. Stern makes the same point (Steel 59).

29 James I. Babin emphasizes that Tom's escape to Typee is a reversion to childhood, and hence the escape from Typee represents a newfound maturity.

30 T. Walter Herbert, Jr., cites an uncomprehending contemporary reviewer in the Christian Parlor Magazine of the first edition of Typee who concluded that Melville returned to America in order to be a cannibal missionary from the Marquesas to America (Encounters 186).

Chapter 2. Moby-Dick

¹ All further page references to Moby-Dick are given in parentheses in the text.

² Many critics make a similar point. Richard Chase observes that Melville's "symbolic polarities" are contained in Typee: ". . . he had his characteristic symbols before he ever set pen seriously to paper" (Study 35). However, Chase's enumeration of Typee's symbols is quite different from that presented in this thesis, since Chase emphasizes the symbolic qualities of fathers and sons.

James Baird also comments on Melville's tendency towards symbolic polarity--"the most impressive feature of his imagination"--and observes that "[his] symbolism

begins to take form as soon as he begins to write . . ." so that "one has in Typee and Omoo a clear description of imagistic opposites" (188,189,192). Baird suggests that the polarity of symbols is invariably Oceanic and Western (196).

Milton R. Stern points out that in Typee ". . . there is an order sheet for the materials Melville is to use characteristically" among which, Stern suggests, are "the primitive and the western" and land and sea (Steel 25). As Faith Pullin asserts, "Typee . . . encapsulates and prefigures the major concerns and biases of [Melville's] later vision" (1).

³ Brian Way argues for an opposing point of view: "[Melville's] symbols are not interlocking parts of a system: they are local and dramatic . . ." (24).

⁴ Discussing the concept of the primitive in Typee, Moby-Dick and Billy Budd, Sailor, Ray B. West, Jr., argues that there is ". . . little in Billy Budd that Melville had not stated earlier in Moby-Dick. . . . there is much in both novels that had been recognized as early as Typee" (383).

⁵ In this and other quotations from the bible, the King James or Authorized Version of 1611 is used unless otherwise stated. See note 65 to this chapter of the thesis.

⁶ The most memorable elaboration of the curse of "the ground" is in Paradise Lost where Milton ingeniously and systematically explains the vicissitude of the environment consequent on the Fall (10:648-706).

⁷ James G. Frazer has demonstrated that the Flood of Genesis has parallels found nigh universally in the myths of many other nations of the world. It does not follow, however, that the significance of the Flood in other traditions is the same as has been argued for in Genesis. Whether or not this is so is a matter for independent enquiry.

⁸ The imagery of battle is absent from the King James translation of the verses but manifest in that of the New English Bible.

⁹ W. H. Auden makes the same point (7).

¹⁰ James Baird suggests that the sea has a different significance for Melville. Baird emphasizes the timelessness of the ocean, an image of the Urwelt, from which follow, inter alia, man's grief at the brevity of his existence, and his powerlessness in the face of the ocean's indifference to good and evil (345-52).

¹¹ Discussed in this thesis, p.22.

12 Leo Marx suggests the following "symbolic setting[s]" in Moby-Dick: ". . . (1) a ship . . . (2) an idyllic domain, a lovely green land . . . and (3) a hideous menacing wilderness, habitat of cannibals and sharks . . ." (285).

13 David Jaffé comments on this custom and so does Edward H. Rosenberry ("Coffin-Canoe").

14 Merlin Bowen discusses Melville's sense of the sea as evil (74-77).

15 W. H. Auden comments on the common properties of sea and desert (15-18), and also points out the differences (18-19). In a discussion of the desert and the "scarcely less cursed" Encantadas, Merlin Bowen cites a passage from Melville's "The Encantadas": ". . . in no world but a fallen one could such lands exist'" (81).

16 William Sedgwick asserts that ". . . the meaning of Typee grew into the symbolic significance of the land in Moby-Dick, as opposed to the sea . . ." and that "the land stands for the Typee side of life" (32,100). While there is a kernel of truth in what Sedgwick says, he overlooks in Moby-Dick the "frightful places" of the earth, and fails to distinguish island and land. Sedgwick subsequently observes, what is more accurately expressed, that "insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy" has the same "meaning" that Typee came to have for Melville (33).

17 Cf. Northrop Frye: "In Biblical typology the relation between Eden and the wilderness of Adam's exile is closely parallel to the relation between the Promised Land and the wilderness of the law" (Fables 60).

18 William Sedgwick discusses the imagery of darkness and light in Moby-Dick (126-29).

19 William Sedgwick makes, briefly, similar observations--that the sea is "the dangerous element," that the call to the sea has "glory to it," and that "the land has its perils too" (99)--but the terminology and evidence (apart from one quotation) are different from that in this thesis.

20 Frank G. Novak, Jr., argues that the binary opposition of beauty and terror is pervasive in the novel, an argument that could also account for the ambivalence with which the narrator views the sea.

21 Merlin Bowen makes a similar point but gives different reasons for it (27). William Sedgwick observes that "the sea is the element of truth . . ." (98), but does not develop the observation. R. V. Osbourn discusses sea and whale in relation to the pursuit of truth.

Ahab's pursuit of truth is discussed in this thesis, pp. 124-131.

22 Even the mystical conception of the sea as anima mundi--"the great mundane soul," "that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature" (201,140) links the sea and thought: ". . . every dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some undiscernible form, seems . . . the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it" (140).

23 James E. Miller, Jr., conducts a similar analysis, albeit with different concepts, and covering a wider range of Hawthorne's writings ("Unpardonable" 91-105).

24 Merlin Bowen gives a comprehensive analysis of the concepts of head and heart in Melville's works (23-39). Bowen considers Melville's works in general; this thesis focusses upon the development of Melville's conception of human nature as manifest in Typee and Moby-Dick, and compares and contrasts Hawthorne and Melville's concepts of head and heart.

25 Merlin Bowen suggests that for Melville in general the head is the masculine principle, the heart the feminine (25-26). Bowen cites examples from Mardi, Moby-Dick, Pierre and Clarel; in this thesis the heart as feminine principle in Billy Budd, Sailor is discussed in chapter 3.

26 Compare Milton's notion of the "paradise within," internal and spiritual counterpart to the lost Garden of Eden (12:585-87).

Leon Howard suggests a view of Hawthorne's influence upon Melville in Moby-Dick different from that presented in this thesis (Howard 168-69,172-73). Howard argues that Melville, "the onetime primitivist, the admirer of the noble savage and the denouncer of civilization," began to suspect what Hawthorne's story "Earth's Holocaust" declares--". . . that man is not innately good but may have the source of the world's evil in his own nature" (169). I think it true that Melville was working towards such a position when writing of Ahab, but not of Queequeg.

27 Many critics, among them F. O. Matthiessen (435-440) and Richard B. Sewall (92-105), regard the novel as a tragedy.

28 Beongcheon Yu suggests that ". . . Moby-Dick is, first of all, Ishmael's cultural autobiography, and the Ahab tragedy was added onto this matrix . . ." (111).

29 Nina Baym discusses the complexity of the genre of Moby-Dick (917-18); A. Robert Lee gives an extensive discussion of this topic (86-102).

30 Pierre Bayle discusses Adam's "prodigious knowledge" (ed. Des Maizeaux note D, 101-102); S. H. Hooke claims that Adam is a seeker after "magical knowledge" (115-16).

Robert Graves and Raphael Patai suggest that ". . . 'knowledge of good and evil,' in Hebrew, means 'knowledge of all things, both good and evil,' and does not refer to the gift of moral choice . . ." (Hebrew 81).

³¹ Merton M. Sealts., Jr., discusses Ahab's quarter-deck speech in relation to Platonic philosophy ("Platonic" 305-309).

³² Luther S. Mansfield and Howard P. Vincent comment on Melville's knowledge of Kant and of empiricist and German philosophers (note 326.22, pp.765-66).

³³ Viola Sachs makes a similar point: "The white whale personifies for Ahab, the limits of human knowledge, the 'wall', across which man,--'the prisoner'--must thrust to reach outside" (88).

³⁴ Nina Baym adds that "the author of Mardi is quite a bit like Ahab" but she has other points of resemblance in mind (913).

³⁵ The legend of Faustus here refers particularly to Marlowe's drama. It is clear that Melville was familiar with Doctor Faustus, having bought a copy of Marlowe's Plays in London in 1849 (Sealts, Reading entry 348).

³⁶ Gustaaf van Cromphout reminds the reader that, as students of Western culture such as Thomas Mann and Oswald Spengler point out, ". . . Faust represents what is most characteristic of the Western psyche: its boundless aspirations, its expansionism, its identification of knowledge with power . . ." (18). Gustaaf van Cromphout contends that "the Pequod's voyage into landlessness is Melville's version of the Romantic transformation of the Faustian ethos" (18).

³⁷ F. O. Matthiessen notes, briefly, the resemblance between Ahab's tragedy and Ethan Brand's (449); Paul McCarthy compares Ahab to Chillingworth in Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter.

³⁸ James E. Miller, Jr., gives a similar analysis of Ahab's isolation ("Unpardonable" 108-109).

³⁹ F. O. Matthiessen gives a comprehensive discussion of Ahab's relationship with Starbuck and Pip (449-454); Sharon Cameron explores the implications of Ahab's relationship with Pip and the significance of its rejection by Ahab (20-35).

⁴⁰ Leo Marx comments upon the mechanistic implications of this and similar imagery (298-99).

⁴¹ Brian Way points to Ahab's monomania and the "dark side" of his soul as the sources of Ahab's power over

his men (41-43). Reginald L. Cook draws attention to the contribution of magic and ceremonial to Ahab's domination of his crew.

42 Merlin Bowen makes a similar point: "We must distinguish at all times between the experiencing actor and the more sophisticated narrator, between Ishmael-then and Ishmael-now" (240).

43 Cf. Merlin Bowen: "[Ishmael's] experiences, chief among them the witnessing of Ahab's tragedy and the loss of the 'Pequod,' have matured him" (241). Philip J. Egan analyses the stages in Ishmael's development. Frank Shuffelton draws attention to the importance of the "Extracts" preceding chapter 1 in relation to Ishmael's developing consciousness (528).

44 Commenting on the crew of the Pequod, the narrator declares: "They were nearly all Islanders . . . Isolatoos too, I call such, not acknowledging the common continent of men, but each Isolato living on a separate continent of his own" (108). These isolatoos are islanders who have all "pushed off" from their isles.

45 Grant McMillan suggests that Ishmael attempts to discover the spiritual significance of the material world and his experience of it.

46 James Baird suggests a reading of this image in the light of that of the Chinese creeper attacked by millions of cankerous worms in Melville's story "The Piazza" (Baird 259).

47 Tyrus Hillway points out Carlyle's influence on these passages (84). Frank G. Novak, Jr., cites these passages as evidence for the pervasiveness in Moby-Dick of the binary opposition of beauty and terror (334-35).

48 Marius Bewley finds little resemblance between Ishmael and Ahab: Bewley argues that Ishmael sets out on ". . . a different quest from Ahab's. It is a quest for spiritual health . . ."; ". . . although from time to time during the course of the Pequod's voyage Ishmael comes under the influence of Ahab's intellectual domination, such occasions are momentary" (206).

49 The discussion in this thesis of Ishmael's relationship with Queequeg is similar to that of Daniel Hoffman (Form 263-68). There are, however, significant differences; besides, the concepts used here are different from Hoffman's, as is the context of the discussion and the direction of the argument.

50 James E. Miller makes a similar observation (Guide 81,114).

51 Leo Marx comments on Ishmael's experience in "A Squeeze of the Hand": "What is striking about this vision of rural tranquility, under the circumstances, is its irrelevance. It is totally, absurdly, not to say insanely irrelevant to Ishmael's life . . . On this ship only Ahab determines the effective 'conceit of attainable felicity'" (305). Marx argues (308-310) that Ishmael's "explicit, rational repudiation of the quest" occurs rather in the chapter "The Try Works." (Richard B. Sewall refers to "The Try Works" as "the last of Ishmael's intimate moral revelations" (100); Milton R. Stern suggests that "The Try Works" is the "thematic center" of the novel (Steel 241).)

52 This statement of Bowen's is better formulated than a later one in which Bowen talks of Ishmael making a "shift from head to heart" (248).

53 Richard Chase presents a totally different view of the doubloon (Novel 109).

54 Leo Marx suggests the following significance in the Epilogue's quotation from Job: "Ishmael is saved as Job's messengers had been saved, in order that he may deliver to us a warning of disasters to come"; ". . . we too may expect our integrity and faith to be tested" (319, 287).

55 Louis Leiter presents a similar argument (253).

56 What Marx means by "the Ishmaelian view of life" is, to use his terms, "a complex pastoralism in which the ideal is inseparably yoked to its opposite" (318).

57 Some critics argue that in the Epilogue Ishmael is symbolically resurrected (e.g., Marius Bewley (208-210)). Ted N. Weissbuch and Bruce Stillians present an opposing view.

58 David W. Noble discusses Ishmael's acceptance of death: "Ishmael . . . attempt[s] to recapitulate the exodus of his ancestors from the crowded cities of Europe, across the purifying waters of the ocean, to a promised land in the west where death, the badge of the ineradicable imperfection of the Eternal Adam, would no longer haunt mankind" (36).

59 Leo Marx gives an extended discussion in which he compares and contrasts Ishmael and Ahab (287-319). Marx's thesis is as follows: "The sea change that Ishmael suffers, played against the opposite change in Ahab, is the narrative key to the pastoral design in Moby-Dick" (289).

Alfred Kazin emphasizes the contrasting roles of narrator and protagonist in the novel: ". . . two rhythms --one reflective, the other forceful--alternate to show

us the world in which man's thinking and man's doing follow each its own law" (83). John Seelye, in contrasting Ishmael and Ahab, focusses on the imagery of circles and lines (65-71). Richard H. Brodhead analyses Melville's counterpointing of Ishmael and Ahab (148-62,202).

60 Janis Stout discusses the thematic importance of Job for the presentation of Ahab and Ishmael ("Job" 76-79).

61 Beongcheon Yu argues that Ahab's death manifests Melville's attitude to "sultanism," Ishmael's survival Melville's attitude to "divine equality" (122).

62 Joyce S. Adler asserts that ". . . the spirit of war, as embodied in Life-hating Ahab, and the spirit of peace, as symbolized by Life-preserving Queequeg, represent the fundamental impulses in the human heart . . ." (56).

63 Brian Way makes a similar point: "For Melville there is always something malignant, if not diabolical, in the natural world . . ." (32).

64 John Seelye makes similar observations about Ishmael and Ahab (3).

65 Because of the influence of the King James bible --the Authorized Version--on Paradise Lost, and its widespread use in the Protestant world of Melville's day, that translation of Genesis must be considered here. Besides, the verses from the bible quoted in the "Extracts" (2) point to Melville's familiarity with the King James translation (although punctuation and the use of capitals are not identical).

66 Cf. Milton, Paradise Lost (9:163-91).

67 When Melville has Ahab hunt Moby Dick as the incarnation of evil, he also refers to another myth, or group of myths, that of Hero and Dragon, a topic discussed in section 4 of this chapter.

68 Since the paragraph is devoted to the portrayal of Ahab's thoughts and feelings, and since it is the narrator speaking here, the term "malice" probably reflects Ahab's view, the term "seeming" the narrator's qualification.

69 It is during the "Season-on-the-line" that Ahab is maimed; a year later, at the beginning of that season (and before he embarks on the Pequod's voyage) Ahab's shattered ivory leg pierces his groin; yet another year later, at that same season, Ahab fatally encounters Moby Dick.

70 Discussed in this thesis, p. 85.

71 Discussed in this thesis, pp. 82-86.

72 James Baird argues that "the White Whale . . . the master avatar of Melville's art . . . is a re-incarnation of the old chaos-dragon" (335). While the association of Moby Dick and Tiamat--the chaos-dragon (Baird 334)--is valuable, it should be emphasized (which Baird fails to do) that the association is Ahab's, not the narrator's. Further, the implications of the terms "avatar" and "re-incarnation" are likely to be misleading.

73 Cf. Thomas Mann: "What concerns us here is not calculable time. Rather it is time's abrogation and dissolution in the alternation of tradition and prophecy, which lends to the phrase 'once upon a time' its double sense of past and future and therewith its burden of potential present" (Joseph 18).

74 Harold Beaver makes the same point--"In his monomania [Ahab] re-enacts the role of dragon-slayer--Osiris to Moby Dick's Typhon, Christ to Leviathan . . ." --but does not develop it (37).

75 Thornton Y. Booth makes a similar point: ". . . to Ahab comes the conviction that he is fated to destroy evil, or at least to strike back a blow for man against the evil powers that pursue him" (38).

76 Ahab's freedom of will is implied in the discussion in this thesis, pp. 143-44, particularly in his remark, "'What I've dared, I've willed; and what I've willed, I'll do!'" (ed. Hayford, Moby-Dick 147).

77 Henry Murray gives a very different--and psychological--reading of the novel. Murray argues that Ahab is an embodiment of Satan (and captain of the "Id"), Moby Dick an embodiment of the Calvinist conception of the deity (the Superego).

78 W. H. Auden suggests that Ahab does not "believe for a moment that if he succeeds in killing the White Whale, he will be any happier" (111).

79 Charles H. Cook, Jr., makes a similar point about Ahab's motive: "By killing this monster he [Ahab] would bring mankind into the millenium" (61). Cf. Viola Sachs: "We are . . . led to see in Ahab's wild chase of the monster . . . a desperate attempt to reinstall himself and man in the garden of Eden . . ." (89).

80 Henry Pommer draws attention to Ahab's resemblance to Satan in Paradise Lost and concludes that "Ahab maligned the whale as wrongfully as Satan maligned God" (90-97,98).

81 F. O. Matthiessen gives the background to his remark and elucidates it (446,459).

82 Cf. John R. May: "The image of the eternal city which concludes the vision of Revelation is a perfect compliment to the paradisiacal myth of Genesis" (23).

83 Daniel Hoffman has an extended discussion, from another point of view, of the significance of Jonah for Moby-Dick ("Whale" 207-214). Nathalia Wright also discusses this topic ("Jonah's").

84 Discussed in this thesis, pp. 223-230.

85 Discussed in this thesis, pp. 221-222.

86 V. William E. Sedgwick (111) and John Parke (87-88).

87 Discussed in this thesis, pp. 129-31.

88 Thomas Vargish draws attention to Melville's knowledge of Gnosticism.

89 Hans Jonas analyses Gnostic beliefs (93).

90 Cf. Mary Shelley's prefatory note to Shelley, Prometheus Unbound (980-81).

91 T. Walter Herbert, Jr., discusses this topic ("Calvinism").

92 Paul W. Miller discusses Zoroastrianism in Moby-Dick.

A possible source of Melville's knowledge of Manichaeism is The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle (ed. Des Maizeaux 90-97). Millicent Bell argues for this suggestion.

93 Owing to the inaccessibility of most of the sources, read by Melville, of the myths he cites in "The Honor and Glory of Whaling" (ed. Hayford, Moby-Dick 304, n. 1), reliable twentieth century versions have been used in this thesis. The sole accessible source, the article "Jonas" (Des Maizeaux 3:577-80), which comments on the relation of Jonah and Hercules, was of little relevance to this thesis.

94 Robert Graves would have applauded the link between Hercules and Jonah. According to Graves, both instances of the sojourn in the belly of a whale are based upon ritual: ". . . Marduk's representative, the King of Babylon, spent a period in demise every year, during which he was supposedly fighting Tiamat" (2:174).

95 P. J. Hogarth discusses the historical basis of George and the dragon. Hogarth asserts that "St. George is not unique in his association with dragons. Well over 100 saints--not to mention knights, kings and other heroes--slew dragons" ("St. George" 20).

96 Judy Allen and Jeanne Griffiths discuss mystical and alchemical interpretations of the myths of Hero and Dragon (121-25).

97 H. F. Scott-Stokes discusses the sacrifice of the maiden (74-76).

98 The concepts of hero and saviour-hero discussed here are not identical with the notion of tragic hero.

99 C. Kerényi discusses the cult of the hero (Heroes 4-5).

100 Discussed in this thesis, pp. 244-45.

101 Reginald L. Cook emphasizes the importance of the victory of Ahab's spirit in spite of his death (197) yet I contend that the heroes of the myths of Hero and Dragon are unconquered in body as well as in spirit.

102 Henry F. Pommer presents an opposing point of view. Pommer postulates Ahab's "concern" for his crew and "occasional regard" for their welfare, yet concedes that such concern was "never a major absorption, never strong enough to turn the leader from the path of pride . . ." (102-103).

103 Merlin Bowen views Ahab's death from an entirely different perspective: ". . . we find in [Ahab's] death a sense of fulfilment, not loss. For defeat is his only who accepts defeat, and this Ahab has not done. He "stands forth his own inexorable self" even in the irreversible moment of final failure. His integrity is his victory" (157).

104 Hoffman discusses this notion further (Form 241).

105 One is reminded of Nathalia Wright's contention that in Melville's works, ". . . natural circumstances are deliberately compared with supernatural ones . . . one suddenly perceives another sequence of events happening at the same moment in quite another world . . ." (Use 184).

106 Cf. Richard Brodhead, who acknowledges his indebtedness to Northrop Frye: "In Moby-Dick Melville looks through the whaling cruise in such a way as to see its "secret part", the romance action of the dragon-slayer's quest" (22).

107 Other critics express similar views of Ahab as Romantic hero, for example, Leon Howard (170-71).

108 It is interesting to note that Reed points out ". . . the diminishment of Ahab as a heroic figure toward the end of Moby-Dick . . ." and observes that "part of him

is already with the inhuman savagery of Moby-Dick, part of him looks back toward the humanizing spirit of Ishmael" (Meditations 178).

109 See discussion in this thesis, pp. 180-83.

Chapter 3. Billy Budd, Sailor

¹ All further page references to Billy Budd, Sailor (for reasons of brevity, referred to as Billy Budd) are given in parentheses in the text.

² A similar bipartite structure is suggested by Richard and Rita Gollin (515). Peter A. Stitt implies the same in his observation that "there are two basic conflicts in this book . . ." (45).

³ Harrison Hayford and Merton Sealts stress that the manuscript of Billy Budd was not ready for publication at the time of Melville's death (ed. Hayford, Billy 1). However, I contend that the novel's incompleteness does not affect its demonstrable unities of plot, time and place. Hershel Parker claims that to regard Billy Budd--"a work left unfinished at the author's death"--as a unified work of art is to be "still entangled by the New Criticism" ("Melville" 59). Yet is it only the New Criticism that postulates the unity of a work of art? The structuralist, for example, does so too, emphasizing the importance of the reader's "expectation of totality or coherence" in a literary text (Culler 170-74).

Hershel Parker argues elsewhere that ". . . we need to ask skeptical questions about placement and relationship of parts rather than to look merely for evidences of one sort of ingenious, elusive unity or another. . . . we simply cannot read certain books unless we first study the surviving draft pages or manuscript . . ." ("Exigencies" 142). Robert Milder examines the "New Scholarship" advocated by Parker, and criticizes its assumptions about the importance of the genesis of a text (60-61).

⁴ Reich's account of the reason for such a response differs from that suggested in this thesis.

⁵ Billy as a Christ figure is discussed in this thesis, pp. 313-16 .

⁶ James E. Miller, Jr., makes a similar observation but his evidence is quite different from that presented here (Guide 220-21). Robert L. Perry briefly compares Billy to Adam and Eve as portrayed in Paradise Lost (Perry 179-81); his evidence is different from that of this thesis.

7 Critics have pointed out Claggart's resemblance to Satan as portrayed in Paradise Lost (ed. Hayford, Billy note 137, p.165; note 140, pp.165-66; Matthiessen 505-506).

8 Olive L. Fite suggests the influence of Schopenhauer in the conception of the contrasting figures of Billy and Claggart.

9 James Baird points out that the Handsome Sailor is, characteristically, ignorant of his origins (212).

10 Critics have pointed out Claggart's resemblance to Iago (ed. Hayford, Billy note 137, p.164).

11 H. Bruce Franklin postulates the identity of Claggart and the Serpent-Satan: "The central act of Billy Budd comes when Budd slays the serpent. Earlier hints have implied that Claggart is the serpent of Eden. When he accuses Budd, Claggart becomes the reptilian incarnation of evil . . ." (Wake 193). However, Franklin does not develop this argument, devoting his chapter on Billy Budd to the hypothesis that "the mythology and rites of the British Druids in large part define both the action and the symbolism of Billy Budd" (Wake 194).

12 Northrop Frye's notion of "displacement"--the techniques a writer uses to make his story credible, lifelike--is useful here (Anatomy 131-140; Fables 36; Brodhead 21-22).

13 James Baird draws attention to Melville's use of animal imagery (368-77). Baird suggests that Melville thereby expresses his sense of the presence of the Urwelt, often juxtaposed to his vision of civilized man. The animal imagery used of Claggart is an excellent example of this, one not mentioned by Baird.

14 Charles A. Reich comments on the significance of speech versus gesture in Billy Budd (387). Irene Friedman draws attention to the contrast of Billy's stutter and Claggart's urbane speech, and points out that Queequeg too is characterized by incoherent speech (92).

15 Unlike Milton, Melville was not intent on retelling the biblical story nor (particularly not in Billy Budd) in justifying the ways of God to men.

16 Friedman's evidence is different from that presented in this thesis.

17 James E. Miller, Jr., for example, claims that Billy's deed is "Satanic" (Guide 222).

18 Johnson claims that a minority of readers do not see Billy and Claggart as personifications of good and evil, and that these readers approach the characters from a psychoanalytical standpoint (577-79).

19 Johnson argues that a psychoanalytical reading denies that Billy's fatal blow is unintentional, accidental (580).

20 Merlin Bowen makes a similar point: ". . . in the light of [Verè's] prejudgement of the case the body [Vere] convokes appears less a court of law than a convenient instrument of his will" (225).

Edward H. Rosenberry is more sympathetic to Vere's remark ("Problem" 496).

21 Billy's association with the primitive and the feminine is discussed in this thesis, pp. 317-318.

22 Cf. Merlin Bowen: ". . . it is through Vere that Claggart's wish for Billy's destruction is accomplished . . ." (220).

23 For example, Warner Berthof argues that ". . . Melville is at pains to present martial law as morally sui generis, and in its own terms morally unimpeachable. . . . Melville does not choose . . . to judge the martial discipline by a higher moral law; he makes such a standard available neither to Vere . . . nor to the reader in judging what has happened" (339-40).

24 Walter L. Reed suggests an analogy between the forms of military law and the forms of art: "In having to impose the rule of law on Billy Budd's spontaneous nature, Vere is facing problems similar to those Melville had faced in his earlier fiction . . ." ("Forms" 232). Reed's analogy implies an opposition between, on the one hand, law, form and on the other hand, lawlessness, formlessness, "spontaneity." I contend that the implied opposition is misleading and that in Billy Budd the true opposition is between one law and another--one is associated with "natural justice," the other is martial law.

25 Cf. Merton M. Sealts, Jr.: ". . . the dichotomy of Billy and Claggart repeats Melville's old pattern of heart versus head" ("Platonic" 333). Charles Mitchell refers to the conflict between Claggart and Billy as "the psychomachia within Vere" (115).

26 Some critics (for example, Peter L. Hays and Richard D. Rust) discuss the relationship between Vere and Billy in terms of that between Melville and his son Malcolm, who committed suicide at the age of 18.

27 C. B. Ives argues that, in sentencing Billy to death, Vere suppresses his own humanity and capacity for feeling.

28 Merlin Bowen makes a similar point: he argues that Vere ". . . has stifled the sound of his own heart and learned to live by the head alone . . . Neither the Christian

gospel nor the modern doctrine of the rights of man has, in his opinion, any place in the government of this man-of-war world" (217).

29 Charles Mitchell draws attention to the manifold parallels between Vere and Claggart.

30 Evelyn Schroth argues for the narrator's condemnation of Vere, although her evidence is different from that of this thesis.

31 Phil Withim criticizes James Miller's argument, but his criticism is different from that given here (Withim note 10, p. 118).

32 Richard H. Fogle makes a similar point elsewhere: "The law of the mutiny act is the law of a fallen world . . ." (Acceptance" 45).

33 Janis P. Stout examines the themes of the bucolic and the urban in American literature, and comments on the myth of the New World and the reality of America (Sodoms 3-15).

34 John B. Noone, Jr., considers two opposing conceptions of Claggart: ". . . Claggart apparently is the apotheosis of Rousseau's conception of 'civilized' man. . . . From a different point of view, Claggart may be viewed as a restrained version of Hobbes's primitive man" (251-52). Noone contends that Melville sides with Hobbes; I would contend that the imagery associated with Claggart suggests the opposite.

35 In the dedication to Billy Budd, Jack Chase's ship is the frigate, United States.

36 Milton R. Stern presents another view, one which focusses on the Bellipotent: ". . . the man-of-war world, wrong as it is, is all that exists" (Steel 210).

37 John B. Noone, Jr., suggests that relative to the Bellipotent (called the Indomitable) the Rights-of-Man represents the Rousseauan state of nature (251). However, Noone overlooks the fact that the Rousseauan state of nature is represented by the South Sea island, and that the Rights-of-Man belongs to civilization, as does the Bellipotent.

38 Reich argues that, in telling Billy's story, Melville is asking about the fate of the natural in man in civilized society (388-89).

39 William Braswell has a very different interpretation of the significance of the Bellipotent (the Indomitable) ("Narrative"). Braswell argues that ". . . the laws in effect in His Majesty's Navy are symbolically

the universal laws to which man must adapt himself . . . man must accept his place in the universal scheme decreed by God . . ." ("Narrative" 145).

It is instructive to consider Warner Berthoff's rebuttal of the above interpretation: "The martial law by which Billy goes to his death is usually held to be symbolic of some universal law or authority, such as divine providence: I think mistakenly" (339).

⁴⁰ William York Tindall compares Billy Budd to Heart of Darkness on the grounds that the narrator's thought processes constitute the centre of both novels (40).

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