

Spatial Form in *Moby-Dick* or, *The White Whale*

Fumiko Takase

要約

『白鯨』における空間形態

高瀬 ふみ子

捕鯨船、ピークオッド号のエイハブ船長と白鯨の死闘とそれに到る経過をただ一人の生き残り水夫、イシュマエルが、コールリッジの『老水夫』なみに語るという二重構造をもったこの作品の基本的プロットの進行は、スウィフト、スターンの手法に似た、一見、プロットと無関係の“脱線”によって、しばしば妨害される。この構築にジョゼフ・フランクの「現代文学の空間形態」論を適用することによって、『白鯨』が、人間全体の文明的経験に作者も読者も共に参加しているという意識—「現在が過去によって規正されなければならないとおなじ程度に過去は現在によって変えられなければならない」—を与える作品であることを証明しようとする試論である。

Introduction

Under compulsion of what experience he attempted to express the inexpressibly terrible, we cannot ever know.

—T. S. Eliot, "Hamlet"¹

Since Rene Descartes' declaration of "*Cogito, ergo sum*," Ian Watt has pointed out, a growing tendency for subjectivity has been replacing collective tradition.² In fact, the revolt against medieval authority led to the rejection of the four levels of meaning in allegorical exegesis—literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical³—based upon tradition and authority.⁴ Instead, the individual turned inward, finding authority for interpretation within the self. The individual has given "a new associative freedom to allegorize." Now, a new type of allegory, private allegory, came into existence.⁵ As allegory is of a double structure, signifying that "by this I *also (allos)* mean that,"⁶ private allegory, independent of authority and tradition, tends "not to be fully understood."⁷ The more does a writer rely upon his own vision, the less definitive meaning of his work can be grasped by the reader. Hence Melville's despair: "Why, ever since Adam, who has got to the meaning of this great allegory—the world? Then we pygmies must be content to have our paper allegories but ill comprehended."⁸

A work of art, however, has never been created *ex nihilo*. The writer's consciousness of reality must be dramatized in terms of existing conventions through the medium—in fiction, language, which is "the most sensitive index to cultural history."⁹ Melville's way of viewing the world, either characteristic of the Dutch Reformed Church¹⁰ or typical of "the tendency of American idealism,"¹¹ is suggestive of his conscious or unconscious share of "the transcendental conviction that the word must become one with the thing."¹²

In *Moby-Dick* Ahab, "the dominant character and the source of action,"¹³ makes most outright announcement of the doctrine of correspondences, on which such a tendency depends and to which the characters of the book are committed in one way or another:

"O Nature, and O soul of man: how far beyond all utterances are
your linked analogies: not the smallest atom stirs or lives on matter,
but has its cunning duplicate in mind."¹⁴

Ahab, moreover, in his "monomaniac" pursuit of Moby Dick, the White Whale, has gone to excess in this tendency and interprets everything in terms of his own perception. Ishmael the narrator overhears him identifying himself, one morning, with the figure of the doubloon of the *Pequod*:

"The firm tower, that is Ahab: the volcano, that is Ahab: the
courageous, the undaunted, and victorious fowl, that, too, is Ahab:
all are Ahab: and this round gold is but the image of the rounder
globe, which like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn

but mirrors back his own mysterious self" (p. 439).

This vision, this type of consciousness of objective reality, strongly reinforces the image of Narcissus at the very beginning of the work. Ahab's solipsism shows that he is none other than a victim of modern allegorizing, who conceives it in his power to "reduce the notions of all mankind exactly to the same length, and breadth, and height of [his] own," and who might have been thrown into Bedlam as a madman in eighteenth-century England,¹⁵ for extreme subjectivity was then identified with madness.¹⁶

Ishmael, however, warns against the reading of *Moby-Dick* at the simple level of allegory:

So ignorant are most landsmen of some of the plainest and most palpable wonders of the world, that without some hints touching the plain facts, historical and otherwise, of the fishery, they might scout at *Moby Dick* as a monstrous fable, or still worse and more detestable, a hideous and intolerable allegory (p. 221).

Ishmael's meditation, for instance, while weaving with Queequeg, in which weaving is likened to life interwoven of "chance, free will, and necessity," is broken, when the fateful cry, "There she blows!" is heard from mid-air. "The ball of free will" that drops from his hand (pp. 230-231) goes beyond the stage of simple allegory, moving toward epiphany. It no longer remains a mere static commentary on life or reality, as allegory does, but plunges into the realm of symbolism or what Northrop Frye terms the "anagogical" level of meaning, not in the medieval theological sense, but "containing life and reality in a system of verbal relationships,"¹⁷ in Melville's attempt to embrace a whole complexity of the particular experience of the first lowering at that particular moment.

There is, throughout the book, a persistent tendency for facts, events, and images to become symbols, enveloped in mysteries, through Ishmael's vision. In fact, the whole book begins with "Call me Ishmeal," whose real identity the reader is not allowed to probe into. He is as mysterious as Ahab, yet he is credible because he tells us not what he is but what he sees and what he sees other people see. He is not only a character in the story but also the single voice, or rather the single mind through which the whole drama is unfolded. Whether this first person device comes from the nineteenth-century stress upon "seeing" or vision¹⁸ or Melville's foresight into the modern interior monologue technique, *Moby-Dick* grows out of "I," out of the significant emphasis on the subjective individual consciousness, half-dreaming, summing up the recollection of its past experience which happened "some years ago" (p. 31) in the same way as Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" does.

Once this participating consciousness is thus logically tied to the book, it limits and controls what can be told and how. Ishmael "exuberantly sees the world through human language: things exist as his words for them."¹⁹ His very language makes Ahab's voice ring "eloquent and rhetorical beyond belief"²⁰ and true to our ears. On the literal level of meaning in the allegorical exegesis, the mad old whale-hunter is "in all his Nantucket grimness and shagginess" (p. 166) and the White Whale is his brute antagonist: they are no materials for tragedy, but through Ishmael's verbal presentation, Ahab,

though his name itself is burdened with the image of a wicked king and usurper in *The Old Testament*,²¹ is progressively raised to the higher levels of meaning—Adam, Prometheus, and “the Fates’ lieutenant” (p. 563), the Whale to a mighty analogue of the Leviathan, Satan, God, and the struggle between the two to a tragedy of the Universal feud of man with Fate and Infinity, Good and Evil, inherent in human existence itself.²²

In the belief that “to produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme” (p. 463), Ishmael magnifies his characters and their affairs by paralleling his contemporary common men and their industry with the Biblical figures, epic heroes, sages, prophets, gods, and thus establishes, for a brief moment, a background of antiquity and suggests the presence of yet another unseen world, “an everlasting *terra incognita*” (p. 287) beyond the mid-nineteenth-century American scene of whaling which meets the eye. In a way, he achieves what Allen Tate calls “an historical miscellany,” transcending historical limits and encompassing all times in *Moby-Dick*, where “past and present are seen spatially, locked in a timeless unity which . . . eliminates any feeling of historical sequence by the act of juxtaposition.”²³ In view of this “contrapuntal” technique,²⁴ language gives an inexhaustible supply of approaches appropriate to the infinite and invisible. Conscious of his “craft of speech,”²⁵ Ishmael declares that “a careful disorderliness” is the true method for some enterprises” (p. 374). To this aspect of his language Walter E. Bezanson pays what may be a high tribute: “To an extraordinary extent Ishmael’s revelation of his sensibility is controlled by rhetoric.”²⁶ “Rhetoric” here is not something opposed to the “conversational” style preferred in the present day,²⁷ but it simply means an art of “technique of words”²⁸ as Aristotle defined it at the very beginning of his *Art of Rhetoric*.²⁹ Ishmael’s verbal technique is, of course, deliberately devised and calculated by his creator, Melville.

Admitting that *Moby-Dick* outgrows its literal and allegorical levels of meaning by means of its vision and rhetoric—the pervading presence of the participating consciousness and the medium and technique with which it is expressed, I aim to explore Melville’s rhetoric, exclusively his contrapuntal manipulation of words, focussing on what Ishmael sees in Ahab in relation to what Ahab sees in the White Whale, and then, on what Ishmael sees in the Whale in relation to Ahab. My hope is by this means to approach Melville’s concept of the “mortally intolerable truth” (p. 129) of human existence.

Chapter I Vision and the Art of Words

I look, you look, he looks: we look, ye look, they look (p. 442)

The relationship between what Ishmael sees and his verbal expressions is illustrated in abundance throughout the book. The best example lies in the famous doubloon scene (pp. 438–443). The doubloon is the gold coin which Ahab has nailed to the mainmast of the *Pequod* as the reward for the man who first sights the White Whale. Ishmael records that Ahab contracts its whole symbolic meaning to “his own inexorable self” (p.74). “The incompetence of mere unaided virtue or right-mindedness in Starbuck,” the first mate, reads it as the image of the Trinity. “The vulnerable jollity of indifference and recklessness in Stubb,” the second mate, observes it in terms of the Gemini of Virtue and Vice, and accepts both nonchalantly. “The pervading dexiocrity” in Flask, the third mate, sees nothing there but a gold coin which, as he calculates, would buy nine hundred and sixty cigars. The Manxman, a primitive sooth-sayer, sees a vague doom. Fadallah, the mysterious Parsee harpooner, whom Ahab has smuggled aboard, sees the fire worshiped in his religion. Pip, as in the divine frenzy of the sage fool tradition,¹ expresses the impossibility of seeing anything and utters out his version of solipsism. The object of vision is indifferent: the subject is all that is needed because the subject always sees himself. As with the indifference of God, he mocks at Ahab’s quest of the White Whale and predicts its ominous ending:

Then, again, if it stays here, that is ugly, too, for when aught’s
nailed to the mast it’s a sign that things grow desperate. Ha, ha!
old Ahab! the White Whale; he’ll nail ye! (pp. 442–443)

These characters’ different responses to the same symbol are obviously set in contrast with Ahab’s. Ishmael, no less sensitive to the hidden meaning behind the visible objects than Ahab, recognizes that

some certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are
little worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher, except
to sell by the cartload, as they do hills about Boston, to fill up some
morass in the Milky Way (p. 438).

Ahab’s gift for symbolic perception increasingly reduces all pluralities to the singular—the self, whereas Ishmael seeks more and more to magnify his own vision by paralleling the concrete with the universal. If allegory deals with “fixities and definitives,” while “symbolism is esemplastic,”² we may say that Ahab substitutes an allegorical fixation for the world of symbolic potentialities where Ishmael roams. The difference between the two lies in the directions in which they move, starting from the common experience on board the *Pequod*: the one is centripetal, the other centrifugal. We suspect that Ahab comes out a great tragic figure because of Ishmael’s persuasive eloquence and feeling for him. Indeed, much depends upon the use of language for objectifying the particular quality of Ishmael’s vision of his Captain and the White Whale.

Since rhetoric and eloquence both come from roots meaning "to speak," we are now reminded of the Aristotelian stress on rhetoric as "sheer words"³ and on the use of language as "a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols."⁴ We are also reminded, when we respond toward the directions of the two main visions of the story, contrapuntal to each other, of the two distinctive attitudes toward language in European literature, Greek and Hebrae-Christian, curiously mingled and fused as in our notion of poetry as "creation," resultant, as Ernest Curtius testifies, from the injection of the Hebrae-Christian cosmogony into the Greek view of things, since *poiesis* is a technical term meaning "fabricating" of things in Greek.⁵ To the Greeks *logos* was a word, speech, reason, and rhetoric, as the technique of speech, developed in Athens and Rome as the most effective tool of democracy in persuading others into one's opinion and dealing with language, "the most dynamic part of social life of man where the subjective and the objective are in delicate and latent clash."⁶ In the Greek attitude language constantly looked into itself for further possibilities of communication.

On the other hand, especially in the Christian faith, the principle of *logos* behind such purely human language was the "Word" in another sense, a kind of word that was identical with reality,⁷ a truth beyond the physical and rational level of human vessels, where "Nature falls silent, Logic is conquered, Rhetoric and Reason fail."⁸ Part of the Truth was revealed to a particular individual only through some sensory organs, through his mystical identification with it. Whether the nineteenth-century Romantic emphasis on one of the senses—seeing and vision—and, consequently, on the identification of the poet with the seer or teacher⁹ came from the Transcendentalism or from the development of photography and open-air painting,¹⁰ it had a deep affinity with the Hebrae-Christian tradition. For example, the poet of Percy Bysshe Shelly's "Alastor" exiles himself from human society because the ideal vision he has found in the shape of "Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought"¹¹ cannot be translated into words. The poem, in fact, is a manifesto of the Romantic concept of the poet as a visionary and an isolated figure doomed to sorrow in the mortal world of time,¹² and it anticipated Thomas Carlyle's dictum of solipsism, the supremacy of self: "Our Me is the only reality, Nature. . . but the reflex of our inward Force."¹³ The Greek direction is, indeed, centrifugal: the Hebrae-Christian is centripetal. This distinction produced two patterns of *mimesis*, Auerbach contends, furnished with the same antithesis between the Greek and the Hebrae-Christian: on the one hand, we have the externalizing of "phenomena, at a definite time and in a definite place, connected together without lacumae in a perpetual foreground," and, on the other, the externalizing of "only so much of the phenomena as is necessary for the purpose of narrative: all else left in obscurity; . . . the whole permeated with the most unrelieved suspense and directed toward a single goal. . . remains mysterious and "fraught with background."¹⁴ This distinction is also the distinction between Ishmael and Ahab in thought and *mimesis*. Ahab, "shut up in the caved trunk of his body" (p. 171), does not speak much but "when he speak, then you may well listen" (p. 104). He does not think, either: he "only feels, feels" (p. 565), whereas Ishmael, who finally "escaped alone to tell" (p. 575), thinks: "in some dim, random way, explain myself I must" (p. 205).

The result of the interplay of the two visions is that we sense a highly dramatic quality in *Moby-Dick*.

Charles Olson notices that the book has a rise and fall like the movement of an Elizabethan tragedy, with the function of the White Whale, "comparable to Death's function in the last act."¹⁵ *Moby Dick*, however, is not a play. Whether Ishmael's way of narrating be viewed in terms of the tradition of dream vision "that runs from *Revelation* to *Finnegan's Wake*"¹⁶ or of the epic tradition with supernatural machinery, the dramatic quality of the book is attained by Melville's contrapuntal management of the two visions in respect of structure as well as of words. Ishmael tells what he sees in Ahab and what Ahab sees in the Whale. Ishmael, in fact, is again of a double construction—Ishmael the narrator of the story and the younger Ishmael of "some years ago," of whom, among others, the narrator tells in the story. Never named otherwise, Ishmael wears the burden of the Biblical figure of the "son of Abraham," exiled from his father's domain, bearing the name which stands for "God Shall hear."¹⁷ The Ishmael of the "Epilogue" is the Ishmael of the "Loomings" where he states the motive and the theme of the drama, in which he alone has survived. He believes that "only when we escape it shall we hear the thousand voices that speak through it" (p. 457). As solitary as young Ishmael, the narrator has, as Pip did, looked into the depths of the mysterious sea, the visible image of that "bottomless soul" (p. 177), and come back to life with "the buttonlike black bubble" (p. 575) as a visionary, obsessed by the image of the Whale, "one grand hooded phantom, like a snow hill in the air" (p. 35), in the sense that the Ancient Mariner is called a visionary.¹⁸

The "Loomings" furnishes the key to the book—the image of Narcissus. Whether it is the literary convention much used in Melville's day, under the influence of the Concord Transcendentalists—a philosophy of the self—or following the vogue of the Fatal Man of the Romantic School endowed with the vital possibilities of the self,¹⁹ solipsism, hypnotic self-regard, imprisonment within the self, is, Ishmael teaches, a common disease, "a crucifix," to all men. Stand thousands of mortal men, "fixed in ocean reveries," in whom "meditation and water are wedded for ever" (pp. 31–32): for the sea offers a cure for despair, loneliness, madness and suicide, yet it also has the danger inherent in solipsism. In his pursuit of the image of the "ungraspable phantom of life" (p. 33), Narcissus was drowned. *Moby-Dick* is to present the two versions of Narcissus, Ahab who has perished, and Ishmael who has survived the same hypos (p. 31) and the "everlasting itch for things remote" (p. 35).

Though bred in the Presbyterian Church, apparently not much impressed by Father Maple's sermon at the Whaleman's Chapel, young Ishmael ironically learns the real meaning of Christian love from Queequeg, a despised heathen from the South Seas—"George Washington cannibalistically developed" (p. 75), with the tattooing of "hieroglyphic marks" on his body, which signify "a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth" (p. 487). The two become "silent, solitary twain" (p. 76) of a "Siamese ligature" (p. 334), for Ishmael thinks:

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 (p. 76).

He is progressively drawn back to humanity, away from his Narcissism.

In contrast with Ishmael's psychic salvation through the pagan, Ahab keeps his track toward self-destruction through his solipsism. Before young Ishmael's first acquaintance with Ahab, therefore, Melville cautiously has the narrator explain Ahab's greatness and his "Shakespearean rhetoric,"²⁰ in defiance with the myth of common man in American idiom.²¹ Some of the "fighting Quakers" of Nantucket, endowed with Scripture names and the "stately dramatic thee and thou of the Quaker idiom, are, the narrator asserts, led them to think "untraditionally," and "with some help from accidental advantage, to learn a bold and nervous lofty language. . . , fit for noble tragedies." He combines that "lofty language" with greatness, which he connects, in turn, with morbidity: "all men tragically great are made so through a certain morbidity. . . . All mortal greatness is but disease" (p. 98). This greatness-morbidity parallelism and the image of Narcissus prefigure the very nature of the danger that Ahab is to undergo. As to his characterization, Ahab was so named by his crazy mother after the Old Testament ruler who "did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him," worshipping Baal.²² Ahab is, according to Peleg, "a sort of sick. . . , queer man but a good one":

He's a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab: doesn't speak much: but, when he does speak, then you may well listen. . . . Ahab's above the common: Ahab's been in colleges, as well as 'mong the cannibals: been used to deeper wonders than the waves: fixed his fiery lance in mightier, stranger foes than whales. . . : he's Ahab, boy: and Ahab of old, thou knowest, was a crowned king: (p. 104)

Ahab's desperate moodiness is tied to the loss of his leg "last voyage by that accursed whale," yet he has "his humanities," having a sweet girl-wife and a child by her (p. 104). Ahab's character is presented through descriptions of dual nature—"ungod-like godly" or the greatness-morbidity parallelism, his stature "like Cellini's cast Perseus" (p. 143), who killed Medusa, his birthmark, "lividly whitish," his fire worship, his pride and dictatorship called "that certain sultanism of his brain" (p. 165), his "Grand-Lama-like exclusiveness" (p. 471), alien to Christendom, his "clenched hands" in sleep and his Promethean torment within (pp. 217-218), symbolical of his self-crucifixion. His identification of the whale with "the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies" (p. 201), his crazy hatred for "that inscrutable thing" (p. 182), and his baptizing a harpoon in the infidels' blood: "Ego non baptizo te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diaboli!"—all move to the Parsee's prediction of his death by the hemp (p. 504).

While talking of Ahab in reference to "Emperors and Kings," however, Ishmael does not forget to mention the fact that the mad captain is "a poor old whale-hunter" and his grandeur like Hotspur's airy nothing:

Oh, Ahab, what shall be grand in thee, it must needs be plucked at from the skies, and dived for in the deep, and featured in the unbodied air! (p. 166)

The narrator thus ruthlessly unmask the reality of the mad captain's cosmic struggle

with the Whale, the Devil personified (p. 201), and that of his crew as "mongrel renegades, and castaways, and cannibals" (p. 203). His ivory leg is of the bone of the Sperm Whale's jaw (p. 479). Whether it be blasphemy or madness to chase the Whale, it is his *raison d'être* and it makes Ahab Ahab. Ahab and the Whale are wedded in his solipsism while Ishmael and Queequeg are in true Christian love (p. 78). In Ahab's last fight with the Whale, the hemp ties them for ever and all the crew were caught into one maelstrom except Ishmael with Queequeg's coffin-life-buoy. Ahab's "delirious but still methodical scheme" (p. 215) has fatally miscalculated the degree of "the demoniac indifference with which the Whale tore his hunters, whether sinning or sinned against" (p. 539).

Moby Dick, either all evil incarnate or a dumb brute, is, in reality, larger and mightier than Ahab's mental world can contain. His "wild vindictiveness" does not give him wisdom but madness, reducing all notions of "one-half of the worlds" to the same size of his own. As Jonathan Swift calls this type of madness Lucifer's pride produced by "the mechanical operation of the spirit,"²³ so Melville has the narrator often describe Ahab as "mechanical." In fact, Ahab steps out of the organic resilience of body and mind and becomes a humour-character with "something mechanical encrusted upon the living,"²⁴ seized by his monomania or "the wildness of his ruling passion" (p. 227). When Ahab announces his fatal purpose, young Ishmael hears "the mechanical humming of the wheels of his vitality in him" (p. 179). When Stubb, who has first linked the fierce flames in his eyes with madness (p. 147), admires his unconquerable will, on the second day of the chase, "as fearless as fire," the captain mutters, "And as mechanical" (p. 564). The tyrant's will is frequently compared to iron, steel, and bronze, and he looks straight ahead to a darker side of life, feeling as if "followed by the joy-childlessness of all hell's despair" (p. 470). His jaw-ivory leg evinces the mechanical part of his mind. A prisoner within himself, like a Marlovian hero in his tragic humour, Ahab does not learn, as Ishmael does, that life is interwoven of necessity, free will, and change, but imputes his egoistic drive for the Whale to the "cozzening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor . . . , making [him] ready to do what in [his] own proper, natural heart, [he] durst not so much as dare" (pp. 547-548). As the Fatal Man destroys whoever comes near him,²⁵ so Ahab mechanically makes himself "the wilful murderer of the thirty men and more" (dragging them all into the "ever-contracting, dropping circle" (p. 471) of solipsism. Ahab, like his namesake in *The Old Testament*, becomes a "wicked king."

What makes King Lear a great tragic hero, however, is not madness but "a wisdom that is woe" (p. 433) and his restoration of humanity.²⁶ Still less do the mechanical operation of the spirit and wickedness allow Ahab a tragic stature, for a wicked madman never deserves pity and terror.²⁷ It is Ahab's awareness of "humanities" in him that makes him a tragic hero. He has to lift, for a moment, his mask of "something mechanical encrusted upon the living" to reveal his "proper, natural heart." Ahab feels that Pip, who has acquired insanity of "heaven's sense" (p. 424), abandoned alone on the sea, is tied to him by the cords woven of his heartstrings (p. 526) as Queequeg is to Ishmael, yet he rejects him because of something in the mad negro boy that is "too curing to his malady" (p. 537). Before the mad captain's final encounter with the Whale, he drops a

tear into the sea, and tells Starbuck about his past life of strife and privation, his girl-wife and his child:

I felt deadly faint, bowed, and humped as though I were Adam, staggering beneath the piled centuries since Paradise! mockery! mockery! God! God! God! —crack my heart! —stave my brain! —mockery! mockery! bitter, biting mockery of grey hairs, have I lived enough joy to wear ye: and seem and feel thus intolerably old? Close to me, Starbuck: let me look into a human eye: it is better than to gaze into sea or sky: better than to gaze upon God. By the green land: by the bright heartstone: this is the magic glass, man: I see my wife and my child in thine eye (p. 547).

Thoroughly conscious of his “body’s doom” (p. 554) and “humanities,” however, he feels compelled to challenge the evil of the world as “the Fates’ lieutenant” (p. 563). The captain’s last words to his first mate are: “I am old: —shake hands with me, man” (p. 567). Starbuck is deeply moved by his confession of his own weakness, who has once tried to save the *Pequod* by killing him:

“Oh, my captin, my captain! noble heart—go no—go not! —see, it’s a brave man that weeps: how great the agony of the persuasion then” (p. 567).

He now understands that “the effable thing” which has tied him to his captain (p. 187) is this aspect of his character. Ahab’s “humanities,” when added to his will and vindictiveness against the “inscrutable” Whale, “the wildness of his ruling passion” (p. 227), which has driven him as “mechanical” as a humour character,²⁸ make the “monomaniac” old whale-hunter as tragic a hero as Prometheus and Lear. In spite of their eloquence, Ahab is “wordless,” (p. 250), gnawed at in his self-made hell of solipsism, the forked flames of which are revealed in his eyes (p. 227). His monomania is a consequence of his self-allegorizing that “all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil. . . were visibly personified, and made practically assailable” (p. 201) and that he is the only challenger.

Indeed, Ahab and *Moby Dick* are described and told about through Ishmael’s eyes and words. Melville, with his contrapuntal method, so constructs the whole book that Ahab’s centripetal vision, hidden and “fraught with background,” constantly self-allegorizing, is to be more clearly viewed through Ishmael’s centrifugal vision of Ahab and *Moby Dick*: Ishmael’s art of words perpetually externalizes every phenomenon into “the foreground.”

Chapter II Time and Space

And of all these things the Albino Whale was the symbol.
Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt? (p. 212)

"Give me a condor's quill: Give me Vesvius' crater for an inkstand!" bursts out the narrator while writing *Moby-Dick*: he asserts,

For in the mere act of penning my thoughts of the Leviathan, they weary me, and make me faint with their out-reaching comprehensiveness of sweep, as if to include the whole circle of the sciences, and all the generations of whales, and mastodons, past, present, and to come, with all the revolving panoramas of empire on earth, and throughout the whole universe, not excluding its suburbs. Such, and so magnifying, is the virtue of a large and liberal theme! We expand to its bulk (pp. 462-463).

Conscious of his method of writing "these dissertations," for which he has consulted "a huge quarto edition of Johnson," he makes this apologia for "a careful disorderliness" in his "mighty book" in proportion to its "mighty theme." Its main action of the book, centered upon "the suspense attached to Ahab and the peril of the White Whale,"¹ is, indeed, frequently interrupted, disconnected and magnified in its meaning by the quasi-learning of the cetological accounts and the "Leviathanic revelations and allusions of all sorts" (p. 152).² This sense of "disconnectedness" or "inconsistencies" arises not only from the so-called "digressions" but from the forms of presentation. More than one tenth of the chapters of the book leave the ordinary narrative form and they are presented in the dramatic form: some ten have strictly dramatic form without narrative intrusion—"Dusk," "First Night-Watch," "Midnight, Forecastle," while another half-dozen use some script devices with the narrative, such as "The Quarter-Deck" and "The Candles."

It is noticed, however, that because "The Quarter-Deck" and "The Candles" are combined, though they are chapters apart, by the dramatic form, they are distinctly twin centers of gravity, as Walter E. Bezanson contends,³ in the structure of the main action, with Ahab's forcing his mates to make the "indissoluble league" with him by crossing their lances with the oath to hunt the Whale to his death (p. 184) and his final reminding himself and his mates being bound by that oath (p. 513). Moreover, the same words, such as "hemp," "mechanical," "monomaniac," "whiteness," and "the key," and the same images—the loom, Narcissus, the land-sea and the fire-ice antitheses—recur throughout the work, regardless of the scenes of the main action or those of the digressions. The "boggy" painting of the withered old man fighting with the whale at the Spouter-Inn becomes the actual strife between Ahab and Moby Dick at the end. Father Maple's sermon on the acceptance of God's rod, based on the Biblical Jonah story, finds its parody in Fleece's sermon to the sharks, its inversion in Ahab's demand of his crew the absolute

obedience to him as "Fates' Lieutenant," and its inversion in Ahab's defiant worship of fire as his father. If the image of Narcissus be the key to the whole story, the "blessed calms of the sea" is the "golden key" to Ahab's "own secret golden treasures" (p. 496). We become conscious that the "disorderliness" or "disconnectedness" is, in fact, carefully and deliberately devised. We now believe that the meaning-relationship between the disconnected word-groups or image-groups "which, when read consecutively in time, have no comprehensive relation to each other, is completed. . . only by suspending the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal reference can be apprehended as a unity."⁴

We may well say that the "disconnectedness" is not due to simple digressions but that it results from Melville's management of his materials with words—Ahab's centripetal vision of and Ishmael's centrifugal vision of Ahab and Moby Dick. We have viewed that in the space of Ishmael's consciousness, Ahab is given the stature of a tragic hero and his quest a symbolic meaning different from what he has attached to it. To young Ishmael Moby Dick—the mad captain's antagonist—is a creature of splendor and horror, as indifferent as God and so full of meaning that we are deeply concerned with what the narrator sees in the Whale and in what way he unravels his vision of the "grand hooded phantom, like snow hill in the air" (p. 35).

The narrator begins *Moby-Dick* with a preliminary page on the "Etymology" of the whale as some of the Biblical commentaries do with the etymology of God, such as the Hebrew *Tetragrammaton*, *JHVH*, which is, here, represented as *HWAL* (p. 15). In the "Extracts, (Supplied By a Sub-Sub-Librarian)" the narrator warns the reader not to take "the higgledy-piggledy whale statements, however authentic, in these extracts, for veritable gospel cetology" (p. 17). Job, who, he believes, wrote the first story of the whale, treated the Leviathan as symbolic of God and His inscrutable power, while some of the church-fathers insisted that all Biblical references to it were to Satan (p. 18). Thus, the whale is to be viewed as of a dual nature, "godly" and "ungod-like," as in the epithets applied to Ahab. From the beginning the whale and Ahab are associated through the same epithets as in the animal-man metaphor, one of the oldest figures in literature down from the pseudo-Homeric *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* and *Reynard the Fox*.⁵ The whale-man metaphor runs throughout the book and, once established, the whale-man juxtaposition is freely applied to human characters. Following the tradition of trifles, bagatelles, alive in Erasmus' *Encomium Moriae*, Thomas Nashe's *Lenten Stufte*, Jonathan Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, etc., the narrator presents his "Cetological System" (p. 16), dividing the species, for an elaborately academic lark, into "books," "folios," and "chapters," befitting his self-claimed gigantic attempt to "hook the nose of this Leviathan" (p. 154). Though the whale is definitely defined as "a spouting fish with a horizontal tail" (p. 154), the fish and whaling are, in the process of action aboard the *Pequod* and that of the mock learning, increasingly raised to a higher level of dignity and mystery. "Whaling is," the narrator exclaims, "imperial! By old English statutory law, the whale is declared 'a royal fish' " and the whale-ship is the true mother of Australia and also Ishmael's Yale and Harvard (pp. 132-133). It is proclaimed that the

Sperm Whale is "the monarch of the seas" in place of the deposed Greenland Whale (p. 153). The *Thrasher*, famous for his tail, is called a gentleman and made analogous to a schoolmaster. The lengthened tusk of the *Narwhale*, which gives him "the aspect of a clumsy left-handed man, would be used, the narrator jokes, for a convenient folder in reading pamphlets (pp. 160-161). The *Fin-Back* seems "a whale-hater, as some men are man-haters" and also "the banished and unconquerable Cain of his race" (p. 157). In terms of the *Killer* Ishmael reflects that "we are killers, on land and on sea: Bonapartes and Sharks included" (p. 161). The *Black-Fish* or the "*hyena Whale* has "an everlasting Mephistophlean grin on his face" and a fin "like a Roman nose" (p. 159).

The whale participate in the sexual and domestic life. In the "Schools and Schoolmasters" Chapter two types of schools are presented: one is "like a mob of young collegians," riotous lads "at Yale or Harvard," which the whale-ship stands for to young Ishmael. The other is a harem, ruled over by "a luxurious Ottoman" or the schoolmaster, who expels a "pert young Leviathan" in the most terrible duels, all for love, until he grows too impotent to take care of his harem, and goes abroad inculcating the folly of his amorous experience. A solitary Leviathan takes Nature to wife in the wilderness of waters and will fight like a fiend "exasperated by a penal gout" (pp. 403-404), reminiscent of the grey-headed solitary Ahab's fight against Moby Dick. Though young Ishmael, before the voyage a Lazarus "chattering his teeth against the curbstone for a pillow" (p. 38), becomes rapt with the member-roll of Perseus, St. George, Hercules, Jonah, and Vishnoo in whaling, to which he has joined, but at the same time his experience in the perils of whaling teaches him an easy sort of "desperado philosophy," wherein the whole universe seems "a vast practical joke. . . at nobody's expense but his own" (p. 242). In dealing with "the horrible whale-line," he meditates: "All are born with halters round their necks: but it is only when caught in the swift, sudden turn of death, that mortals realize the silent, subtle, ever-present perils of life" (p. 295). The whaleman's "desperado philosophy" and the Parsee's prophecy that "hemp only can kill [Ahab]" (p. 504) foreshadow Ahab's manner of death. As to the whale's eyes, with which he sees "one distinct picture on this side, and another distinct picture on that side: while all between must be profound darkness and nothingness to him" (p. 343), the narrator thinks that "man, likewise, cannot then help mechanically seeing whatever objects are before him" (p. 343), which reminds us of Ahab's fixed gaze. Since Ishmael learns the comparison of life to weaving, he applies the same principle to the "fish with a horizontal tail," the whole bulk of which is "knit over with a warp and woof of muscular fibres and filaments" and in the tail of which "the confluent measureless force of the whole seems concentrated to a point." He adds: "Could annihilation occur to matter, this were the thing to do it" (p. 386). The account also foretells the final catastrophe. The killing of whales is, he believes, man-killing, for Ishmael has seen, in "the enchanted pond" near Sumatra, the whale-hunting breaking upon the whale families in repose and and the agony of the wounded and dying whales. The nursing mothers, the babies, while sucking, feasting upon some unearthly reminiscence as do human infants, and the young revelled in dalliance are suddenly thrown into affrights:

Starbuck saw long coils of the unbilical cord of Madame Leviathan, by which the young cub seemed still tethered to its dam.

Not seldom in the rapid vicissitudes of the chase, this natural line, with the maternal end loose, becomes entangled with the hempen one, so that the cub is thereby trapped (pp. 398–399).

Ishmael, conscious of the affinity of man with the whale, admires the peaceful sight of the whales resting in primitive innocence, and thinks of the madness of men undoing it.

The whale–man metaphor supplies Ishmael with occasional satirical attacks on human–kind. In his hypothesis that the whale’s spout is mist, the narrator is assured that profound men such as Plato, Pyrrho, the Devil, Jupiter, Dante, and Ishmael himself spout some mist from their heads, while in the act of thinking deep thoughts (pp. 384–385). Though Ishmael thinks that “the peeled white body of the beheaded whale,” devoured by sharks and birds, is “a most doleful and mocking feneral,” (p. 322), he finds that “if the Sperm Whale be physiognomically a Sphinx,” phrenologically there is no indication of his brain in his head and that the whale, like all things mighty, “wears a false brow to the common world” (p. 361). At the sight of Stubb banqueting on the whale’s flesh, Fleece gives out his insight, in Ishmael’s view, into the Hobbesian perspective of man in perpetual war of every war against every man: “Wish, by Gor! whale eat him, ’stead of him eat whale. I’m bressed if he ain’t more of shark dan Massa Shark hisself” (p. 311). Laws and politics suffer a *reductio ad absurdum* to the “Fast–Fish” and “Loose–Fish” disputes under the only decree which “for terse comprehensiveness surpasses Justinian’s Pandects and the By–Laws of the Chinese Society for the Suppression of Meddling with other people’s Business” (p.405). The allusion is, finally extended to cover the whole human world: “What are the Rights of Man and the Liberties of the World but Loose–Fish?” It ends with Ishmael’s direct address to the reader: “And what are you, reader, but a Loose–Fish and a Fast–Fish, too?” (p. 408)

The narrator carefully develops the whale–man metaphor in general into the particular affinity between the whale and Ahab. His discovery that the hump is “the organ of firmness or indomitableness” in the Sperm Whale (p. 363) flashes out the figure of the hump–backed solitary old man, Ahab, with “an infinity of firmest fortitude” (p. 144). He also observes “the turning sunwards of the head” in all dying Sperm Whales and their fire worship, calling the whale “the most baronical vassal of the sun” (p. 501), which facts remind us of Ahab’s fire worship and his turning his body from the sun in his last fight with Moby Dick (p. 573). A decaying whale, he notices, contains “precious ambergris” (p. 418) in the same way as Ahab does his “humanities” (p. 104). He believes in the whale, “however perishable in his individuality” (p. 469): this belief is, certainly, applicable to Ahab who declares his immortality on land and on sea (p. 504). With the basic whale–man metaphor the word–and the image–groups in mind, we are made to understand the meaning of the forced union of Moby Dick and Ahab in hatred at the end. While the general image of the whale is crystalized into the particular image of Moby Dick through Ishmael’s ever centrifugal approach to the cetological exploration, the White Whale remains “the fictitious monster” (p. 239) to Ishmael. His Moby Dick is “a Sperm Whale of

uncommon magnitude and malignity, ferocious and athirst for human blood, not only "ubiquitous but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquitous in time)" (p. 200). His body is of the "shrouded hue," which has gained his distinctive name of the White Whale (p. 200). While Ahab's monomaniac hunt for the Whale falls deeper and deeper into self-allegorizing, and crazy Gabriel views him "no less a being than the Shaker God incarnated" (p. 330), Ishmael presents his own vision of the Whale. His association of horror with him comes from its hue. His vision goes centrifugally, running through an endless catalogue of horrors caused by the things in white. As a result, his instinct, like the New England Colt's, tells that "though in many aspects this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright" (p. 211). He links "a dumb blankness, full meaning," in the snow-covered landscape, with a killer, threatening us with annihilation, "the heartless voids and immensities of the universee," atheism, and the blind gaze of "the wretched infidel." In terms of the colorless—all color antagonism, the hues of objects are "deceits," "laid on from without." Nature comes to appear to Ishmael a "painted harlot, . . . covering nothing but the charnel-house tithin," a distant echo of John Webster's "the devil in crystal" theme in *The White Devil* (IV. ii. 85).⁶ If it were possible that light operates without medium upon matter, "the palsied universe lies before us a leper," and the inscrutable "indefiniteness" of whiteness in meaning raises more and more questions, unanswered. Is it in this ambiguity that "that mortally intolerable truth" lies, the glimpses of which Bulkington must have got in his ocean-perishing? Is it because of the vision of this that Pip comes back to life a sage-fool, to die in the catastrophe? The narrator concludes that "of all these things the Albino Whale was the symbol. Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt?" (p. 212). Only the individual degree of allegorizing is the index to the ambiguity.

Ahab and Ishmael react to the ambiguity. "That inscrutable thing is," Ahab declares, "chiefly what I hate" (p. 182). He cannot rest in the ambiguity, and in spite of his dread that there is "naught beyond," he pursues the inscrutable, visualized in the White Whale (p. 181). This sense of "naught" is related to the reverie of the young Platonist who takes the ocean for the visible image of his soul and jumps into it, "when [his] identity comes back in horror," hovering over Cartesian vortices (p. 177), and also to the Freudian "nothing."⁷ Ishmael, however, desists, for he realizes that there is no life in the image (p. 177). "Nothing" is tied to solipsism, accompanied with its horror and death, which is again combined with the fiery hunt for the Whale. Ishmael, through his contact with whales and whaling, learns that even when he dreams of the Whale as Satan, the interpretation of the image relies upon "what mood you are in; if in the Dantean, the devils will occur to you; if in that of Isaiah, the archangels" (p. 389).

On the other hand, the sight of the Pequod regaining her balance between the Right Whale's head [Locke's head] and the Sperm Whale's [Kant's head] (p. 341) does not teach the crew anything. Fedallah—the Mephistophelean devil in disguise—eyes only the Right Whale's head and occupies Ahab's shadow, thus identifying himself with Ahab. From that moment on, "Laplandish speculations were bandied among the crew concerning all these passing things" (p. 341). Again, "light" comes to all from without, from

God. But, as light is anguish to Ahab (p. 185), he lives in "the blackness of darkness" in his hell. The darkness of the mad captain storms against the light principle in Creation and conceives with hatred the White Whale as "the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies"—all evil from Adam down, made practically assailable, in his solipsism, though the narrator thinks that his monomania "took its instant rise at the precise time of his bodily dismemberment" (p. 201) by the White Whale.

Ahab's monomania juxtaposed with Pipe's "heaven's sense," absurd and frantic to reason, through the intense concentration of self, while drifting alone in the heartless "terra incognita" (p. 424), only makes Ishmael conscious of "something fatally wrong" with his fiery hunt (p. 432). As the captain believes that every object of nature has "its cunning duplicate in mind" (p. 326), he madly seeks allegorical fixities in Moby Dick, the notion of whom tasks the captain-humourist though the beast is as indifferent to him to the end as God. Ahab is, indeed, tortured by the very creature his allegorizing has created, different from what Moby Dick actually is. It is not unreasonable that Starbuck warns: "Let Ahab beware of Ahab" (p. 481).

Melville deliberately and now builds up illusory similarities only to be shattered by the very disparity between the Whale and its duplicate in Ahab's mind, in the end, by means of such antitheses in words, concepts, and images as inherent in "whiteness" and the whale-man metaphor. When Moby Dick is described as "the monarch of the seas" with a snow-white wrinkled forehead and a high hump and a body streaked with the shrouded hue, sailing solitary. Ahab is introduced as an isolated, grey-headed, hump-backed old man with a "lividly whitish" scar running from crown to sole. He is hailed as "a king of the sea, and a great lord of Leviathans" (p. 149). The Whale is "athirst for human blood" whereas Ahab has "that that's bloody on his mind" (p. 151). The captain's monomaniac quest for the beast is translated into his idea that the Whale is the monomaniac incarnation of all evil. Ahab is so ferocious that Stubb says, "the best thing you can do, Falsk, is to let that old man alone" (p. 151). Captain Boomer advises Ahab that Moby Dick is "best let alone" (p. 449). But Ishmael as well as the reader has learned by the complicated concepts of cetology and the "whiteness," that the White Whale is the lord of the heartless sea, ubiquitous and immortal, symbolic of ice, frost and horror, as indifferent as God, while Ahab, a man of fire, is indebted to his flesh and his ivory leg: he is "a point at best," not ubiquitous, and immortal only at the gallows as Fedallah has prophesied his manner of death as if he were a pirate. As proud as the Greek god, Ahab wishes to be free as air, but the most he can do is to be hoisted at the top of the mainmast.

When he finally meets his protagonist, submitted to the Fates, he has totally alienated himself from all human ties — reasoning faculties (= the quadrant, the compasses, his hat), filial love (= the *Rachel*), companionship (= Pip), free will, chance, God, replaced by fire-worship, and even Fedallah—with the tragic Aristotelian recognition that he is merely a tired, hump-backed old fool, the object of mockery for great God (pp. 546–547). Moby Dick, more glorified than love, with his quietude invested with tornadoes, is all of a sudden transformed into a huge fish with a deadly tail when challenged. As in an elemental strife ice extinguishes fire easily, so Ahab is staved to

splinters three times by the Fish. At the last fight Ahab turns his body toward the sun as a dying whale does. He stabs the Whale with the words: "I give up the spear," an inverted echo of Jesus' last saying on the Cross: "Father, into thy hand, I commend my spirit."⁸ It is a final piece of irony that Moby Dick does not even care to be the executioner to this blasphemer. The man is strangled with his own whale-line, and the beast, with his supreme indifference, destroys the *Pequod* whether sinning or sinned against (p. 539).

Ishmael alone, floats on the heartless void of the sea to be rescued by the filial love of the *Rachel*. The collapse of the whole world of the *Pequod* is thus made by the White Whale. The "boggy" painting of the Spouter-Inn, the cetological accounts, all the verbal antitheses, images, and metaphors come back to us with their full symbolical force. The Whale is inscrutable because he does not speak and because we try to apply human reason to him. Whether or not he represents the heartless inscrutability of life, the universe, God or Satan, depends upon the individual's vision of life or his degree of allegorizing. As Ahab's tragedy certainly arises from his solipsism, through which he refuses to balance himself between self and not-self, and steps out of organic cadence and turns a humourist with "something mechanical encrusted upon the living," a proud infidel gazing at the Whale, and jumps into his own image in the Whale like the young Platonist. We here pay a tribute to Melville's comment as the solace for, not the solution, to the mechanical threat of solipsism: "I'd rather be a fool with a heart."⁹

Moby-Dick is, in fact, an organic complex of meaning-relationships through word-groups and image-groups, combining the present fact of whaling experience with analogies, and literary conventions of the past. By this very juxtaposition *Moby-Dick* breaks through the wall of time, becomes "unhistorical," and Ishmael's experience aboard the *Pequod* attains a new kind of universality which neither the past nor the present alone can achieve. There are efforts on the part of the real author to transcend the narrative sequence in time, although Ahab's original plan of the voyage is laid in a cycle of one year—from Christmas to Christmas. Ishmael the narrator bears witness: "Time began with man. Here Saturn's grey chaos rolls over me, and I obtain dim, shuddering glimpses into the Polar eternities" (p. 464). In spite of this concept of time in chaos, he inserts, all of a sudden, in the midst of his meditation on the whale's spouting, as does Swift's Tale-Teller so often, the exact time of composition—"fifteen and a quarter minutes past one o'clock P. M. of this sixteenth day of December, A. D. 1851" (p. 381). His imagination runs back to Father Maple "at the time I now write of" his sermon (p. 64). Technically loosening the time sequence, Melville, thus, creates a sense of disconnectedness. The time flow of the action is suspended, so that attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships between the two visions, centrifugal and centripetal, by means of the word-groups and the image-groups. The full significance of a particular scene is given only by the reflective relations among the units of meaning. We perceive the elements of the work "juxtaposed in space rather than unrolling in time."¹⁰ As we progress through this "mighty work," we become gradually aware of the pattern of meaning-relationships. Though Melville still retains most of the conventional narrative form of fiction in his day, *Moby-Dick or, The White Whale* can be regarded as his attempt to lead a work of art in words from the realm of time to that of space.

Conclusion

But it is this *Being* of the matter; there lies the knot with which we choke ourselves.¹

It is probably to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, as André Gide pointed out, that the problem of “spatial form” in modern literature owes its first systematic orientation.² Lessing, in his *Laokoon*, firmly lays his finger on the limitations of modern man’s perception, thus warning against private allegorizing. No matter how accurate and vivid a verbal description might be, Lessing argues, it could not give the unified impression of a visible object because its aim was contradicted with the fundamentally limited properties of the art mediums—human consciousness and language. If the symbols indisputably require a suitable relation to the things symbolized, form in the arts is necessarily spatial, because visible aspects of objects can best be presented juxtaposed in the instant of time.³ He develops his argument to prove that the Greeks, “with an unflinching sense of esthetic propriety, respect the limits imposed on different art mediums by the conditions of human perception,” and he passionately advocates the Greek pattern of *mimesis*, externalizing phenomena into perpetual foreground, into space.⁴ His *Laokoon* is, indeed, considered as the turning point from the centripetal tendency of “ruthlessly subjectivistic perspectives” of the Romantic School,⁵ concentrating itself upon the self for giving meaning to objective reality.

Older Ishmael is deeply aware of the limitations imposed upon human perception or his own vision. By analogy with the whale’s eyes, each of which sees only one picture, while all between is darkness and nothing, he surmises that people mechanically see whatever is before them, deploring and satirizing solipsism common to all human beings. Characteristic of the narrator–author’s feeling toward his “mighty book” is his constant despair in finding appropriate expression and form. In his choice of the “mighty theme” of the Leviathan, its “out-reaching comprehensiveness of sweep” in time and space overpowers him. The “whiteness” of the Whale, its magnificence and horror, is “well nigh ineffable”: he almost despairs of putting it in a comprehensive form.

Younger Ishmael is basically “a seeker, not a finder.”⁶ Since the whaler is his world, his Yale and Harvard, he seeks to find meaning to existence, first, by looking into the image of his own “inscrutable self” in the waters; then, he probes into the pagan world beyond Christendom through the aid of Queequeg with mysteries of the heavens and the earth tattooed on his body, indifferent to solipsism, who tries to get Yojo to look just as he likes, with his jack-knife, while Father Mapple does God’s rod, with his rhetoric. Queequeg has such a primitive interpretation of hell as “an idea first born on an undigested apple-dumpling” (p. 110). Ishmael goes away from solipsism, convinced that there is no life in “water reveries.” His direct contact with whales and whaling teaches him a sort of “desperado philosophy.” His vision of life is ever expanded by the visible absence of colours inherent in the White Whale and learns of the invisible world beyond

the visible, whether there be "naught" or death or fright. The fossils of the "pre-adamite" and "antichronical Leviathans" (p. 464) show to him the period when "Saturn's grey chaos" enveloped the universe "between the Polar eternities" before Noah's Flood and even before life began by the sea. All recorded history is, he realizes, but a fragment of the past, and the cultivated intellect such as Plato's, Kant's, and Locke's is a fraction of consciousness in its effort to grasp the whole history of existence, up to prehistoric mists, chaos and mere space. In the narrator's intuitive belief that truth resides in the invisible or inscrutable world, he continually adds an extra dimension to the actions and events aboard the *Pequod*, fearing that his interpretation should seem final.

Indeed, "out of the trunk, branches grow; out of them, the twigs. So in productive subjects, grow chapters" (p. 303). We must not forget the trunk: Ahab's quest takes place in a practical mid-nineteenth-century American scene of whaling, which is, indeed, a dirty "butchery sort of business" (p. 130), but a necessary part of industry for the human race to support itself physically and economically. Ahab is a poor whale-hunter of Nantucket who has experienced the horror of the White Whale, balancing himself with his ivory leg, half human and half mechanical. A prisoner of his mental hell—his solipsism, his morbid humour of hate for Moby Dick and his pride on his "inexorable self," the captain, like Ethan Brand whose heart finally turns as hard as marble, in seeking the Unpardonable Sin, becomes further and further alienated from common humanity, retiring into himself. Lost in private allegorizing, the puny hunter feels that his fiery father cares for neither love nor reverence, but kills, and, "like a true child of fire" (p. 512), he defies the ubiquitous and immortal, visualized in the White Whale. While raising himself to be "the Fates' Lieutenant," he "insists upon treating with all Powers upon an equal basis," in Melville's own terms.⁷ Younger Ishmael, in the meantime, is magnifying the image of the man into "a Khan of the plank, and a king of the sea, and a great lord of Leviathans" (p. 149), worthy to be the challenger against all evils in existence, stretching even beyond the prehistoric times, only to reveal in the end that Ahab's greatness is literally of "unbodied air" (p. 166).

The world of the *Pequod* collapses under Ahab mechanically seeing his own image reflected upon objective reality, or unable to distinguish self from not-self—objective reality which "seeks [him] not!" The modern Lazarus, who has learned "doubts of all things earthly, and intuitions of some things heavenly" and come to see them both with equal eyes, survives. He must tell, in the Ancient Mariner's manner, his story in "a strange sort of insanity," but his creative frenzy is transplanted into him by Melville, whose visions "come too thick for [him] to master them."⁸ In a contrapuntal way the real author controls and manipulates the visions: Ahab's and the two Ishmaels' along with their appropriate rhetorical patterns—the one is centripetal, the other centrifugal: the one is ever concentrating upon the self, the other externalizing every phenomenon into the foreground, involving not only "the mind of Europe"⁹ but also the whole history of existence. We may well say that Melville now fulfills his task of the creator, fusing the Christian and Greek patterns of *mimesis* and thought in his work of art in words. At the same time he does not forget that existence, in its fulness and flow, is organic,

intuitive, indefinite, and, therefore, asymmetric and inscrutable. In his titanic effort to embrace existence, both macrocosm and microcosm, at all times and in all places, in its organic flow, he furnishes his persona with "Leviathanic allusions and references of all kinds" of the past and the present, both Christian, pagan, prehistoric and semi-scientific, to insert into and interrupt the main action of the old hunter's confrontation of his self with the inscrutable. The author also distributes the whale-man metaphor, the same words, images, and verbal antitheses throughout his book. Thus, he deliberately creates the same sense of "disorderliness" or "disconnectedness" as that of life, so that the reader may link similar and dissimilar events and symbols with this art of words "anagogically," grasp the meaning of existence and that of self as an organic whole over against objective reality, and perceive that behind the visible world of the American whaling with Ahab and his crew exists the invisible world, more important for metaphysical search for "the unsable truth" of the *Ego* in the whole context of existence. In fact, the world of *Moby-Dick* with its protagonist, Ahab, transcends "any feeling of historical sequence by the very act of juxtaposition": it is a timeless world where "past and present are seen spatially," and where the actions and events of a particular time are seen "as the bodying forth of eternal prototypes."¹⁰ In his constant search for the appropriate rhetorical expression for this timeless problem of self and meaning Melville has become, indeed, worthy to be named the first "architect, not the builder" (p. 154), as he wishes, "leaving the copestone to the posterity" (p. 163), of "spatial form in modern literature."¹¹

Notes

Introduction

1. T. S. Eliot, "Hamlet," in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 146.
2. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), p. 60.
3. Dante Alighieri, *The Convivio* (London: L. M. Dent & sons, 1924), pp. 63-67.
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 15. Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*, in *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Temple Scott (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1911), p. 131. Edward H. Rosenberry testifies that there is no evidence of Melville's having read Swift (*Melville and the comic Spirit*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955, p. 65), but many critics have noticed that there is some similarity between Melville's approach toward reality and Swift's. Cf. Matthiessen, p. 409; Thompson, p. 99; William Ellery Sedgwick, *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1944), p. 40.
 16. Michael V. DePorte, *Nightmares and Hobbyhorses: Swift, Sterne, and Augustan Ideas of Madness* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1974), p. 37.
 17. Frye, p. 122.
 18. Matthiessen, p. xiv.
 19. Alfred Kazin, " 'Introduction,' to *Moby Dick*", in *Melville: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Richard Chase (Englewood Cliffs, N. J. Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 41.
 20. R. P. Blackmur, "The craft of Herman Melville: A Putative Statement," in *Melville: A Collection of Critical Essays*, p. 83.
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28. Deporte, pp. 7–10.

Chapter II Time and Space

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3. Bezanson, p. 50.
4. Frank, pp. 229–230.
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Conclusion

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