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The Eternal Pursuit of Arbitrary God: Melville's Method of Provoking Immortality

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Introduction

Just as Captain Ahab, in *Moby-Dick*, tenaciously chases the white whale to the ends of the Earth, Herman Melville's pursuit of an arbitrary God is unceasing. Not only Ahab and Melville, but we readers, too, have attempted to decipher the symbolism of the mystic whale, and we always will. In Chapter 41, the narrator, Ishmael, remarks, "[t]he White Whale swam before him [Ahab] 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" (156). He continues, "all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick" (156). In the next chapter, "The Whiteness of the Whale," Ishmael also understands the whale to be "the most meaning symbol of spiritual things, nay, the very veil of the Christian's Deity" (165). From these explanations, we can at least extract Moby Dick's two roles: the whale is an incarnation of both divine will and Ishmael and Ahab's inner selves. Thus, the pursuit of Moby Dick equals that of their second selves embodying the will of God, so that the analysis of the twofold relationship between the whale and Ahab (and Ishmael) leads us to first elucidate Melville's concern for the arbitrary God of Calvinism. We should also note that, in the twofold relationship with the white whale, Melville portrays both the first self (Ahab and Ishmael) as a pursuer, and the second self (Moby Dick), which embodies an incarnation of God's will, as the pursued.[1] This implicates Melville's understanding of himself as a pursuer of divine will, based on his Calvinistic views. In other words, there are two selves in Melville's mind: one has free will that is one step behind his predestined fate (the first self); the other is the predestined self, one step ahead of his free will (the second self). The relationship of the first and second selves in *Moby-Dick* mirrors the author, torn between divine and free will. As for the feature of Melville's doubling—with the first self as a pursuer and the second as the pursued—it is noteworthy that such a division of roles inverts an orthodox way of describing of a doubled self in a novel. Generally speaking,

the second self tends to be a pursuer rather than the pursued, as Keppler asserts in *The Literature of the Second Self*:

> [t]he pursuit need not be a literal chasing; it may for strategic purposes sometimes let the first self appear to do the pursuing, but such stratagems are never more than temporary, and always the general movement is the same—a pushing forward of the first self, whether by a gradual crowding or a headlong driving, toward the precipice of catastrophe. (28)

Keppler exemplifies his claim through one of Melville's contemporaries, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat," in which Poe juxtaposes the narrator and a black cat as the first and second selves, respectively. According to Keppler:

> The narrator is "white," a man of good instincts and intentions, but with a core of blackness that in the course of his relationship with the cat spreads outward through his whole being; the cat is black in more than its fur, unknown and mysterious and malignant; its sole spot of white does not alleviate but intensifies its blackness, gradually assuming the form of the gallows to which, from a beginning and with a purpose that are never defined, it has pursued its human other-self. (32–33)

Aside from "The Black Cat," it is evident that Poe is apt to describe the second self as a pursuer, as he does in "William Wilson," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "The Tell-Tale Heart." Keppler also mentions Melville's *Billy Budd*, in which a second self, John Claggart, pursues the first self, Billy. Still, Keppler notes that "[i]n this story Melville is dealing less with the two sides of one fragment of the human personality . . . than with the two moral poles of the human soul; really what he is presenting is, in a realistic and relatively modern setting, the ancient struggle between Light and Dark" (41–42). Keppler's reading of *Billy Budd*, which forces Claggart to behave as the pursuer in his relationship with Billy,

leaves the reader doubtful to some extent. Melville emphasizes Billy's "behindedness," which results from his stuttering:

> Though in the hour of elemental uproar or peril he was everything that a sailor should be, yet under sudden provocation of strong heart-feeling his voice, otherwise singularly musical, as if expressive of the harmony within, was apt to develop an organic hesitancy, in fact more or less of a stutter or even worse. (*Billy Budd* 1362)

Billy has within him both a first and second self; his first self emerges as a vocal expression and goes behind the second self, which reflects his inner feelings. With this in mind, we can assume that Melville's stories cannot be understood as tales of the orthodox pursuer–pursued relationship in the twofold selves, and that such an inversion is the quintessence of Melville's stories' quarrels with divine will.

As mentioned above, the positioning of the first self as a pursuer and the second self as the pursued is rooted in the author's predestined view of life. According to Lawrance Thompson, throughout his lifetime, Melville wavered between a belief in "ultimate salvation and atonement only through abject and self-effacing bondage to God" (4) and "self-realization and fulfillment as a 'natural man,' through the liberating assertion of his natural powers of body and mind and spirit, without any necessary reference to supernatural powers" (4); for

> [i]n his youth, Melville inherited the Reformation dogma of John Calvin, in a quite undiluted form. His devout and pious parents were members of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, and they taught their son to believe that God had created him innately depraved and predestinately damned to eternal Hell; but that he might possibly be saved from such damnation, through divine grace, if he threw himself submissively and abjectly on the mercy of God, as revealed through Jesus Christ. (4)[2]

Yet, as Melville went through hardships as a sailor, he gradually came to doubt the Calvinistic dogma, and his suspicions of God crystallized in the whaling narrative *Moby-Dick*.[3] We can observe Melville's own wavering between free will and divine will in a sermon by Farther Mapple on Jonah in Chapter 9 of the story:

> As with all sinners among men, the sin of this son of Amittai was in his wilful disobedience of the command of God—never mind now what that command was, or how conveyed—which he found a hard command. But all the things that God would have us do are hard for us to do—remember that—and hence, he oftener commands us than endeavors to persuade. And if we obey God, we must disobey ourselves; and it is in this disobeying ourselves, wherein the hardness of obeying God consists. (*Moby-Dick* 49)

His unsteadiness is further displayed in a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne after the publication of *Moby-Dick*. He wrote, "Though I wrote the Gospels in this century, I should die in the gutter" (Horth 192). After several months, he also wrote to Hawthorne:

> In me divine magnanimities are spontaneous and instantaneous—catch them while you can. The world goes round, and the other side comes up. So now I can't write what I felt. But I felt pantheistic then—your heart beat in my ribs and mine in yours, and both in God's. A sense of unspeakable security is in me this moment, on account of your having understood the book. I have written a wicked book, and feel spotless as the lamb. (Horth 212)

Although the latter passage still shows his perplexity, Melville momentarily felt calm while writing it, to the extent that could describe himself as "spotless as the lamb." As such, he wavered between feelings of piety and impiety when tackling *Moby-Dick*, a state that persisted throughout his lifetime.

Melville's views on predestination lent themselves to several of his stories' structures, a theme also common among other nineteenth century writers.[4] For example, John H. Timmerman points out the effect of the typology in *Billy Budd*, remarking that, "in *Billy Budd* the typology emphatically underscores the fact that justice is often accompanied by agonizing choices. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac, God's willingness to sacrifice Jesus, Vere's willingness to sacrifice Billy. In such choices mercy and retribution flail each other terribly" (36). In addition, Jonathan A. Cook claims that "'The Apple-Tree Table' incorporates a complex layering of typological symbolism in which covert allusions to Old Testament figures, events, and objects in the first half of the story exist in symbolic correspondence with covert New Testament antitypes in the second half" ("The Typological Design" 136). He also notes this typological structure in "The Two Temples," insisting that the story contains "the manner in which the paired sketches unite religious and historical themes through a strategic synthesis of Christian typology and social critique in order to convey paradoxical, potentially unwelcome truths about American and English cultures in the mid-nineteenth century" ("Christian Typology" 5–6).[5] To sum up, Melville reflects on the question of whether it is better for him to follow his predestined fate, as decided by divine will, or resist it through his narratives' typological settings.

In Melville's stories, the question appears as a space–time pursuit of the second self, namely, a symbol of divine will. However, our attention should be focused on the fact that Melville, as the first self, does not aim to reach God as the second self, but instead attempts to continue following Him. This is Melville's way of compromising with God, in that he moves toward predestination but is never willing to correspond with it, always delaying his foreordained fate. For this reason, it is important for Melville to evoke an eternal following motion that never reaches its goal—as in Zeno's paradox, the slow-footed tortoise that can never reach fleet-footed Achilles. In fact, Melville iterates death when a character reaches his

or her second self. For instance, in *Billy Budd*, Billy kills Claggart and ends up being hanged by the central mast, though there is no simultaneous death of his doubles. In *Moby-Dick*, when the *Pequod* reaches the white whale at the end, they are all swallowed into a whirlpool. In addition, *Pierre* shows the demise of both doubles when Pierre is arrested for the murder of his cousin Glendinning Stanly and dies in prison. Glen is represented as his second self in that he is an only son, like Pierre, and they have "a much more than cousinly attachment" (253) in which

> the friendship of fine-hearted, generous boys, nurtured amid the romance-engendering comforts and elegancies of life, sometimes transcends the bounds of mere boyishness, and revels for a while in the empyrean of a love which only comes short, by one degree, of the sweetest sentiment entertained between sexes. (253)

Pierre escapes from his hometown to New York, relying on Glen; however, he is betrayed by his cousin, and then decides to commit the murder. That is, Melville describes a death of doubles in *Pierre*, when the pursuer reaches the pursued. It is noteworthy that Melville consistently forbids the reaching of the second self in his narratives.

While the eternal following motion toward the prophetical second self enables Melville to compromise with God, the motion itself can be an effective way of understanding an arbitrary God—a bodily way of understanding Him against the mental way. Through his stories, Melville shows us that, if one cannot understand God through logic alone, it is best to follow the behaviors of God or of prophets, striving to embody the will of God. Like Melville, Poe illustrates this kind of intelligence in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter."[6] The narrator in the former compares two kinds of intelligence using the examples of chess and a game of draughts, and insists that "the higher powers of the reflective intellect are more decidedly and more usefully tasked by the unostentatious game

of draughts than by all the elaborate frivolity of chess" ("Rue Morgue" 241). Moreover, the narrator remarks:

> Let us suppose a game of draughts where the pieces are reduced to four kings, and where, of course, no oversight is to be expected. It is obvious that here the victory can be decided (the players being at all equal) only by some recherché movement, the result of some strong exertion of the intellect. Deprived of ordinary resources, the analyst throws himself into the spirit of his opponent, identifies himself therewith, and not unfrequently sees thus, at a glance, the sole methods (sometimes indeed absurdly simple ones) by which he may seduce into error or hurry into miscalculation. (241)

Further, in "The Purloined Letter," Dupin shows the same sort of intelligence, exemplifying an eight-year-old boy who is successful at the game of "even and odd," in which "[o]ne player holds in his hand a number of these toys [marbles], and demands of another whether that number is even or odd" ("Letter" 374). The narrator infers that his success is brought about by "an identification of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent" (375), and Dupin proves it, quoting the boy's remarks as follows:

> When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression. (375)

In these two detective stories, Poe demonstrates a technique of bodily perception brought about by following another's expressions. Just as Poe shows an alternative intelligence to what people may usually regard as intellect, so does Melville, displaying a similar kind of intelligence based not on the mind but the body. Hence, in Melville's stories,

if one hopes to grasp the bottomless mind of God, he or she must keep following Him eternally. This thesis will elaborate on this point in later chapters.

Andrew Delbanco gives an interesting biographical description for our purpose concerning Melville's experience as a sailor on the naval frigate *United States*:

> When he [Melville] shipped from Honolulu aboard the naval frigate *United States* in August 1843, Melville began a long voyage home that retraced his outbound route, docking at Nukuheva too briefly to allow shore leave, and at Tahiti, where the ship took on provisions while anchored tantalizingly close to the beach. It must have been strange to see this alien shore again, still foreign yet now familiar, stirring memories rather than anticipations. Perhaps it was one of those experiences that lay behind the many images in Melville's writing of things desired that seem near enough to reach for, yet too distant to grasp. (59)

This paradoxical image that is "near enough to reach for, yet too distant to grasp" is exactly what this doctoral thesis aims to examine and to show that such unattainability is caused by Melville's Calvinistic views. Delbanco does not give any concrete example to prove the paradox, but, for instance, "Bartleby" is surely one of the stories that embodies it. Bartleby spends every day in the office sitting close to the other staff members' desks, yet no one can understand him. Further, although Bartleby consistently stays at the same place, he still manages to be arrested as a "vagrant" ("Bartleby" 664). In short, Bartleby always stands "near enough to reach for, yet too distant to grasp." Throughout Melville's lifetime, he could not compromise with God, but his fiction enabled him to come close, as it is the eternal pursuit of God in his novels that brought him some sense of resurrection as an ideal person who follows God but never reaches Him. In short, through his writing, Melville was able to settle his free will against divine will. He always kept one step behind God, rather than caught up to Him to welcome a resurrection.

This thesis exemplifies Melville's eternal pursuit of an arbitrary God through four chapters: Chapter I, "Following Your Shadow: The Battle of Wits between Body and Mind in "Benito Cereno"; Chapter II, "Melville's Delay in 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' and *Moby-Dick*: Literary Borrowings from William Shakespeare"; Chapter III, "Melville's Diptychs and Immortality: 'The Two Temples' and 'Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs"; and Chapter IV, "Melville's Domestic Fictions and the Symbolization of the Past: 'The Apple-Tree Table' and 'I and My Chimney'." Chapter I addresses "Benito Cereno" by focusing on the slogan "[F]ollow your leader" (58), which is painted on the hull of the *San Dominick*. The slogan applies not only to the characters in the story, but also to Melville's own creative method as a novelist, as shown through an inter-textual reading alongside three other short stories—"The Lightning-Rod Man," "The Happy Failure," and "The Bell-Tower"—that were written during the same period. In addition, the chapter examines the effect of biblical wisdom literature in Ecclesiastes on the story and explains that Melville himself follows Solomon.

Chapter II, "Melville's Delay in 'Bartleby, the Scrivener' and *Moby-Dick*: Literary Borrowings from William Shakespeare," aims to clarify Melville's intention to postpone 'the end' as a form of the eternal pursuit mentioned earlier. First, we turn to recurring delays among characters in carrying out their duties. For example, Bartleby repeats his cliché "I would prefer not to" as a means of postponing his duties as a scrivener, and finally denies eating anything. The other members of the staff, including the lawyer–narrator, also defer their duties. The narrator repeatedly postpones his decision to fire Bartleby, who does nothing at all, yet he also declines to extend to him a helping hand. Thus, these postponements of duty result in the delay of the narrative's endpoint. The chapter's discussion on *Moby-Dick* is in terms of the common factors between the whaling narrative and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, namely, the delay of vengeance. Although Melville takes over Shakespeare's method of

depicting the delay of vengeance, there is the outstanding difference between the two tragedies: Melville has Ishmael survive the calamity of a shipwreck at the end, in which the sailor's second self, Moby Dick, demises, while Hamlet dies with his second self, Claudius. Ishmael survives the calamity and everlastingly pursues his second self as a narrator of *Moby-Dick*, going back to the outset of the story and beginning his voyage again and again.

Chapter III, "Melville's Diptychs and Immortality: 'The Two Temples' and 'Poor Man's Pudding and Rich man's Crumbs,'" deals with two short stories with a twofold structure composed like a diptych in which Melville evokes contrasts such as rich/ poor, genuine/fake, and life/death. Through this diptych-like structure, he creates doubled motifs—for example, the richness within poorness, the genuine within the fake, and life within death. In addition, this structure allows aspects of each work to mirror and face one another, thus evoking notions of eternity in which the contradicting motifs require us to follow them unceasingly.

Finally, Chapter IV, "Melville's Domestic Fictions and the Symbolization of the Past: 'The Apple-Tree Table' and 'I and My Chimney'," explores the sense of unattainability peculiar to Melville's works in the two domestic fictions. Melville's unique conception of time, in which the past and the present can coexist, is highlighted in our reading of "The Apple-Tree Table." For Melville, the flow of time is not a consistent, singular event, but rather an inconsistent, plural series of events. In other words, Melville describes the past that is never reaches to the present (and the future). "I and My Chimney" also embodies the sense of unattainability by the motif of a secret chamber as well as that of a mysterious chimney.

We begin our eternal pursuit of Melville's profound world with a close reading of "Benito Cereno," keeping the slogan "[F]ollow your leader" (58) in mind. Like Ishmael, we will continuously chase "the ungraspable phantom of life" (*Moby-Dick* 20), taking care not to be inadvertently swallowed into it like Narcissus, who drowned in the fountain in a bid to

grasp how own mystical image. Like Ahab, we will “strike through the mask” (140), even though “there’s naught beyond” (140).

Chapter I

Following Your Shadow: The Battle of Wits between Body and Mind in "Benito Cereno"

Shortly before the publication of *Moby-Dick* in 1851, Herman Melville wrote to Nathaniel Hawthorne, giving him his "prose opinion" that,

> in those men who have fine brains and work them well, the heart extends down to hams. And though you smoke them with the fire of tribulation, yet, like veritable hams, the head only gives the richer and the better flavor. 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. (Horth 192)

It is noteworthy that Melville attributes the subject of creation not to his head (mind), but to his heart (body), and that such a tendency can be seen, for example, in his devotion to hieroglyphics (as discussed in Chapter II), a symbol of nonverbal language in *Moby-Dick*. Throughout his career, Melville attempted to reconnect the outside of language with its inner workings. In *Pierre; Or, the Ambiguities*, Isabel's mystic guitar symbolizes that which is beyond language, because Pierre feels that it is "eternally incapable of being translated into words; for where the deepest words end, there music begins with its supersensuous and all-confounding intimations" (329). "Bartleby, the Scrivener" also thematizes the realm of nonverbal language. As Sanford Pinsker notes, "Melville's narrator discovers that language only makes the haunting Bartleby more perplexing and less definable" (17). Further, "Melville's vision is split into two voices—one incorporated in the exclamatory phrase 'Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!' and the other which whispers about a darker humanity we cannot know in words" (26). Melville's final work, *Billy Budd, Sailor*, also depicts nonverbal communication, mainly represented by the advocate, Billy, who suffers from stuttering and is eventually hanged for the impulsive murder of his superior, Claggart. Sean Ford, who

analyzed Melville's three later poems, "Æolian Harp," "To the Master of the Meteor," and "Far Off-Shore," compiled in *John Marr and Other Sailors*, a private collection of his poetry, insists that their central theme is "a recurring urge to tell what cannot be told" (236). "Benito Cereno" is one of those works in which Melville requires the reader to pay attention to nonverbal means of communication, because the conflict between whites and their black slaves symbolizes the battle between the body and the mind.

Although "Benito Cereno" is so controversial that it is not easy to outline its possible interpretations, Lea Bertani Vozar Newman attempts to survey them mainly as follows. First, the earliest interpretations of "Benito Cereno" provide a biographical viewpoint: "Melville himself is Cereno, and Babo is the personification of the malicious criticism that had unjustly brought his work to a premature close and ruined his life" (130). Second, she points out that, to critics, it matters "whether Melville meant this story to be (1) a metaphysical examination of evil or (2) a sociological exploration of slavery" (130). She also remarks that the latter entails additional contrasting explanations, namely, "whether the Negroes and their rebellion are perceived as portrayed (a) favorably, thereby opposing slavery, or (b) unfavorably, thereby accepting the racist status quo" (130). By contrast, some critics understand "Benito Cereno" to be a story about "slavery as a sociological disease that contaminates slaves and masters alike" (130). In addition to the story's contents, how it is represented has also been a topic of much discussion.

A first reading of "Benito Cereno" blinds many readers to the truth of the slaves' rebellion until Cereno escapes from the *San Dominick* and Delano discovers reality; being forced to witness a series of occurrences through Delano's obscure perspective makes this possible. Critics have therefore attributed the common reader's failure in dismissing the clues scattered around the story to the unreliable narrator.[7] Matthew Rebhorn considers this point further and presents an outstanding explanation. He credits it to Delano's inability to

understand the body's seemingly irrational discourse against the mind's rational discourse, referring to the concept of the "embodied mind," as proposed by cognitive scientists such as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. His reading differs from the one presented here, in that this study assumes the binary opposition between the two white captains (Delano and Cereno) to represent the body, while the slave leader Babo represents the mind. By contrast, Rebhorn divides these three characters so that Delano represents the mind, and Cereno and Babo stand in for the body. This understanding of "Benito Cereno," nevertheless, provides readers with clues for interpreting the mysterious story in terms of the body–mind relationship. Rebhorn focuses on Melville's overwriting, arguing that "the *more* language we get here from our narrator, the more information we as readers expect from more words, the *less* clear that information becomes, and therefore, the less clear is the meaning of the passage" (158). Moreover, he advocates the need for what he calls "an *embodied reading practice*" (161), which "involves a way of deciphering and interpreting the environment that does not simply espouse the concept of the embodied mind but one that also insists that embodiment itself is discursive" (161). Melville not only rebalances the body–mind relationship, he also reveals that "our embodiment possesses a range of nonverbal communicative modes that can both facilitate and frustrate our attempts to use verbal language to represent the world around us" (161). Given that Rebhorn largely exemplifies Melville's inclination toward bodily discourse in "Benito Cereno" based on historical and cultural aspects, such as the conversion of cognitive science theories and antebellum American interests, in remapping the body–mind relationship, we can shed light on Melville's craftsmanship to represent this means of communication with regard to the germination of the idea of bodily communication.

Melville allots the role of the body to the two white captains, Delano and Cereno, in contrast to Babo's role of the mind. Given Delano's good-natured personality, the narrator

questions readers as to "[w]hether, in view of what humanity is capable, such a trait implies, along with a benevolent heart, more than ordinary quickness and accuracy of intellectual perception" ("Benito" 56). It should be noted here that the narrator, in a sarcastic tone, compares "a benevolent heart" with "quickness and accuracy of intellectual perception," which suggests Delano's lack of the latter. Cereno also personifies the body, as he is forced to facilitate bodily communication in a situation in which he is forbidden from revealing the truth about the rebellion to Delano.

In contrast to Delano and Cereno, Babo the slave has considerable intelligence, and the narrator emphasizes his acuteness and slenderness, remarking that "[a]s for the black—whose brain, not body, had schemed and led the revolt, with the plot—his slight frame, inadequate to that which it held, had at once yielded to the superior muscular strength of his captor, in the boat" ("Benito" 137). Melville inverts the established division of roles between a white man as the mind and a black man as the body; therefore, we must consider what the inverted mind embodied by the slaves is, as we can assume that Melville was not merely describing the replacement of racial roles in antebellum American society, but rather evoking another kind of wisdom that belongs to the domination of the body.

This chapter examines the bodily means of perception through three short stories by Melville published in the same period as "Benito Cereno," namely, "The Lightning-Rod Man," "The Happy Failure," and "The Bell-Tower." First, we elucidate the roots of Melville's inclination to bodily understanding rather than mind by analyzing "The Lightning-Rod Man," which embodies the binary opposition between the heart and the head in the battle between the narrator and the peddler of a lightning-rod. Second, we clarify that Melville's attempt to create unconventional wisdom is reflected—in reverse—on a young man and an old man in "The Happy Failure." Generally, the older one gets, the wiser one becomes, but Melville overturns this convention as a means of representing the wisdom of the body. Third,

we examine "The Bell-Tower," in which Melville demonstrates the eternal motion of following God in an effort to understand Him. The materialist character Bannadonna ventures to create an automaton, a proxy of God's creature, by following His work for himself. This story illustrates that efforts to persuade God evoke another way of understanding Him, by relying not on the mind but on the body. Melville's inclination toward the bodily way of perception, exhibited in these three short stories, reveals his concern with the arbitrary God of Calvinism. As Melville wrote to Hawthorne in the letter referenced above, "[T]he reason the mass of men fear God, and at bottom dislike Him, is because they rather distrust His heart, and fancy Him all brain like a watch" (Horth 192). Thus, Melville advocates that, to understand the darkness of God, which is incapable of being described by language, we must acquire a kind of wisdom that does not rely on the mind, but on the body. Finally, through a discussion about the literary effect of Ecclesiastes, a source of biblical wisdom, we can identify several common motifs significant for our purpose of deciphering Melville's alternative wisdom in "Benito Cereno," wherein he creates what we will call the wisdom of the body. As Bannadonna in "The Bell-Tower" follows God, and "Benito Cereno" produces a chain of leader–follower relations, Melville himself follows Ecclesiastes to grasp the darkness of the divine.

1. "To the Dogs with the Head!": The Triumph of Heart over Head in "The Lightning-Rod Man"

"The Lightning-Rod Man," which first appeared in the August 1854 issue of *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, is one of the six tales collected in *The Piazza Tales*, published in 1856. It illustrates a confrontation between a narrator and a peddler, which represents the binary opposition between the body and the mind that paves the way for our reading of "Benito Cereno." Considering Melville's letter to Hawthorne, in which he remarks, "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" (Horth 192), the peddler, Jupiter Tonan, stands on the side of the head (mind). By contrast, the narrator, living in a house where the floor is made of "Heart-of-oak" ("Lightning-Rod" 759), stands on the side of the heart (body). We can mainly attribute Melville's idea of the body–mind relationship in this work to two sources: one derives from Horace's ode embodying the Greek myth of Jupiter; the other is the symbolic incident of a cultural movement in antebellum American cognitive science, the American Crowbar Case. First, as Eric W. Stockton points out (321–22), the two central motifs of "The Lightning-Rod Man," lightning and Jupiter, remind us of Horace's odes, in particular "C. 1. 3," which alludes to an anecdote from Greek mythology in which Prometheus outwits the all-knowing Jupiter and robs him of fire. This is, in effect, a battle of wits against Jupiter's absolute wisdom ("Iapetus' daring son by impious craft brought fire to the tribes of men. After fire was stolen from its home in heaven, wasting disease and a new throng of fevers fell upon the earth, and the doom of death, that before had been slow and distant, quickened its pace" [Horace 15]). To ensure readers would recognize the theme of the battle between the mind and body, Melville surely modeled "The Lightning-Rod Man" on "C. 1. 3," in which the head opposes the heart. It is also noteworthy that the ode remarks that "[o]ak and triple bronze must have girt the breast of him [Virgil]" (Horace 13), because Melville concerns his narrator with the motif of oak. Second, in addition to Horace's ode, a historical event in antebellum America, the American Crowbar Case heard on September 13, 1848, resulted in a turnabout in the superiority of mind over body. This might have sparked in Melville the idea of the confrontation between body and mind for "The Lightning-Rod Man." Matthew Rebhorn suggests its impact on Melville's interest in the topic when dealing with "Benito Cereno," and remarks on events following the accident:

> During the construction of the Rutland & Burlington railroad in Vermont, an unplanned explosion sent a three-meter long iron tamping rod through the head of a railroad worker named Phineas Gage, the iron landing roughly twenty meters behind him. Gage's death seemed inevitable, but, fantastically, he survived, walking to the nearby road where he hitched a ride on an oxcart to a doctor's office. (166)

Gage's survival despite his injuries was widely reported in the media and made him a celebrity; hence, Melville surely knew this and adapted it into his stories of "Benito Cereno" and "The Lightning-Rod Man." We should keep in mind the influence of Horace's odes and the American Crowbar Case on "The Lightning-Rod Man," and its battle between the body of a narrator and the mind of a peddler.

Melville scatters clues throughout his work to remind readers that the narrator and the peddler embody the conflict between body and mind. The parallelism between the division of roles in the men and the body–mind relationship is first symbolized by the peddler sticking "his tri-forked thing at my [the narrator's] heart" ("Lightning-Rod" 762), which reveals the peddler's awareness of the superiority of the head over the heart.[8] In addition, it proves his inclination toward the head, in that he looks down on those who do not know what he knows. The peddler remarks, "[t]hose Canadians are fools. Some of them knob the rod [of copper] at the top, which risks a deadly explosion, instead of imperceptibly carrying down the current into the earth, as this sort of rod does" (759). Similarly, he holds the narrator in contempt in the following exchange:

> "Yet first let me close yonder shutters; the slanting rain is beating through the sash. I will bar up."
>
> "Are you mad? Know you not that yon iron bar is a swift conductor? Desist."
>
> "I will simply close the shutters then, and call my boy to bring me a wooden bar. Pray, touch the bell-pull there."

> "Are you frantic? That bell-wire might blast you. Never touch bell-wire in a thunder-storm, nor ring a bell of any sort." (759–60)

In contrast to the peddler, the narrator, standing on a floor of "Heart-of-oak" (759) during their confrontation, inclines toward the heart. For instance, he asks the peddler, "Does your beat extend into the Canadas?" (758); here, he uses the word "beat," which also means "a pulsation of the heart" (*Oxford Dictionary of English* 143). Most of all, his response to the narrator's mentioning "returning-stroke" justifies this interpretation. The peddler asks him:

> "Because lightning sometimes passes from the clouds to the earth, and sometimes from the earth to the clouds. Do you comprehend?—and I choose the middle of the room, because, if the lightning should strike the house at all, it would come down the chimney or walls; so, obviously, the further you are from them, the better. Come hither to me, now?"
>
> "Presently. Something you just said, instead of alarming me, has strangely inspired confidence."
>
> "What have I said?"
>
> "You said that sometimes lightning flashes from the earth to the clouds."
>
> "Aye, the returning-stroke, as it is called; when the earth, being overcharged with the fluid, flashes its surplus upward."
>
> "The returning-stroke; that is, from earth to sky. Better and better. But come here on the hearth and dry yourself." (760–61)

What should be noted here is that the narrator feels at ease and says, "Better and better," when he hears the peddler's comment that lightning passes from the earth to the sky. This down–up movement of lightning indicates an electrical signal from the earth (the word "earth" also means "substance of the human body" [*Oxford Dictionary of English* 547]) to the mind, because the narrator's house is a three-storied structure, likened to the tripod of life (heart,

lungs, and brain), in which the floor of the middle story is the "Heart of oak" ("Your house is a one-storied house, with an attic and a cellar; this room is between" ["Lightning-Rod" 760]).

The narrator and the peddler do not attempt to persuade, but rather to command, each other; this embodies Melville's concern with which attribute masters one's behaviors and decisions, the body or the mind. We can observe this in the scene where the peddler warns the narrator not to be near a hearth for the sake of safety, and throws himself into "the erectest, proudest posture I could *command*" (757; emphasis added). Then, the peddler says, "for Heaven's sake, get off of the hearth! Know you not, that the heated air and soot are conductors;—to say nothing of those immense iron fire dogs? Quit the spot,—I conjure,—I *command* you" (757; emphasis added), and the narrator replies, "Mr. Jupiter Tonans, I am not accustomed to be *commanded* in my own house" (757; emphasis added). It is worth noting that Melville represents the conflict between the men as a matter of which place they should choose, either the hearth or the center of the house. Thus, their uncanny exchange regarding the better place to survive a lightning strike connotes the battle over the mastery of human cognition.

The battle of the narrator and the lightning-rod man ends with a victory for the former, which is to say, a victory of the body, as the narrator remarks, "I seized it [a lightning-rod]; I snapped it; I dashed it; I trod it; and dragging the dark lightning-king out of my door, flung his elbowed, copper scepter after him" (762). This reveals Melville's inclination toward the body rather than the mind; however, we should also note that he attempts to describe the superiority of the body over the mind especially in terms of the recognition of fear, which is inspired in humans by a deity. In other words, Melville declares that we must face the fear of God not with our heads, but with our hearts. As the narrator says in the outset, "What grand irregular thunder, thought I, standing on my hearthstone among the Acroceraunian hills" (756). He seems to enjoy the irregular situation. The narrator manages the fear of lightning

better than the peddler by selling lightning-rods to rid customers of their fear, because he deals with the matter using his heart rather than his head. In contrast, when thunder strikes, the lightning-rod man eyes the narrator "half in wonder and half in a strange sort of horror" (757). During another thunder-strike, he shouts, "Hark!—Awful!" (759), so that the narrator sarcastically remarks, "For one who would arm others with fearlessness, you seem unbeseemingly timorous yourself" (759). Such a fear of lightning is linked to the fear of a deity, in the way that the narrator shares a joke with the peddler: "Who has empowered you, you Tetzel, to peddle round your indulgences from divine ordinations?" (762). Melville questions by which means, the heart or the head, we grasp the will of God, represented as lightning, and concludes that, in this regard, the heart is superior to the head. In short, through the battle between the narrator and the lightning-rod man, Melville is arguing that, to understand the will of God, we should address it not through the mind but through the body.

"The Lightning-Rod Man" is Melville's attempt to remap the body–mind relationship, in a way similar to how antebellum-era American scientists had considerable influence over the American Crowbar Case. He also crystallizes his argument in "Benito Cereno," a story in which chattels were expected to play the role of a body. Therefore, we can see the reversal of the racial positions on the *San Dominick* as an inversion of the body–mind relationship, and a reversal of young and old, which also symbolizes the superiority of the body over the mind. As noted above, the older one grows, the wiser one tends to become, but in "Benito Cereno," Melville creates adults who lack wit. Such a contradictive motif reveals Melville's intention of overthrowing the conventional division of roles between the body and mind by displaying an array of what can be called "childish adults." For instance, Delano thinks that, "under the aspect of infantile weakness, the most savage energies might be couched [in Cereno]" ("Benito" 76). In fact, Cereno takes Atful along, "as if a child should lead a bull of the Nile by the ring in his nose" (92), and he is looked after by Francesco "as a nurse does a child's"

(107). In addition to Cereno, Delano is also a childish adult because he encourages himself as if he were a child, saying: "Fie, fie, Jack of the Beach! you are a child indeed; a child of the second childhood, old boy; you are beginning to dote and drule, I'm afraid" (91). However, is not only Cereno and Delano, but also "an elderly negro, in a clout like an infant's, and with a pepper and salt head, and a kind of attorney air" (90) who represents this contradictory motif. We should also note that the elderly man is "a kind of attorney" whose job generally requires wisdom to a greater extent than that found among ordinary people; thus, he embodies an infant with more wisdom than an adult. The infantile but wise man regards, in contrast to himself, an aged sailor who makes mysterious knots as "simple-witted" (90), that is, an adult who lacks wisdom. To sum up, Melville is convinced that, against our common sense, the older a man grows, the less wise he becomes. He does not, however, intend to sketch an old man's stupidity, but rather attempts to show an alternative facet of mind-centered knowledge. With this in mind, we can proceed with a reading of the paradoxical representations of the unwise old man and the wise young man in "The Happy Failure," which was written in the same period as "Benito Cereno."

2. The Inversion of Youngness and Oldness in "The Happy Failure"

"The Happy Failure, a Story of the River Hudson," is one of Melville's 16 short pieces for magazines written between 1853 and 1856. It was published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* on July 1, 1854, a year and a half before "Benito Cereno" appeared (and later included in *The Apple-Tree Table and Other Sketches by Herman Melville*, of 1922). As Ray Broadus Browne insists, "The Happy Failure" is "perhaps the weakest of them" (189), thus few critics have paid it much attention, so that the number of suggested interpretations is far less than for Melville's other stories.[9] Still, we should not dismiss the significance of this

work, because it represents Melville's unconventional concept of wisdom for understanding the realm of the supernatural.

The young narrator, his elderly uncle, and Yorpy, "his grizzled old black man" ("Happy" 1188) travel upriver to Quash Island carrying a mysterious device invented by the uncle over the span of 10 years and practice using the device there. What is interesting for our purposes is that Melville compares the current of the Hudson River to the flow of time, and its ascent and descent embody traveling through time to return to the past, before the uncle had obtained wisdom. Thus, through their travels, the elderly uncle becomes young and without wisdom, while the young narrator becomes old with wisdom. Although we generally consider that the older one gets, the wiser one becomes, Melville inverts youngness and oldness in terms of an alternative wisdom with his unintelligent older man and intelligent younger man.

The uncle's mysterious invention denotes wisdom itself, and the failure of the experiment and its demolition on Quash Island represent the destruction of intelligence. In the first place, the box is "a huge, shabby, oblong box, *hermetically* sealed" (1188; emphasis added). The adverb "hermetically" has its roots in the Greek god Hermes, the god of invention.[10] Moreover, when the narrator looks into the box, he notes "a surprising multiplicity of convoluted metal pipes and syringes of all sorts and varieties, all sizes and calibres, inextricably interwreathed together in one gigantic coil. It looked like a huge nest of anacondas and adders" (1192). The metaphor of a serpent appears again when the experiment fails: "my uncle was diligently stooping over, and striving to peep in, up, and under the box where the coiled anacondas and adders lay […] seizing the whole box, he [disemboweled it of all its anacondas and adders" (1193). The motif of a snake, as we know, symbolizes wisdom, much like the serpent that tempts Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge

in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1–6). Therefore, it can be concluded that the uncle goes upstream and practices the experiment with the serpentine box to quash wisdom.

The symbolic movement of going up and down the river equates to going back and forth along the flow of time, which makes not only the elderly uncle young but also the young narrator old. Quash Island is, as the uncle says, "ten miles above the bridge" (1189), and the number 10 corresponds to the number of years the uncle has spent inventing the box. Yorpy remarks, "De pox has been my cuss for de ten long 'ear" (1189).[11] The narrator doubts whether they must truly go upriver for 10 miles and asks the uncle, "[W]hy pull so far, dear uncle, upon the present occasion? Why pull ten miles for it? You do but propose, as I understand it, to put to the actual test this admirable invention of yours. And could it not be tested almost any where?" (1190). The uncle replies, "Simple boy, [. . .] would you have some malignant spy steal from me the fruit of ten long years of high-hearted, preserving endeavor?" (1190). As the uncle refers to the narrator as a "[s]imple boy," they talk about wisdom soon after the aforementioned exchange: "pardon me, dear uncle; you are wiser than I" / "One would think years and gray hairs should bring wisdom, boy" (1191). This reveals Melville's intention to relate the motifs of wisdom, age, and the river's current to each other; thus, we can conclude that the uncle must go upstream against the current of time to become young without wisdom. However, we should also consider why Melville describes going not only up, but also down the river, because, if the uncle merely hoped to become young again, he would not need to travel in both directions. Melville does not sketch a one-sided rejuvenation, but rather, highlights the duplicity of youngness and oldness in a man. For example, when the uncle allows Yorpy to "sell the old iron for tobacco-money" (1195), the old uncle in the present becomes what he was 10 years before, and Yorpy says, "Dear massa! dear old massa! dat be very fust time in de ten long 'ear yoo hab mention kindly old Yorpy. I tank yoo, dear old massa; I tank yoo so kindly. Yoo is yourself agin in de ten long 'ear'"

(1195). Yorpy also shows the dualism of youngness and oldness, in that the uncle suggests to the narrator that Yorpy has no wisdom despite his old age: "Yorpy there, dear uncle; think you his grizzled locks thatch a brain improved by long life?" / "Am I Yorpy boy? Keep to your oar!" (1191). Like Yorpy, who lacks wisdom, the uncle at last becomes a childish adult without the wisdom worthy of his age after travelling up and down the Hudson River. In contrast to the uncle and Yorpy, the young narrator finally becomes wise, as he recollects, "if the event made my uncle a good old man, as he called it, it made me a wise young one. Example did for me the work of experience" (1195). As such, the men symbolize Melville's unconventional understanding of wisdom, and the uncle's failed experiment brings him joy, as he can at last lift the burden of wisdom from his shoulders. However, it leads to questions of cognition without relying on wisdom. "The Bell-Tower," which was also included in *The Piazza Tales*, gives us clues to better understand it.

3. The Materialistic Perception of the Darkness of God in "The Bell-Tower"

As critics have pointed out, the epigraph of "The Bell-Tower" indicates the thematic similarity between it and "Benito Cereno," in that both dramatize a slave rebellion (Browne 257; Dillingham 209; Fogle 63). "Like negroes, these powers own man sullenly; *mindful* of their higher master; while serving, plot revenge. / The world is *apoplectic* with high-living of ambition; and *apoplexy* has its fall. / Seeking to conquer a larger liberty, man but extends the empire of necessity" ("Benito" 202; emphasis added). The first sentence, which is conspicuous for its central theme of the master–slave relationship which appears in the two stories, attracts our attention, but we should also underscore Melville's choice of words in the epigraph—"mindful," "apoplectic," and "apoplexy"—because all of these concern the brain and allude to his interest in the relationship between the body and the mind, as seen in "Benito Cereno," "The Lightning-Rod Man," and "The Happy Failure." The words

"apoplectic" and "apoplexy" foretell Bannadonna's end, in which his creature hammers his brain and Bannadonna's great ambition to invent an automaton—or, more specifically, to mastermind materially as a mechanician—actually brings about his own demise. As the narrator remarks, "A practical materialist, what Bannadonna had aimed at was to have been reached, not by logic, not by crucible, not by conjuration, not by alters; but by plain vice-bench and hammer. In short, to solve nature, to steal into her, to intrigue beyond her, to procure some one else to bind her to his hand" ("Bell-Tower" 214). This is accomplished in an ironic way, because the material automaton behaves as if it has a mind of its own, and then kills its master. In addition to the automaton, Bannadonna also builds a bell tower, which reminds us of Melville's letter to Hawthorne, in which he remarked, "The reason the mass of men fear God, and at bottom dislike Him, is because they rather distrust His heart, and fancy Him all brain like a watch" (Horth 192). This reveals that, for Melville, a watch symbolizes the brain, rather than the heart. A "practical materialist," Bannadonna attempts to build such a brain to conquer mind by body.

In terms of such the materialistic view, Bannadonna, a mechanician, can also be linked to the carpenter in *Moby-Dick*, whose uncompromising nature involves "a sort of unintelligence; for in his numerous trades, he did not seem to work so much by reason or by instinct" (*Moby-Dick* 357). He is "a pure manipulator; his brain, if he had ever had one, must have early oozed along into the muscles of his fingers" (357). Like Bannadonna, the carpenter's unintelligent ways require him to use not his brain and reason, but "the muscles of his fingers." Moreover, Melville alludes to the thematic relation of the two stories in *Moby-Dick*, remarking that "this omnitooled, open-and-shut carpenter, was, after all, no mere machine of an automaton. If he did not have a common soul in him, he had a subtle something that somehow anomalously did its duty. What that was, whether essence of quicksilver, or a few drops of hartshorn, there is no telling" (*Moby*-358). Finally, Chapter 107

of *Moby-Dick*, "The Carpenter," shares with "The Bell-Tower" a common motif of the "subtle something" functioning as the soul, which appears in pure materiality; "The Bell-Tower" indicates that such a soul cannot be understood by intelligence, so we must deal with it using unintelligence, like Bannadonna and the carpenter in *Moby-Dick*.

Bannadonna, through his work to create the bell tower and the automaton, demonstrates a bodily way of understanding God, which is to say that he actually follows divine work and comprehends it using his body. In fact, even though Bannadonna's enthusiasm to undertake creation as a proxy for God and come closer to Him seems to be mere arrogance, Melville is convinced that the best way to understand an arbitrary God is to become a follower of the divine. For example, Bannadonna's bell tower is compared to the Tower of Babel, a symbol of man's haughtiness (Genesis 11:1–9):

> Like Babel's, its base was laid in a high hour of renovated earth, following the second deluge, when the waters of the Dark Ages had dried up, and once more the green appeared. No wonder that, after so long and deep submersion, the jubilant expectation of the race should, as with Noah's sons, soar into Shinar aspiration. ("The Bell-Tower" 202)

That is, the bell tower symbolizes Bannadonna's aspiration to approach God. Moreover, Bannadonna bends "his efforts upon the locomotive figure for the belfry [the automaton], but only as a partial type of an ulterior creature, a sort of elephantine Helot, adapted to further, in a degree scarcely to be imagined, the universal conveniences and glories of humanity; supplying nothing less than a supplement to the Six Day's Work" (213). As Bannadonna aims at "the Six Day's Work," he is, in the last paragraph of the story, described as a "lord" and "creator": "So the blind slave obeyed its blinder lord; but, in obedience, slew him. So the creator was killed by the creature" (216). Further, his desire to reach Heaven is reflected in a contrasting description of a rise and fall throughout "The Bell-Tower." The story begins with

the fallen bell tower after Bannadonna's death: "In the south of Europe, nigh a once-frescoed capital, now with dank mould cankering its bloom, central in a plain, stands what, at distance, seems the black mossed stump of some immeasurable pine, fallen, in forgotten days, with Anak and the Titan" (202). In contrast to the sketch of the fallen bell tower in the outset, Melville underscores Bannadonna's ascent during its construction in the following sentences: "Stone by stone, month by month, the tower rose. Higher, higher: snail-like in pace, but torch or rocket in its pride […] After the masons would depart, the builder, standing alone upon its ever-ascending summit, at close of every day saw that he over topped still higher walls and trees" (203). Moreover, on the holiday of the tower's completion, "[t]o the sound of viols, the climax-stone slowly *rose* in air" (203; emphasis added). While these passages obviously illustrate Bannadonna's aspiration to reach Heaven, on the day of his funeral, the bell tower "thoroughly falls no sooner than his bier goes into a cathedral as the pall-bearers entered the cathedral porch, nought but a broken and disastrous sound, like that of some lone Alpine land-slide, fell from the tower upon their ears. And then, all was hushed" (216). Furthermore, when speaking with two magistrates about works he had created before, Bannadonna remarks, "Some years ago, you may remember, I graved a small seal for your republic, bearing, for its chief device, the head of your own ancestor, its illustrious founder. . . . *Gravity* is the air of all; but, diversified in all" (208; emphasis added). Although "gravity" in this case refers to the "solemnity of manner" (*Oxford Dictionary of English* 757), Melville also indicates Bannadonna's divinity by giving a double meaning to the word, the other meaning implying that Bannadonna created "the force that attracts a body towards the centre of the earth" (*Oxford Dictionary of English* 757), a task that originally belonged solely to the hands of God. In short, Bannadonna pursues divine work by himself and attempts to comprehend God not by wisdom, but by this bodily following.

It is not only Bannadonna, but also his creature, that follows his master, because both of them commit murder in the same way. Whereas Bannadonna "smote the chief culprit with his ponderous ladle" (204) during the construction of the bell tower, the automaton follows his master, in that it "dully smote the intervening brain of" (204). Melville's intention to follow a master also influences the theme of a double in the story, where one is described as a prophet, and the other as a follower of the prophecy. First, the two magistrates of the town who Bannadonna allows to enter the tower during its construction are called "the twain" (212), and one of them, a junior magistrate, obviously plays the role of a prophet, foreseeing Bannadonna's death:

> dimly surmising what might be the final fate of such a cynic solitaire, nor perhaps uninfluenced by the general strangeness of surrounding things, this good magistrate had glanced sadly, sideways from the speaker, and thereupon his foreboding eye had started at the expression of the unchanging face of the Hour Una. (207)

As soon as the junior magistrate tells Bannadonna, "Una looks unlike her sisters," the other magistrate compares Una's face to "that of Deborah, the prophetess, as painted by the Florentine, Del Fonca" (207). Melville juxtaposes the junior magistrate's recognition of a prophetic sign in Una and Deborah to highlight his role as a prophet. Again, the junior magistrate talks about the ill omen of Una's face, telling Bannadonna, "she seemed intently gazing on you; one would have almost sworn that she picked you out from among us three" (209). The other magistrate, however, takes no notice of his associate's remark, saying only that "somehow, our great mechanician moves me strangely. Why, just now, when he so superciliously replied, his look seemed Sisera's, God's vain foe, in Del Fonca's painting.—And that young, sculptured Deborah, too" (209). He also says, "a passing whim. Deborah?—Where's Jael, pray?" (209). While the associate clearly behaves as a prophet in this relationship, it is slightly less clear that the chief's role is that of a follower; however,

Melville sketches the prophet–follower relationship more clearly in other doubles, namely, the two strange sounds from the bell-tower. In the early morning of the formal announcement of the bell tower and the automaton,

> [s]trange sounds, too, were heard, or were thought to be, by those whom anxious watching might not have left mentally undisturbed, sounds, not only of some ringing implement, but also—so they said—half-suppressed screams and plainings, such as might have issued from some ghostly engine, overplied. (210)

These foretell Bannadonna's death. Following these strange sounds, at one o'clock, when the automaton should have hammered the hands of Una and Dua to signal the time, "[s]uddenly a dull, mangled sound—naught ringing in it; scarcely audible, indeed, to the outer circles of the people—that dull sound dropped heavily from the belfry" (210). When the chief magistrate hears the strange sound, he hurries to the top of the tower, accompanied by his associate and a few soldiers. Here, it should be noted that Melville suddenly inserts a spaniel into the scene, "A spaniel which, unbeknown to them, had followed them thus far, stood shivering as before some unknown monster in a brake: or, rather, as if it snuffed footsteps leading to some other world" (211), because, in earlier scene where Bannadonna founds a bell, he also writes, "The unleashed metals bayed like hounds" (204). No one knows of the spaniel's origins, but "[t]rue it was, the spaniel never more was seen; and probably, for some unknown reason, it shared the burial now to be related of the domino" (211). As the domino follows Bannadonna, who also follows God, the spaniel traces the domino. Such a chain of leader–follower relations in "The Bell-Tower" is emphasized by the motif of the spaniel, which is generally recognized as a symbol of obsequiousness. In other words, Melville evokes doubles of a prophetic leader and a follower, as he has realized that this is the best way to understand unearthly conceptions formed by an arbitrary God while following His footsteps "leading to some other world" (211).

Before publishing "The Bell-Tower," Melville already had the idea of prophetic links of duplicates in mind while tackling *Moby-Dick*. Harrison Hayford points out that one of the *Pequod's* owner–captains, Bildad, is "the first of seven duplicate prophets, all of whom take up in their various direct or indirect ways the burden of Christian Bildad's initial prediction of a profane captain [Ahab]'s hell-bound career" (677). Hayford identifies the other six as follows: the old squaw, Tistig, at Gay-Head (ch. 16); an old sailor, Elijah (chs. 19, 21); the Pasee Fedallah; Tashtego's senior, an old Gay-Head Indian among the crew (ch. 28); a grey Manxman (ch. 28); and the crazy Shaker Gabriel (ch. 71) (677). Once Bildad makes a witty remark to profane Peleg, who the other owner–captain of the *Pequod* (according to Hayford, "though not Peleg's, it turns out, but Ahab's" [677])—"thy conscience may be drawing ten inches of water, or ten fathoms, I can't tell; but as thou art still an impenitent man, Captain Peleg, I greatly fear lest thy conscience be but a leaky one; and will in the end sink thee foundering down to the fiery pit, Captain Peleg" (*Moby-Dick* 77)—the other six prophetic duplicates follow him one after another, foreseeing Ahab's eternal destruction. In addition to the prophetic chains of duplicates, Hayford enumerates the highly repetitive chapters before the *Pequod's* departure, remarking that "presenting two whaling ports entails presenting two inns—duplicates breed duplicates" (675), but among his observations, it is notable that Melville duplicates an event that would occur as a sequence. For example, Hayford shows Peleg and Ahab's strange sharing of a sailors' ritual in which "[o]n an actual voyage the crew thus mustered aft might be harangued by the captain, who would lay down the purpose of the voyage, the crew's duties, and his own policies; and the mates would choose up men for their watches" (679), and concludes that "Melville has his duplicate captains give duplicate muster orders; Peleg's is too early (in harbour) and is not followed by either customary routine; while Ahab's is fourteen chapters too late (at sea) and is followed by a customary but subverted routine" (679). These instances therefore demonstrate how carefully Melville

arranges a series of prophetic duplications in both the whaling epic and in the short piece "The Bell-Tower."

4. The Pursuit of Predictive Doubles in "Benito Cereno"

Keeping in mind that Melville's explanation of "unintelligence" is needed for understanding God by means of following Him, as shown in close readings of "The Lightning-Rod Man," "The Happy Failure," and "The Bell-Tower," we can proceed to the reading of "Benito Cereno" to demonstrate that it also thematizes a follower–leader relationship, as the sentence painted on the *San Dominick*, "*Seguid vuestro jefe* (follow your leader)" ("Benito" 58) symbolizes, showing the bodily way of understanding against wisdom as in the three aforementioned short stories. "Benito Cereno" tells the tale of followers who are tracing their leader's way, and it doubles an occurrence as with *Moby-Dick* and "The Bell-Tower." "Benito Cereno," however, further intensifies our reading, in that it discloses Melville's idea that it is preferable to continue following a leader forever than to merge with that leader completely. We know Melville feels this way because the stories bring death to characters whenever they unite with their leaders. In other words, we should not strive to catch up with our leaders wholly, but instead pursue them perpetually. Melville evokes the eternal following motion within "Benito Cereno" as a means of understanding God and attaining salvation.

As *Moby-Dick* and "The Bell-Tower" demonstrate, the relationship between a leader and a follower is the significant key when it comes to deciphering "Benito Cereno." Babo painted the slogan "[F]ollow your leader" (58) on the *San Dominick*'s hull, and, in front of Aranda's skeleton, warns the white sailors, "Keep faith with the blacks from here to Senegal, or you shall in spirit, as now in body, follow your leader" (126). When Delano's sailors recapture the *San Dominick*, a white shipmate encourages the others, crying, "Follow your

leader!" (119). Moreover, at the end of the story, "three months after being dismissed by the court, Benito Cereno, born on the bier, did, indeed, follow his leader" (137).

In accordance with the theme of the leader–follower relationship, Melville repeatedly evokes duplicates, and has one follow the other. Of these duplicates, the most obvious is seen in the duplicated structure of the story, which is divided into two parts: the main part is told from Delano's perspective and includes the declaration after recapturing the *San Dominick*; the latter, which discloses the whole truth about the mysterious rebellion, is indeed required for this detective fiction-like tale, but it plays another important role in forming "Benito Cereno" as a duplicated story similar to Melville's other short stories that are often referred to as "diptychs"[12] —"The Two Temples," "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs," and "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids." Using this doubled structure, Melville arrays duplication in the details. In fact, he begins and ends with descriptions of the stories' leaders and the followers. On one hand, the narrator remarks in the outset, "Flights of troubled gray fowl, kith and kin with flights of troubled gray vapors among which they were mixed, skimmed low and fitfully over the waters, as swallows over meadows before storms. Shadows present, foreshadowing deeper shadows to come" (55). On the other hand, no sooner has the narrator remarks, concerning Cereno's statement, that "'With their steadfastness they but waft me to my tombs, señor,' was the foreboding response" (136) than Cereno commits suicide. In addition, two white sailors who attempt to convey hints of the slaves' rebellion to Delano each appear twice. The third clerk, Joaquin, Marques de Arambaolaza, first leads Delano's eyes to Cereno and Babo, by whispering something (75), and then the young sailor reappears and signals with his eyes once more (78). Furthermore, "an old Barcelona tar" (85) surrounded by two blacks, "one of those who seemed so earnestly eying me [Delano] here awhile since" (86),[13] displays suspicious behavior, as if he is frightened by something when Delano asks several questions about the *San Dominick*. Later,

when Delano commands the vessel, he happens to find him and says, “look straight forward and keep the ship so. Good hand, I trust? And want to get into the harbor, don’t you?” (109). The old sailor shows signs of agreement with Delano, but the two slaves glare at him. Apart from the repetition to Delano of the white sailors’ suggestion about the truth of the rebellion, Melville has the young slave Jose appear twice before the revolt on the *San Dominick*. Jose has a secret conversation with his leader, Babo, several times in the nights preceding the rebellion and, during the deposition, one sailor attests that “one night, the mate drove him away twice” (131).

Although Melville reiterates the duplications represented in the leader–follower relationship, he obviously distinguishes two phenomena: following a leader and catching up with a leader, in other words, merging with the leader. On one hand, if one continues to follow a leader’s guidance, it is possible to survive calamities; but, on the other, if one merges into a leader, death may result. For example, Cereno and Delano survive the rebellion on the *San Dominick* because they follow divine guidance. When Delano left the *San Dominick*,

> upon sudden impulse, which the deponent [Cereno] believes to have come from God and his angels, he, after the farewell had been said, followed the generous Captain Amasa Delano as far as the gunwale, where he stayed, under pretense of taking leave, until Amasa Delano should have been seated in his boat; that on shoving off, the deponent sprang from the gunwale into the boat, and fell into it, he knows not how, God guarding him. (130)

Whereas it might not be easy to determine whether Cereno is following or merging with the will of God, he follows the other captain, who is “the Prince of Heaven’s safe conduct through all ambuscades” (136), that is, Cereno’s pursuit of God through the agency of Delano. As Cereno repeats God’s grace in a trial and conversation with Delano in the ending, since

both Cereno and Delano are following the divine, they can, in the end, overcome the crises of the revolt. In contrast, when one totally corresponds with a leader, death is the result. For example, after Alexandro Aranda, a passenger on the *San Dominick*, is murdered by slaves for the purpose of warning the whites, his skeleton is "substituted for the ship's proper figurehead, the image of Christopher Colon, the discoverer of the New World" (126). Here, Aranda is forced to play the role of the symbol, which is to say that he becomes the leader Christopher Colon himself. This strange replacement of the figurehead with Aranda's skeleton designates the correspondence of a leader and a follower, which is inseparably related to death. As Aranda, Cereno merges himself into a symbol of his nation through the national flag of Spain, when he goes to shave in a cuddy. Because Melville consciously matches the colors of the Spanish flag with those of Cereno, who wears "a loose Chili jacket of dark velvet; white small clothes and stockings" (68) with his "pale face … and yellow hands" (68), he sketches colors of the flag in detail: "one broad fold swept curtain-like over the chair-arm to the floor, revealing, amid a profusion of armorial bars and ground-colors—black, blue, and yellow—a closed castle in a blood-red field diagonal with a lion rampant in a white" (100). Cereno has all the colors of the Spanish flag except red, but they are completely matched when "the razor [of Babo] drew blood, spots of which stained the creamy lather under the throat" (101). While shaving, Cereno is shaking, likely because the act reminds him of the slaves' cruel treatment of Aranda's remains while his corpse was hidden under the deck. At the moment he draws blood, Cereno's fright reaches its climax. The correspondence of Cereno with the national flag links itself to the fear of death. Hence, we should keep in mind that reaching the status of a leader brings calamity to one's followers, but following a leader can lead to salvation.

Melville's concern about the relationship between a leader and a follower affects the theme of a hybrid between a white man (leader) and a black man (follower). When Francesco, a mulatto, serves the two captains, they dispute his heritage:

> "Francesco is a good man," a sort of sluggishly responded Don Benito, like a phlegmatic appreciator, who would neither find fault nor flatter.
>
> "Ah, I thought so. For it were strange indeed, and not very creditable to us white-skins, if a little of our blood mixed with the African's, should, far from improving the latter's quality, have the sad effect of pouring vitriolic acid into black broth; improving the hue, perhaps, but not the wholesomeness."
>
> "Doubtless, doubtless, Señor, but"—glancing at Babo—"not to speak of negroes, your planter's remark I have heard applied to the Spanish and Indian intermixtures in our provinces. But I know nothing about the matter," he listlessly added. (104)

Although this conversation superficially questions the superiority of a person of mixed race, given the iterated matter of whether one should follow a leader or merge with a leader, the two captains discuss the rights and wrongs of the fusion between a leader and a follower. In addition to Francesco serving as a symbol of the unity of a follower and a leader, Melville evokes the two hybrids of human and animal. One is "a dark satyr," and the other is "an old Barcelona tar" (85). The *San Dominick* holds, near its balcony,

> the ample oval of the shield-like stern-piece, intricately carved with the arms of Castile and León, medallioned about by groups of mythological or symbolical devices; uppermost and central of which was a dark satyr in a mask, holding his foot on the prostrate neck of a writhing figure, likewise masked. (58)

The "dark satyr" refers to a hybrid in the following two ways. First, a satyr is a half-god and half-beast; "[i]n Greek art they were represented as a man with a horse's ears and tail, but in Roman representations as a man with a goat's ears, tail, legs, and horns" (*Oxford Dictionary*

of English 1569). Second, this satyr is a hybrid of black and white, because, even though satyrs is generally represented as white, Melville has made his black. Moreover, "an old Barcelona tar" (85), Delano thinks, sits "strangely enough on his weather-beaten visage, much as if a grizzly bear, instead of growling and biting, should simper and cast sheep's eyes" (85). The old sailor is once again mentioned as a hybrid of a bear and a sheep: "[t]he negroes about the windlass joined in with the old sailor, but, as they became talkative, he by degrees became mute, and at length quite glum, seemed morosely unwilling to answer more questions, and yet, all the while, this ursine air was somehow mixed with his sheepish one" (85), and Delano calls him "a centaur" (85). In short, the old sailor is a hybrid of a leader and a follower, as he is a mixture of not only human and beast, but also a predator bear and a prey sheep. It is notable that both hybrids, the satyr and "the Barcelona tar, die. Although Melville does not describe the satyr's death carved in "the ample oval of the shield-like stern-piece" (58), in Greek Mythology, they are generally represented as mortal gods. Furthermore, it is interesting that one of the satyrs in Greek mythology, Marsyas, is flayed by Apollo; this is the same fate Aranda experienced, as he becomes a skeleton within three days "in a way the negroes afterwards told the deponent, but which he, so long as reason is left him, can never divulge" (131). Melville also provides descriptions related to skinning; for instance, the narrator remarks that Delano commands "a large sealer" (55), and the parallel between Babo's hand movements while shaving in the cuddy and the slaves' way of skeletonizing Aranda, and Cereno "is like one flayed alive, thought Captain Delano" (110), because he emphasizes that skinning is the calamity that befell Aranda. Thus, Melville does not merely quote Marsyas, but rather alters the motif into a hybrid to highlight the unfortunate fate of a half-breed and the unity of a leader and a follower. Apart from the satyr and Barcelona tar who dies, we also learn of

> Luys Galgo, a sailor about sixty years of age, and formerly of the king's navy, was one of those who sought to convey tokens to Captain Amasa Delano; but his intent, though undiscovered, being suspected, he was, on a pretense, made to retire out of sight, and at last into the hold, and there was made away with. (132)

As we have clarified that Melville evokes the bodily way of understanding God by means of following, in the conclusion of "Benito Cereno," Melville once again draws attention to the body–mind and leader–follower relationships:

> The body [of Babo] was burned to ashes; but for many days, the head, that hive of subtlety, fixed on a pole in the Plaza, met, unbashed, the gaze of the whites; and across the Plaza looked towards St. Bartholomew's church, in whose vaults slept then, as now, the recovered bones of Aranda; and across the Rimac bridge looked towards the monastery, on Mount Agonia without; where, three months after being dismissed by the court, Benito Cereno, borne on the bier, did, indeed, follow his leader. (137)

The battle between the white and black men concludes with a defeat of the mind, symbolized in Babo's capital punishment; however, this climax leaves us questioning why Cereno must commit suicide, because, if Melville means to give superiority to the body over the mind, he should have had Cereno survive. Although we can assume that Melville provides a vague conclusion of the battle between the body and the mind, it seems more fruitful to consider the meaning of Cereno's death. Remember that Melville distinguishes the two phenomena—following a leader (salvation) and merging with a leader (death)—and if so, Cereno, who decides to follow his leader, must attain salvation. The end, therefore, suggests not Cereno's death, but his reaching salvation, namely, resurrection. If Cereno can continue pursuing his leader, he will never die. Moreover, his death leads us to another question—who does Cereno ultimately follow?— because Melville leaves us with the possibility of several interpretations of "his leader": Aranda, Babo, and God. In the first place, most readers assume that "his

leader" in the last sentence refers to Aranda, as, in front of the skeleton, Babo remarks to the white men, "Keep faith with the blacks from here to Senegal, or you shall in spirit, as now in body, follow your leader" (126), and it is below Aranda's wrapped skeleton that the sentence "*Seguid vuestro jefe* (follow your leader)" (58) is chalked. Second, it might, indeed, be unreasonable for Cereno to follow Babo; however, we should take into account Cereno's reply to Delano's question—"What has cast such a shadow upon you" (137)—that it is "[t]he negro" (137). We cannot determine whom "[t]he negro" implies, because this can be either Babo or the dark memory of Cereno himself (shortly before, Cereno attributes his sadness to memory). In any case, the mystic darkness within Cereno, symbolized through Babo, leads him to commit suicide regardless of his will, because Melville foretells his final act, remarking that "[t]here was silence, while the moody man sat, slowly and *unconsciously* gathering his mantle about him, as if it were a pall" (137; emphasis added). Because Cereno behaves as if he is following the will of God, the "negro" could also mean God's darkness, which will lead him to suicidal resurrection. Cereno himself does not know what a "negro" is, thus he has no choice but to follow the will of a perverse God in hopes of grasping it. In either case, Cereno must pursue his leader for eternity, in order to approach the darkness that cannot be represented using verbal language. Throughout "Benito Cereno," Melville tells us that darkness beyond the realm of wisdom can be grabbed if we keep following it to the end of the earth; however, we should never reach it.

5. Melville's Chase of Solomon: "Benito Cereno" as an Alternative to Wisdom Literature

Now that we have illustrated that "[F]ollow your leader" ("Benito" 58) is a slogan not only for the sailors in "Benito Cereno," but also for Melville himself, we can shed light on the fact that, when Melville deals with "Benito Cereno," he is actually following his leader's

prediction, namely, the predictions by Solomon in Ecclesiastes, as a means of recreating wisdom literature by his own hand. Like other works by Melville, "Benito Cereno" contains biblical allusions, but the relationship with Ecclesiastes has not yet been closely examined, perhaps because the more obvious implications of Luke, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Genesis distract us from them. According to Bruce H. Franklin, Luke 22:21, "but, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table," inspired Melville to write, "Or was the Spaniard less hardened than the Jew, who refrained not from supping at the board of whom the same night he meant to betray?" (113) and "for nothing was to be seen but the hand of his servant pushing the Canary over toward him" (105). Melville also uses "the Canary" in the following remark, "the hand of his servant, mute as that on the wall, slowly pushed over the Canary" (107), based on Daniel 5:5, "suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote" (Franklin 476). In addition, "Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones" (57) obviously suggests Ezekiel 37, and "[t]he next moment, with clenched jaw and hand, he passed Atufal, and stood unharmed in the light . . . ; the screened sun in the quiet camp of the west shining out like the mild light from Abraham's tent" (113) refers to Genesis 18:1–8. [14] Although Melville does not make as obvious use of quotations from Ecclesiastes as he does from other biblical books, we should not dismiss the biblical influence underlining his work. In "Benito Cereno," he crystallizes the unconventional wisdom that leads us to grasp the vacancy of God by means of re-creating wisdom literature, which repeatedly addresses vanity, as symbolized in "[v]anity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2) and refers to wisdom in 27 verses.[15] It is difficult to determine the meaning of wisdom in the context of Ecclesiastes, because of its wavering between positive and negative meanings, such as: "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Ecclesiastes 1:18), which is in contrast with "[w]isdom strengtheneth the wise more

than ten mighty men which are in the city" (Ecclesiastes 7:19). However, in "Benito Cereno," Melville positively interprets and recreates the theme of wisdom as a key to snatching a shadow of God.

Stephen J. Bennett provides a comprehensive analysis of allusions to Ecclesiastes in *Moby-Dick* in terms of four categories: "'worthless pursuits,' 'the sovereignty of God,' 'stylistic similarity,' and 'other shared elements'" (51), such as "death, human fallibility, enjoyment, hierarchy, 'under the sun,' and continuous motion" (57), all of which could be applied to our reading of "Benito Cereno" to illustrate Melville's devotion to Ecclesiastes even after *Moby-Dick*. In addition to the four categories, we can identify three other motifs in common with Ecclesiastes: kings, an entangled cord, and fear of God. Each of these is related to the theme of wisdom. Melville elaborates on them and evokes his own wisdom literature, which arouses skepticism toward the conventional comprehension of body–mind relations, as detailed above.

First, Melville regards the wind as one of the most important motifs in both *Moby-Dick* and "Benito Cereno," as Bennett asserts that it "is explicit in Ecclesiastes, which mentions pursuing the wind nine times, using it as a metaphor for a worthless pursuit of an unattainable goal or for something that is beyond understanding such as the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom (Ecclesiastes 1:17)" (51). Just as *Moby-Dick* reiterates the "worthless pursuit" of wind, "Benito Cereno" also repeatedly fails to catch the wind. Early in "Benito Cereno," Captain Delano inspects the *San Dominick*, a slave ship strangely wandering around the bay of the Harbor of St. Maria, and finds "a huge bunch of conglobated barnacles adhering below the water to the side like a wen; a token of baffling airs and long calms passed somewhere in those seas" (58) on its side, which indicates that the *San Dominick* has been unsuccessful in catching the wind for a long time. When Captain Delano embarks on it, the black men onboard all relate "a common tale of suffering" (58): "Off Cape Horn, they

had narrowly escaped shipwreck; then, for days together, they had lain tranced without wind" (59). This story, which is later revealed as a tall tale to conceal a series of murders of white sailors by the slaves, is repeatedly retold, even after the aforementioned boarding scene. While Delano asks Cereno to tell him the story, "[t]he portion of the narrative which, perhaps, most excited interest, as well as some surprise, considering the latitudes in question, was the long calms spoken of, and more particularly the ship's so long drifting about" (68), Cereno cannot uncover the truth under the slaves' intent gazes. We should focus on the fact that Melville chooses the narrative of calm to provide a mysterious tone to "Benito Cereno." Furthermore, Melville mentions uncatchable wind when he depicts a boat carrying provisions, sails, and rigging for the *San Dominick* and Delano's pilotage of the wrecked ship. This boat of Delano's delays in backing from its mother ship, "prolonged by unexpected detention at the sealer's side, as well as its returning trip lengthened by the continual recession of the goal" (82). The *San Dominick*, piloted by Delano, is forced to engage in calm, but Delano, "from his knowledge of those latitudes, cherishing hopes of a breeze, and a fair and fresh one, at any moment" (91), is optimistic about the situation because he considers that "with a good wind, ten minutes' sailing would retrace more than sixty minutes' drifting" (92). The absence of wind, therefore, permeates "Benito Cereno."

As Bennett points, "[t]he pursuit of the wind in Ecclesiastes usually accompanies the declaration that something is vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:14; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 6-7, 16; 6:9)" (51), and so it emerges that vanity is also one of the central themes of "Benito Cereno." Cereno's fugitive story of the shipwreck worries not only Delano, but also the readers. Moreover, a rather mysterious tone is set by the descriptions of Cereno as an elusive phantom. As Delano cannot comprehend Cereno's real intention, "he began to feel a *ghostly* dread of Don Benito. And yet when he roused himself, dilated his chest, felt himself strong on his legs, and coolly considered it—what did all these *phantoms* amount to?" ("Benito" 80; emphasis added), and

he describes Cereno as “the central hobgoblin of all” (81). Moreover, Cereno’s silver-mounted sword, not a sword but “the ghost one” (137), whose scabbard, “artificially stiffened, was empty” (137), symbolizes vanity. In the end, after suppressing a rebellion by the slaves, Delano and Cereno converse with “their fraternal unreserved in singular contrast with former withdrawments” (135); however, Delano still cannot comprehend the darkness in Cereno, who later commits suicide. It is arduous for Delano to see Cereno as elusive as the wind, even at the story’s conclusion.

The slaves’ shrewd stratagem deprives Delano of any chance to discover the truth of a rebellion on board, while Cereno is placed in a tense situation wherein he is not allowed even to make a gesture. Perhaps a conversation about money could diffuse the tense situation; however, the opportunity is wasted. As Ecclesiastes preaches the futility of money, “Benito Cereno” describes its vanity. Bennett remarks, “[l]ike Ecclesiastes, *Moby-Dick* emphasizes the futility of the elusive goal of pursuing wealth. Ecclesiastes even has a scenario where riches are lost in a bad venture (5:14 [13]), which is essentially what happened to the *Pequod*” (53); this exemplifies Ahab’s abandonment of the pursuit of whale oil for money and the motif of a golden doubloon as the first to find the white whale, which was nailed to the center mast of the *Pequod* to symbolize Ahab’s central aim (his fruitless chase of the whale). Although “Benito Cereno” has no description of an inquiry of the intrinsic value of money like Qoheleth and Ahab make, it shows that money does not change their situation whatsoever. Babo, for example, forces Cereno to ask Delano several strange questions, in order to gain beneficial information about his sealer:

> “And there, Señor, you exchanged your seal-skins for teas and silks, I think you said?”
>
> “Yes. Silks, mostly.”
>
> “And the balance you took in specie, perhaps?”
>
> Captain Delano, fidgeting a little, answered—

"A bout five-and-twenty, all told." ("Benito" 77)

Delano doubts Cereno's queries, but he cannot understand that it is the intention of capturing his sealer which lays behind this conversation on business. Delano also misses the chance to reveal the mystery of the *San Dominick* when he asks Cereno to yield the right of ownership of Babo to him, saying, "I should like to have your man here myself—what will you take for him? Would fifty doubloons be any object?" (83). Babo, however, replies, "Master wouldn't part with Babo for a thousand doubloons" (83) before his owner, Cereno, can even open his mouth to speak. The business talk about Babo could make Delano suspicious, because the slave himself intervenes, thus implying a reversal of the master–slave relationship; however, Delano still cannot see the truth. Delano thinks that Babo takes it "in earnest, and, with the strange *vanity* of a faithful slave appreciated by his master, scorning to hear so paltry a valuation put upon him by a stranger" (83; emphasis added). Although this "vanity," of course, is an "excessive pride in or admiration of one's own appearance or achievements" (*Oxford Dictionary of English* 1950), it is ironic that it is Delano, rather than Babo, who is so vain that he cannot see the worthlessness of his own words with regard to the mystery of the *San Dominick.* In other words, Melville implies the other meaning of "vanity," particularly, "the quality of being worthless or futile" (*Oxford Dictionary of English* 1950) in the aforementioned conversation. As part of a series of Cereno's strange inquiries about business, the exchange on the ownership of the slave becomes useless when it comes to unfolding its reality. Moreover, Delano intends "to say something to his host concerning the pecuniary part of the business he had undertaken for him, especially—since he was strictly accountable to his owners—with reference to the new suit of sails, and other things of that sort" ("Benito" 106), but Cereno's manner confuses him: "though his original offer of assistance had been hailed with hectic animation, yet now when it was reduced to a business transaction, indifference and apathy were betrayed" (106). Melville, therefore, retells the futility of

business here, indicating the impossibility of money diffusing the strange situation of the *San Dominick*.

The second category connecting *Moby-Dick* to Ecclesiastes, as Bennett points out, is the sovereignty of God, which Bennett examines in terms of the following four factors: controlling outcomes, God cannot be known, the silence of God, and fate, all of which are related to Melville's long query about the arbitrary God of Calvinism. Based on these four ideas, Bennett inspects several notions specific to Ecclesiastes that influenced Melville: the acknowledgement that "humans cannot control outcomes, despite the commonly held doctrine of retribution (e.g., Ecclesiastes 7:14; 10:8–9)" (54); the inscrutability of God, as opposed to "[t]he standard wisdom of the Book of Proverbs sees a great deal of predictability in the actions of God (e.g., Proverbs 24:33–34)" (55); the silence of God in contrast to "Prophetic literature in the Bible [that] records direct revelation from God with formula such as 'Thus saith the LORD' (e.g., Amos 1:3)" (55); and fate, referring "to the inevitability of death in Ecclesiastes" (56). These common themes between Ecclesiastes and *Moby-Dick*, which represent the sovereignty of God, also underscore "Benito Cereno." Delano deems that Cereno is "not unwilling to let nature make known her own case among his suffering charge, or else in despair of restraining it for the time" ("Benito" 60). When Cereno attempts to escape Babo's control, he behaves as if he is following God's will rather than his own, suddenly springing over the bulwarks and falling into Delano's boat. He recounts the situation to Delano later, saying:

> [A]s God lives, Don Amasa, I know not whether desire for my own safety alone could have nerved me to that leap into your boat, had it not been for the thought that, did you, unenlightened, return to your ship, you, my best friend, with all who might be with you, stolen upon, that night, in your hammocks, would never in this world have wakened again. (135)

Delano replies, "you have saved my life, Don Benito, more than I yours; saved it, too, against my knowledge and will" (135), but Cereno replies, "God charmed your life, but you saved mine. . . you had the Prince of Heaven's safe conduct through all ambuscades" (136). Cereno suggests that God is leading both himself and Delano in a chain of crises against their will. While this scene differs from Melville's usual outlook on God—in that he explicitly represents Him not as wicked but merciful—he also questions whether a man follows his own will or Providence, as is often with the case with Melville's works. We cannot declare, however, that Melville is describing a merciful God in "Benito Cereno," because Cereno is obsessed with dark memories, borrowing his own words, the "negro" (137), and ultimately drives himself to self-destruction. If Cereno follows Providence, why does God lead him to suicide? Melville leaves us to the mystery of the sovereignty of God and closes the story.

Bennett further demonstrates the similarity of style between Ecclesiastes and *Moby-Dick*, when he insists that "[s]tylistic similarity does not show dependence, yet the enigmatic style of Ecclesiastes stands out amongst biblical literature, just as the enigmatic style of *Moby-Dick* confused the critics in the 19th century" (56). Melville intensifies the enigmatic style in "Benito Cereno" to the extent that it can be read as detective fiction. In addition, "Benito Cereno" was subjected to severe criticism because of its disordered state,[16] but the distortion in the structure proves a bond with Ecclesiastes, as Bennett comments that "[a]s is the case with Ecclesiastes, the style of *Moby-Dick* is a 'careful disorder,' which supports the message or 'embodies the meaning of his tale'" (57).

Finally, we examine the common themes of "death, human fallibility, enjoyment, hierarchy, 'under the sun,' and continuous motion" (Bennett 57) between Ecclesiastes and *Moby-Dick* and the possibility of applying them to "Benito Cereno." Each factor is represented by the death of three central characters, Aranda, Babo, and Cereno; the fallibility of knowing the truth of the rebellion from Delano's view; the enjoyment provided to Delano

by the "naked nature" of black people, especially symbolized in a black mother's "pure tenderness and love" ("Benito" 86); the reversed hierarchy on the *San Dominick*; and the comparison between darkness and lightness (discussed in a forthcoming section). Among these themes, we specifically focus on under the Sun, because Melville developed the plot of "Benito Cereno" using a description of the dawn to contrast the world under the Sun with the world in the darkness. For example, the story opens "not long after dawn" (55), as Delano's "mate came below, informing him that a strange sail was coming into the bay" (55). Moreover, the slaves revolt suddenly "on the seventh day after leaving port, at three o' clock in the morning" (123), Babo decides to kill his master Aranda "a little after day-break" (124), and then shows the skeleton to Delano "at sunrise" (126). After the rebellion, the *San Dominick* arrives at the island of Santa Maria "at about six o' clock in the afternoon" (127), but "at six o' clock in the morning" (127–28), slaves find the port and the *Bachelor's Delight*, and they concoct a scheme to deceive Delano and his sailors. It is clear that Melville dared not to sketch the darkness itself, and he foiled it by writing about its opposition, specifically, the world under the Sun. Melville prods us to consider a way to realize the darkness and represents the wisdom to grasp it.

We will now expand on the other three motifs that relate "Benito Cereno" to Ecclesiastes in terms of the theme of wisdom: kings, an entangled cord, and fear of God. Ecclesiastes, "[t]he words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem" (1:1), mentions a king 15 times.[17] Just as Chapter 4, Verse 13 of Ecclesiastes associates a king with wisdom—"Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished"—so does Melville, who depicts the wisdom of a king failing to reach the truth in "Benito Cereno." At the onset, Delano deems the *San Dominick* "a very fine vessel, such as in those days were at intervals encountered along that main; sometimes superseded Acapulco treasure-ships, or retired frigates of the Spanish king's navy, which, like

superannuated Italian palaces, still, under a decline of masters, preserved signs of former state" ("Benito" 57), in which Melville emphasizes an abdicated king or master. As Melville bonds a king to wisdom and deprives the world of him, he attempts to display what is outside of wisdom—that is to say, the darkness of God. Melville has three characters who represent kings, appear in "Benito Cereno": Captain Cereno, Atful, and Francesco. Delano regards Cereno as "Charles V, just previous to the anchoritish retirement of that monarch from the throne" (63) because of his splenetic manner. Atful is introduced by Cereno to Delano with the descriptor, "he was king in his own land" (74), and Delano says later, "Ah now, pardon me, but that is treating the poor fellow like an ex-king indeed" (110). When Delano sees Francesco, a mulatto steward, he remarks, "your steward here has features more regular than King George's of England; and yet there he nods, and bows, and smiles; a king, indeed—the king of kind hearts and polite fellows" (104). Melville intends the number of kings to be three because he is setting the stage for the trial of the rebellion in "the City of Kings," Lima, which Francisco Pizarro found in 1535 on the Epiphany, the day the Magi came to pay a visit to baby Jesus (Matt. 2:1–12). The Magi are also known as the Three Kings or the Three Wise Men. It is because Melville aims to shed light on the theme of wisdom that he chooses Lima as the location for justice. It is noteworthy that the deposition denies the human rights of slaves and dismisses facts of the rebellion from the slaves' perspectives. In other words, the wise men in the court fail to notice the truth. Although a part of the deposition has been exposed to harsh criticism by some critics, it is indispensable to "Benito Cereno," in which Melville searches for a way to realize the truth appearing between body and mind, since the trial symbolizes the failure of wisdom. Melville nullifies the wisdom of mind and seeks unconventional wisdom to grasp the "negro" ("Benito" 137)—the darkness of God.

The frequent motif of entanglement in "Benito Cereno" can be attributed to Ecclesiastes 4:12, which says, "And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and

a threefold cord is not quickly broken," because, like the theme of a king, the number three is important for the story. A white aged sailor on the deck, one whose "hands were full of ropes, which he was working into a large knot" (89), was "like an Egyptian priest, making gordian knots for the temple of Ammon [… and] the knot seemed a combination of double-bowline-knot, treble-crown-knot, back-handed-well-knot, knot-in-and-out-knot, and jamming-knot" (89). These knots are, of course, based on the legend of Alexander the Great, yet we should not dismiss the influence of Ecclesiastes' three cords, considered to be composed of two cords: humans' and God's. The first cipher, the "bowline knot," is also known as king of knots, so a "double-bowline" would refer to two kings. In addition, a "treble-crown" means three crowns. Melville thus evokes the theme of the three kings while simultaneously highlighting the lack of one king for three crowns. To determine the absent king, we can refer to Chapter 47 of *Moby-Dick*, "The Mat-Maker," in which Ishmael and Queequeg weave "a sword-mat" (*Moby-Dick* 179). Melville compares the three factors that entwine the events—"chance, free will, and necessity" (179)—to Queequeg's sword thrust between warp and woof, Ishmael's shuttle to weave woof, and the yarns of warp.

> [A]ya, chance, free will, and necessity—no wise incompatible—all interweavingly working together. The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course—its every alternating vibration, indeed, only tending to that; free will still free to ply her shuttle between give threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and sideways in its motions modified by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events. (179)

Here, Melville portrays weaving, made by the work of two men, and necessity, namely, what God decides and man must follow. For Melville, entangled yarn is, as Ecclesiastes states, composed of the three factors of two humans and God. Therefore, it can be safely concluded

that he implies an absent, unknown God through the ciphers of knots in "Benito Cereno." Given that the other two knots, "back-handed" and "in-and-out" mean "having a meaning that is expressed indirectly or ambiguously" (*Oxford Dictionary of English* 117) and "inconsistent and unreliable" (*Oxford Dictionary of English* 873), Melville, underscoring the absence of God, suggests the perverse God of Calvinism and the vanity of pursuing Him.

As we have clarified, the "gordian knots" tangled by the aged sailor conceal the arbitrary God within them, and Melville questions the means of solving a riddle. When the old sailor hands the knots to Delano, he says, "Undo it, cut it quick" ("Benito" 89). There are thus two ways of solving the riddle of the knots—by mind's intelligence (undo) or by bodily violence (cut). Melville juxtaposes the "gordian knots" and the entanglements of mind: "Captain Delano crossed over to him and stood in silence surveying the knot; his mind, by a not uncongenial transition, passing from its own entanglements to those of the hemp" (89). This is the epitome of Alexander the Great, intelligence and violence in contrast over the solution to the Gordian knot, and Alexander chooses the latter. Yet, Melville does not obviously demonstrate how to solve the cipher of the knots made by a "simple-witted" (90) old man, because the cipher finally remains unsolved and vanishes when an elderly black man demands that Delano hand him the knots before he tosses them overboard (90). Thus, we must ourselves look for a way to unveil the cipher created by a simple-witted old man, and we need to address it using a bodily way.

Lastly, we investigate the theme of fear in regard to the relationship between Ecclesiastes, which mentions fear in seven verses,[18] "Benito Cereno," and Solomon's remarks in the Book of Proverbs—the other source of wisdom literature—that "[t]he fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (1:7), and "[t]he fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (9:10). As Solomon associates fear with wisdom, fear is also related to

wisdom in “Benito Cereno.” Delano is always exposed to fear, because he cannot solve the riddle of the *San Dominick*. In other words, he needs to unfold the riddle to unmask the truth about his fear. Cereno is also affected by fear, in that he cannot comprehend the intentions of the slaves, which he cannot grasp even before his death, as the “negro” (“Benito” 137) in his mind keeps worrying him. Although we are generally capable of solving problems—even those relating to the fear of an arbitrary God—using our wisdom, in “Benito Cereno” Melville demonstrates another way of solving the mystery of God—by relying not on the wisdom of the mind, but on the wisdom of the body.

As Delano, who is constantly considering the traps stretched around the *San Dominick*, says, “acuteness might have cost me my life” (136), and not knowing does save his life. Delano is “a person of a singularly undistrustful good nature, not liable, except on extraordinary and repeated incentives, and hardly then, to indulge in personal alarms, any way involving the imputation of malign evil in man” (56), and the narrator remarks, as previously quoted, that “[w]hether, in view of what humanity is capable, such a trait implies, along with a benevolent heart, more than ordinary quickness and accuracy of intellectual perception, may be left to the wise to determine” (56). Although Delano fails to realize the truth of the rebellion during his stay on the *San Dominick*, we can conclude that his “benevolent heart,” as a result, excels “quickness and accuracy of intellectual perception” (56). This symbolizes Melville’s conviction that wisdom does not bring about benefit, as he takes the trouble to add a part of the trial in Lima, where wisdom is unsuccessful in demonstrating the truth of the rebellion from the slaves’ perspective. Instead of understanding God by wisdom, Melville attempts to grasp Him using unconventional wisdom that belongs not to the mind, but to the body. In more concrete terms, Melville’s bodily way of understanding God is manifest as an eternal following of Him. Thus, Melville follows

Solomon's predictions by himself through the creation of "Benito Cereno." The slogan "[F]ollow your leader" (58) symbolizes this notion.

Chapter II

Melville's Delay in "Bartleby, the Scrivener" and *Moby-Dick*: Literary Borrowings from William Shakespeare

Tracing the work of the divine for himself, Melville strives to understand the darkness of God through his characters' hearts, not their heads – through their desires, not their reasoning. However, we have not yet answered why Melville considers it better to stay one step behind the will of God than to catch up with it. This is Melville's position in his story "The Bell-Tower," in which Bannadonna dies just as he is about to challenge God by creating a human being on his own. In striving to understand God, Melville perceives something like a time difference between human beings and God. He describes this difference as something like the time difference between Greenwich and China in *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (248-9). Furthermore, the importance of the eternal motion of following an aim is reflected in Ahab's remark on the third day of chasing the white whale – which embodies the will of divine – in *Moby-Dick*: "I've oversailed him [Moby Dick]. How, got the start? Aye, he's chasing *me* now; not I, *him*—that's bad; I might have known it, too. Fool! the lines—the harpoons he's towing. Aye, aye, I have run him by last night. About! about! Come down, all of ye, but the regular look outs! Man the braces!" (420; emphasis in original). Here, Melville goes to the trouble of having Ahab accidentally overtake the white whale as part of his pursuit in order to highlight Ahab's role as a follower of Moby Dick. Thus, Ahab should not pass the or catch up to the whale; indeed, when he finds and harpoons the whale he becomes entangled with the harpoon and is dragged to his death. Melville's characters are prohibited from bridging the gap between God and human beings. This theme mirrors the author's imbroglio between the will of a Calvinist God and his own will. Through his work, Melville struggles to find a

compromise with God; he attempts to follow providence but will never reach it. It is, therefore, not at the moment of realizing providence but while following providence that Melville can resurrect as an ideal person who can dialectically unite the will of God and his own will. In this chapter, we will find that the constant delays of plans and actions in Melville's fiction symbolizes his resistance to the idea that a Calvinist God could completely dominate his own life and will.

Both "Bartleby, the Scrivener" and *Moby-Dick* delay their ending by every means possible. The structure of these stories calls to mind Zeno's paradox, in which a slow-moving tortoise never reaches the fleet-footed Achilles because it only ever closes half the distance between them, then half again, then half again, and so on to infinity. Of course, Melville cannot help but put off the climax of his story to some degree, because needs to evoke suspense in his work in order to hold his readers' interest as long as possible. Melville's delays, however, should not be dismissed as usual authorial practice. Instead, I argue that this is a conscious choice on his part, a choice which is worth scrutinizing because it concerns elements of the leader-follower relation which I clarified in the previous chapter. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Melville creates the eternal motion of following to grasp the divine will through desire, not through reason, and illustrates that such a motion provokes salvation. Thus, Melville delays the ends of his stories and create a circular story-telling structure to convey this theme. In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael recommences his voyage again and again as a narrator until he reaches its climax in which no other members of the *Pequod* survive except for him. Likewise, the central motif of "Bartleby" – a dead letter which never reaches its destination – also symbolizes an eternal delay.

Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener" has spawned a flood of studies, which Dan McCall labels "the Bartleby Industry" (x). These studies have, in some critics' minds, arisen

"from the reader's desires to identify and secure Melville within their own rather than his context" (Stern 13). The more we strive to grasp the meaning of the mysterious Bartleby, the more distant from the text itself we become, leading us to a deadlock. Critics have glimpsed shadows of enormous literary works, socio-historical backgrounds, and Melville's own biographical contexts, including the idea of the Christian savior, in "Bartleby." Donald M. Fiene advocates that "'Bartleby the Scrivener' is an allegory treating the Christian ethic and that Bartleby is 'some sort of Christ figure'" (18). Fiene lists a number of descriptions from the text which suggest or invoke Jesus Christ. Such a Biblical approach seems appropriate to some degree.

Yet other scholars, including Sidney P. Moss and Gordon V. Boudreau, claim not that Bartleby symbolizes resurrection as proxy for Christ but that Bartleby cannot be resurrected or restored. Instead, these commentators link "Bartleby" to other short stories, such as "Cock-A-Doodle-Doo" and "The Encantadas." Sidney P. Moss remarks, "'Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!' is clearly a companion piece to 'Bartleby.' Apart from the fact that they appeared concurrently in 1853, they represent opposite positions. Where Bartleby is defeated by life and withdraws even into death, the narrator of 'Cock-A-Doodle-Doo!' comes to defy and even deny death while exulting in life" (210). Following Moss, Boudreau reads "Bartleby" as "the Parable of the Sower in focusing upon 'stony places' where seeds fell but soon withered away because 'they had no deepness of earth' [Matt. 13:5-6]" (349), concluding that although the narrator "is momentarily comforted in discovering 'a soft imprisoned turf' underfoot" (349), "when he discovers Bartleby dead, facing the wall, the scrivener's fetal position mimics a lobe-like seed, desiccated" (349), similar to "The Encantadas," whose landscape "is sterile, inimical to reproduction or growth" (349).

I agree with those commentators who interpret Bartleby's death as a resurrection. In this chapter, I develop those interpretations and argue that Bartleby's resurrection is brought about by slow-moving time, which is to say, Melville's delay in reaching the end of the story. The delays in "Bartleby" come in two forms: the aforementioned dead letter which never arrives, and the famous line "I would prefer not to," by which Bartleby postpones all his duties. The delays in "Bartleby" can, therefore, lead us to ways of interpreting Bartleby's death as a form of resurrection. In order to demonstrate that slow-moving time resurrects Bartleby, in this chapter I first cite details of "Bartleby" which relate to the postponement of duties. I then proceed to examine the influence of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* on *Moby-Dick* – both works wield lagging or non-linear flows of time as themes. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare portrays Claudius, the king's murderer, as a double of Hamlet. In the end, Hamlet and Claudius die together, after Hamlet postpones his vengeance several times, when Hamlet skewers Claudius with a poisoned blade. In a similar fashion, Ahab's vengeance on the white whale is rooted in his own loss (in this case, Ahab's leg), is postponed, and eventually leads to his own death. As with some of Melville's other works which we examined in the previous chapter, in *Moby-Dick*, Melville expresses the idea that when someone and their double merge together, they cannot avoid their fate: death. Captain Ahab, therefore, has to die with his double, the white whale; on the other hand, Ishmael, who is not claimed by a shipwreck and continues on, toward the unreachable end of the story, is resurrected endlessly as the story's narrator. In sum, in this chapter I will describe how Melville includes immortality in his idea of the eternal motion of following the end through readings of "Bartleby" and *Moby-Dick*.

1. The Undelivered Letter in "Bartleby, the Scrivener"

Although there is no doubt that the dead letter represents unfortunate, hopeless Bartleby, "handling these dead letters, and assorting them for the flames" (672), commentators have dismissed the idea that the dead letter and Bartleby mirror one another in that both postpone their duties. When Bartleby works as "a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington" (672), he deals with letters which are meant for deceased addressees, as the narrator says, "[s]ometimes from out the folded paper the pale clerk takes a ring: the finger it was meant for, perhaps, moulders in the grave; a bank-note sent in swiftest charity: —he whom it would relieve, nor eats nor hungers any more; pardon for those who died despairing; hope for those who died unhoping; good tidings for those who died stifled by unrelieved calamities" (672). As these dead letters remain undelivered and do not accomplish their duty, so does Bartleby; he responds to the tasks given him with the phrase, "I would prefer not to," delaying execution of his work as a copyist and, at length, denying literally all things.

Employed by the lawyer-narrator, Bartleby earnestly tackles his businesses "without the least delay" (643) early on in the narrative, but he suddenly refuses the narrator's request to examine a document, remarking that he would prefer not to for the first time. A few days later, Bartleby also rejects to check his own copies, "four lengthy documents, being quadruplicates of a week's testimony taken before me in my High Court of Chancery" (644). The narrator repeatedly asks Bartleby to examine these papers, yet the copyist's reply is always the same: "I would prefer not to." While Bartleby declines the narrator's requests at all times, he enthusiastically continues copying papers for a while. But one day, the narrator notices that "Bartleby did nothing but stand at his window in his dead-wall revery" (656). Bartleby says that "he had decided upon doing no more writing" (656), and thereafter rejects all of his employer's requests, including an order to leave the narrator's office. The narrator,

determined to quit the copyist, moves his workplace; but Bartleby obstinately stays in the office even after the narrator's removal. The office's new tenant comes to the narrator, saying "you are responsible for the man you left there. He refuses to do any copying; he refuses to do any thing; he says he prefers not to; and he refuses to quit the premises" (665); and, as a result, a landlord sends for the police to remove him to "the Tombs" (668). In the Tombs, Bartleby denies everything – and at last turns down an offer eat a meal cooked by Mr. Cutlets. When Mr. Cutlet remarks, "His dinner is ready. Won't he dine to-day, either? Or does he live without dining?" (671), the narrator replies that Bartleby "Lives without dining" (671) and closes Bartleby's open eyes. Therefore, it can be interpreted that Bartleby, like the dead letters, postpones all his duties indefinitely, until he is flamed.

However, in "Bartleby," it is not only the titular character but also the narrator, Turkey, and Nippers who postpone their duties. For instance, the narrator defers his judgment of Bartleby over and over again. When Bartleby first voices that he would "prefer not to," the narrator decides "to forget the matter for the present, [and reserve] it for my future leisure" (644). When Bartleby denies the narrator's requests a second time, the narrator decides "to postpone the consideration of this dilemma to my future leisure" (646). Apart from that, when Bartleby refuses to go to the post office for his employer, the narrator says, "upon the whole, as it was drawing towards my dinner-hour, I thought it best to put on my hat and walk home for the day, suffering much from perplexity and distress of mind" (649). Furthermore, the narrator gives Bartleby three days to leave the office (663). When Bartleby will not leave the office, the narrator delays whatever responsible actions he might take by going on a small trip:

> So fearful was I of being again hunted out by the incensed landlord and his exasperated tenants, that, surrendering my business to Nippers, for a few days

> I drove about the upper part of the town and through the suburbs, in my rockaway; crossed over to Jersey City and Hoboken, and paid fugitive visits to Manhattanville and Astoria. In fact I almost lived in my rockaway for the time. (668)

At long last, the narrator receives a note informing him that Bartleby had been "removed to the Tombs as a vagrant" (668). The narrator, who continues postponing his decision till the story's end, cannot help Bartleby survive in the Tombs. Like the dead letters, his aid, which might have been the "errands of life" (672), does not reach Bartleby in time.

For their part, both Nippers and Turkey become inattentive to their work in turn, "like guards" (641). One morning, Nippers suffers indigestion, "betokened in an occasional nervous testiness and grinning irritability, causing the teeth to audibly grind together over mistakes committed in copying; unnecessary maledictions, hissed, rather than spoken, in the heat of business; and especially by a continual discontent with the height of the table where he worked" (638). In the afternoon, Turkey – especially when displaying "his fullest beams from his red and radiant countenance" (637) – blots documents and makes "an unpleasant racket with his chair; spill[s] his sand-box; in mending his pens, impatiently split[s] them all to pieces, and thr[ows] them on the floor in a sudden passion; [stands] up and lean[s] over his table, boxing his papers about in a most indecorous manner, very sad to behold in an elderly man like him" (637). Because of their eccentricities, Nippers and Turkey defer their work, just like Bartleby and the narrator. As a result, they delay the story's end.

Bartleby's death in the Tombs promises salvation for both the narrator and Bartleby, because they are confined to Melville's eternal following motion. This confinement brings them salvation insofar as the narrator has to follow Bartleby perpetually after his death, and Bartleby comes to die with his permanently delaying in all things to do, which means

Bartleby at last becomes, as it were, a perpetual follower. “Bartleby” embodies Melville’s consistent notion that one should never reach his aim, but follow it forever; in his eyes, redemption appears to us in a time flow not unlike Zeno’s paradox. As the narrator remarks that “Bartleby was billeted upon me for some mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence” (662), Bartleby assumes a divine atmosphere as a proxy of God, or a prophet. Here, Melville creates a chain of leader-follower relations composed of the narrator, Bartleby, and God. Bartleby postpones his allotted vocation again and again, and although he attempts to postpone his destiny, God delivers it to him in the Tombs. This reflects Melville’s own wavering between piety and impiety toward the perverse Calvinist God; in other words, this reflects Melville’s wonder at the relation of his will to God’s will, and whether he should live by one or the other. In these texts, we can see that Melville resists God’s will by eternally delaying his fate. By doing so, he might attempt to evoke alternative resurrection – one not given by God but created by his own hand. In the following section, we will inspect the connection between Melville’s resistance against God and the slow-moving flow of time at the end of *Moby-Dick*.

2. The Doubling and the Postponed Ending in *Moby-Dick*: *Hamlet* as Literary Heritage

“Very like a whale.”

Hamlet (*Moby-Dick* 10)

Melville was so profoundly impressed by Shakespeare’s plays while tackling *Moby-Dick* that he wrote to his literary companion Evert A. Duyckinck, “Dolt & ass that I am I have lived more than 29 years, & until a few days ago, never made close acquaintance with

the divine William" (Horth119). Furthermore, in his essay "Hawthorne and His Mosses," Melville exclaims, "Believe me, my friends, that Shakespeares are this day being born on the banks of the Ohio" (1161). Charles Olson indicates that Melville revised *Moby-Dick* after he closely read *The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare*, jotting down rough notes that "involve Ahab, Pip, Bulkington, [and] Ishmael" (39) on the fly-leaf of the last volume.[19] Given his great enthusiasm for Shakespeare, Melville, in *Moby-Dick*'s "Extracts," has "a Sub-Sub Librarian" (8) pick up the line, "Very like a whale" (Shakespeare 2053; Scene 9), delivered by Polonius in *Hamlet*, and juxtaposes this line against "whatsoever random allusions to whales he could anyways find in any book whatsoever, sacred or profane" (8). Melville does this, I argue, not necessarily to list all literary references to whales, but because he intends to attract our attention to the correlation between his whaling narrative and *Hamlet* – both delay exacted vengeance and, more pointedly, the protagonist's self-destruction.

The line from *Hamlet* appears as an epigraph in order to signal Melville's interest in slow-flowing time. In the play, Polonius brings Hamlet the message that Queen Gertrude would like to speak with her son immediately, but Hamlet delays this audience by exchanging nonsense with Polonius: "Do you [Polonius] see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel? / By'th' mass, and 'tis: like a camel indeed. / Methinks it is like a weasel. / It is backed like a weasel. / Or like a whale. / Very like a whale. / Then I will come to my mother by and by. They fool me to the top of my bent. I will come by and by . . ." (2053). Hamlet seeks revenge on Claudius, but, as we describe later in detail, this seeking ultimately brings him closer toward his own murder, since Claudius stands as Hamlet's double, embedded in the prince's psyche. Shakespeare thus must eliminate Hamlet when he strikes Claudius.

On the other hand, in *Moby-Dick*, there are two protagonists who attempt to exact self-destructive vengeance: Captain Ahab and the narrator Ishmael. It is obvious that Captain Ahab aims to avenge loss of his leg, but the narrator Ishmael's fateful journey is also self-destructive. In the first chapter, "Loomings," Ishmael declares that his voyage is a "substitute for pistol and ball" (18), and later in the text he says that he, too, seeks vengeance: "Ahab's quencheless feud seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of that murderous monster against whom I and all the others had taken our oath of violence and revenge" (152). Ishmael and Ahab are, as it were, mirrors or doubles of one another. Although they are depicted as two separate persons, both pursue suicidal action as one. But, unlike in *Hamlet*, Ishmael does not perish with his double; he is reborn as the narrator of the story. In this chapter, we address why Melville distinguishes *Moby-Dick* from *Hamlet* by resurrecting Ishmael. We argue that Melville does this because he requires the eternal following of one's predictive duplicate for salvation within slow-moving time. By including seemingly unnecessary delays in Ahab's narrative of vengeance, Melville not only postpones the end of the story but privileges postponement as a theme of *Moby-Dick* to signal, as in *Hamlet*, that such a detour could be the shortest route to grasp immortality.

Critics have long been puzzled as to why Hamlet delays his vengeance on Claudius. Ernest Jones calls this puzzle "the Sphinx of modern Literature" (22). Melville attempts to deal with the enigma of Hamlet in *Moby-Dick*. Paul Hurh points out that "Melville's interest in time, its measurement and its metaphysics, develop[ed] over his career" (81). Hurh found evidence of this development in *Clarel*, in which "delays, lapses, and lags occur within the flame of a broader delay: the ten days of Clarel's journey" (88). Melville deals with lagged time in several other words, as well – including "Bartleby, the Scrivener," as we have seen,

and his final prose work, *Billy Budd, Sailor*, in which the title character stutters and Captain Vere lingers in his judgment of whether to hang Billy or not.

Moby-Dick is no exception. From the outset, the novel's unique flow of time draws the reader's attention. For instance, Ishmael arrives at the starting point of his voyage via a detour; he chooses a more distant whaling port in Nantucket instead of the closest one to him, in New Bedford. He misses "the little packet for Nantucket" (23), staying at two inns for a long time before setting sail, and dallies in Nantucket even after receiving word that the sailors must carry their chests into the vessel at once in preparation for departure. All told, Ishmael takes a week or so to set out for the whaling voyage. For example, Ishmael arrives in New Bedford "on a Saturday night in December" (23); leaves there on "Monday" (60); gets to Nantucket "quite late in the evening" (66); "Next morning early," contracts with the *Pequod*; takes Queequeg to the Pequod on the next day (83); "A day or two passed" (89), but "the ship did not sail for several days" (20); "the anchor was up" (95) on "a short, cold Christmas" (95) day. Upon departure from Nantucket, he faces even more delays. Just as Hamlet enigmatically delays his self-destructive revenge on Claudius, so Ishmael demands that we decipher the meaning of his deferred and suicidal confrontation with the white whale. Although Melville suspends the beginning of Ishmael's voyage to foster suspense, as any novelist might, we can also interpret these delays, given what we have seen in Melville's other work, as centering his readers' attention on disrupted, postponed, and slow-moving flows of time.

Several studies have attempted to elucidate the hidden causes of Hamlet's deferral. Here, I leverage Hamlet's deferral to highlight how the protagonists in both *Hamlet* and *Moby-Dick* postpone their actions because of their awareness of some ungraspable mystery which lies beyond, and within, their adversaries. Hamlet and Ishmael know that Claudius and

Moby Dick are not themselves the object of their vengeance. This knowledge impedes their movements as a mystical, unintelligible enigma which flows beneath the two tragedies and slows the rate of the protagonists' self-destructive vengeance. However, in each narrative's climax, the protagonists mark a watershed. Hamlet strikes Claudius, who represents the riddle, at last, and attempts to eliminate the delay in his revenge at the sacrifice of his life. In contrast, Ishmael is rescued by "the coffin life-buoy" (427), inscribed with enigmatic signs made by Queequeg, and he eternally lives within slow-moving time, resurrected as a narrator who circles back on his story, retelling *Moby-Dick* over and over again. Unlike Hamlet, Ishmael deems these delays as a duty that he must bear, because for him these delays are clues to a type of immortality, which he attains by repeating his narrative over and over for eternity.

Critics have not yet discussed *Moby-Dick*'s borrowing of the theme of slow-moving time from *Hamlet* in detail. This is perhaps because critics have chiefly invoked *Macbeth* and *King Lear* when evaluating Shakespeare's impact on *Moby-Dick*. Dan Vogel declares that "[the] ultimate source of this chapter, 'Ahab and the Carpenter,' is the porter scene in *Macbeth* (II,iii)" (244), and that "[t]he source of Ahab's relationship with Pip is evidently *King Lear*: Pip's literary ancestor is Lear's fool" (246). Julian C. Rice, following F. O. Matthiessen, points out that "[s]ince the publication of *American Renaissance*, the most commonly cited derivation from Shakespeare in *Moby-Dick* has been the similarity between Captain Ahab and King Lear" (448). According to Hershel Parker, "*Macbeth* and *King Lear* had been strongly in Melville's mind in mid-1851, when he wrote the ending of his whaling book" (56). However, Christopher Ohge et al., relying on *Melville's Marginalia Online*, find that "[a]fter *Antony and Cleopatra* […], the plays *Hamlet* and *King Lear* rank respectively as a distant second and third among tragedies in the set with the highest quantities of marked text" (42), although, "[i]t would be a mistake . . . that Melville engaged more extensively

with the story of the Danish prince than with that of the Celtic King" (42), because "he engaged with each differently, marking fewer but longer passages in *Hamlet*, while he used more marginalia in *King Lear* to mark a larger number of shorter passages" (42).[20] As Ohge et al. say, the Shakespearean play in which Melville became most engrossed cannot really be determined. However, it is significant that past appraisals of Shakespeare's influence on *Moby-Dick* focus on *Hamlet* as well as *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*.[21]

Some relatively early Melville studies, for example by Raymond G. Hughes and F. O. Matthiessen, have partially explored the role of postponement in *Moby-Dick*, but they do not go into great detail. Hughes asserts that Ahab speaks not as an ordinary man, but rather as a character in *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*. For Hughes, Ahab delivers "[l]ong and tiresome soliloquies, such as never were spoken by mortal man, delay the action and retard the movement" (104). Matthiessen indicates the "slow moving-picture of the whole" (417), asserting that "[a]s a means of heightening his dramatic effect, he delays Ahab's appearance until all the others have been seen" (417), and that "[f]or almost the next two hundred pages [to "The Town-Ho's Story"], about a quarter of the whole, Melville delays the forward movement of his drama—though he thereby heightens suspense" (419). Harrison Hayford has also pointed out Ishmael's initial delays, saying that "Chapter 1 loses narrative headway after its third sentence, so that chapter 2 must duplicate its job and start him again, as he stuffs a shirt or two in his bag and sets out for a whaling port, New Bedford" (675). Although those critics mention the unnecessary delays encountered by Ishmael and Ahab, they do not clarify or interrogate the central reason for these delays. I argue that Melville regards slow-moving time as a prerequisite for resurrection, because slow-moving time enables the binary opposition between mortality and immortality to be dialectically dissolved. Let me begin this argument by noting some of Melville's recurring descriptions of delay near the ending of *Moby-Dick*.

Here, I wish to draw attention to two striking descriptions of slow-moving time. First, Ishmael's suspended departures from Manhattan, New Bedford, and Nantucket; second, Ahab's absence on deck for several days after weighing anchor. On Christmas day, Ishmael finally leaves Nantucket as a sailor of the *Pequod*. He sees captains Peleg and Bildad, who are not only "part owners and agents" (71) but also "the licensed pilots of the port" (94), entrusted with all her business in place of Captain Ahab, who has shut himself in his cabin. Gaining an offing, the two pilots have served their role, but Bildad is "loath to say good-bye" (95), and he "linger[s] long" (95) on the ship, so that Peleg says, "Come, come, Captain Bildad; stop palavering,—away!" (96). The two pilots let Ahab stall his appearance on deck by taking his role upon themselves; Bildad in particular postpones Ahab's emergence by lingering thus. After Peleg and Bildad leave, Ahab, commanding his representatives "with orders so sudden and peremptory" (107), remains in his cabin for several more days (108).

Nearly in the middle of the book, Chapter 54, "The Town-Ho's Story," underscores the prolonged time length by its complicated narrative structure, as Philip J. Egan notes:

> [T]here are events from five different time periods that come into play in varying degrees in this chapter. First, there are events . . . which happen on the *Town-Ho*. Second, there are the main events of *Moby-Dick* two years later, during which the two ships meet and Ishmael first learns of the tale through Tashtego. Third, there is a specified but undescribed meeting that takes place between Ishmael and Steelkilt, the main character of "The Town-Ho's Story." Fourth, there is the time of the story's narration at the Golden Inn, in Lima, Peru. Finally, there is Ishmael's "present" voice in the frame. (340)

"The Town-Ho's Story" is told in "five different time periods," thereby delaying its ending. Chapter 54 is, in this regard, *Moby-Dick* in miniature; here, Melville evokes various kinds of

delay and defers the chapter's climax. This chapter originally appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in October 1851, before *Moby-Dick*'s publication, attracting critics who regarded it as evidence of Melville's theological position against a perverse Calvinist God.[22] Melville, within the chapter's complex narrative structure – which itself defers the end of the novel – depicts repeated delays. One day, a sailor observes that the *Town-Ho* is leaking more water than usual, but its captain continues to sail, deferring a search for the hole stabbed in her hold (200), because "the *Town-Ho* had all but certainly arrived in perfect safety at her port without the occurrence of the least fatality" (200-01), "had it not been for the brutal overbearing of Radney, the mate, a Nantucketer, and the bitterly provoked vengeance of Steelkilt, a Lakeman and desperado from Buffalo" (201).

The primary incident, the conflict between Radney and Steelkilt, has been the focus of critics such as William K. Spofford and Edward J. Rose[23] because it leads "The Town-Ho's the vengeance of Steelkilt's vengeance against Radney. Although the central concern of this chapter is Melville's theological quarrel, we cannot dismiss that the conflict between Radney and Steelkilt and its consequences reveals a practical problem: there are "three lads as the customary sweepers; who, not being billeted at the pumps, *had done little or nothing all day*" (204; emphasis added). That is, Melville elaborately inserts three lads' delay of their daily work into the chapter as the central cause of Steelkilt's mutiny on the *Town-Ho*. Once Steelkilt has raised the rebellion and renounced his position as a sailor of *Town-Ho* as the ship arrives at a savage island, he encounters the captain on the way to Tahiti again, and forces him to cross his arms, throw back his head, and say, "As soon as Steelkilt leaves me, I swear to beach this boat on yonder island, and *remain there six days*" (213; emphasis added) in order to escape legal retribution. Upon arriving at Tahiti, Steelkilt is hired by a French ship; the captain, hampered by his oath, reaches Tahiti "some ten days" (213) after the French

ship sails. Considering these numerous delays, “The Town-Ho’s Story” represents the novel itself in miniature because it both posits a perverse God in Moby Dick’s uncanny behavior, and draws the reader’s attention to descriptions of delay.

“The Town-Ho’s Story” shares the theme of drawn-out time with Chapter 71, “The Jeroboam’s Story.” In the latter, this theme appears as a dead letter to Harry Macey. The two chapters are connected by “a strange story told of the Jeroboam, and a certain man among her crew, some time previous when the Pequod spoke the Town-Ho” (251), who “announced himself as the archangel Gabriel” (251). When gamming, Stubb shouts, “That’s he! That’s he!—the long-togged scaramouch the Town-Ho’s company told us of!” (251). This “scaramouch,” owing to an accidental “dark story concerning Moby Dick” (252), where the white whale sinks a crew member (Macey) into the sea, spreads terror to the ship because credulous sailors believe that “he had specifically fore-announced it, instead of only making a general prophecy, which any one might have done, and so have chanced to hit one of many marks in the wide margin allowed” (253). In connection with Macey’s death, Melville relies on a motif which would later surface in “Bartleby”: a dead letter from Macey’s wife. As was the custom of the sea, “[e]very whale-ship takes out a goodly number of letters for various ships, whose delivery to the persons to whom they may be addressed, depends upon the mere chance of encountering them in the four oceans. Thus, most letters never reach their mark; and many are only received after attaining an age of two or three years or more” (254). Starbuck hands Ahab the letter kept in the cabin, and Ahab mutters, “Mr. Har—yes, Mr. Harry (a woman’s pinny hand, —the man’s wife, I’ll wager)—Aye—Mr. Harry Macey, Ship Jeroboam; —why it’s Macey, and he’s dead!” (254). Macey’s letter arrives only after his death. Such an undeliverable letter would feature prominently in “Bartleby” and thus endorses Melville’s consistent interest in postponement as a major theme in his work.

At length, the *Pequod*, in Chapter 114, penetrates the fishing ground off Japan, where Ahab presumes that Moby Dick will appear (372). However, his actual confrontation with the whale is delayed until the novel's final three chapters. In Chapter 133, when Ahab and his mates have found Moby Dick on their first day of chasing, "their light prows sped through the sea; but only slowly they neared the foe" (408). While Ahab's boat is speeding to Moby Dick,

> through the serene tranquilities of the tropical sea, among waves whose hand-clappings were *suspended* by exceeding rapture, Moby Dick moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of his submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw. But soon the fore part of him *slowly* rose from the water; for an instant his whole marbleized body formed a high arch . . . . *Hoveringly halting*, and dipping on the wing, the white sea-fowls *longingly lingered* over the agitated pool that he left. (409; emphasis added, spellings as in the original)

Moreover, when Ahab's boat is shattered and its crew is picked up by another boat, Moby Dick is described as "swimming with a velocity which plainly showed, that if now, under these circumstances, pushed on, the chase would prove *an indefinitely prolonged*, if not a hopeless one; nor could any crew endure *for so long a period*" (412; emphasis added). On the third day, Moby Dick's absence leaves Ahab tense and feeling that "[a] whole hour now passed; gold-beaten out to ages. Time itself now held long breaths with keen suspense" (420). In the climax, although the plot accelerates to its conclusion, a vortex appears and sucks the whole of the ship, crew, and even Moby Dick down into the sea. Ishmael alone survives, and relates to the reader that "all collapsed, and the great shroud of the sea rolled on as it rolled

five thousand years ago" (427). Melville thus closes his novel with a reflection on a great, interminable length of time.[24]

Having noted the recurring and seemingly central delays in *Moby-Dick*, I shall now take a detour via criticisms of Hamlet's delayed revenge on Claudius in order to better understand the primary causes of Ishmael's delayed self-destruction. Numerous critics have offered interpretations of Hamlet's delayed revenge since around the middle of the eighteenth century, when Johann Wolfgang von Goethe asserted that, "a heavy deed placed on a soul which is not adequate to cope with it. And it is in this sense that I find the whole play constructed. An oak tree planted in a precious pot which should only have held delicate flowers. The root spread out, the vessel is shattered" (146). Early Shakespearean scholars had called attention to the correlation between the defect in Hamlet's character and his delayed vengeance, but only when Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan developed psychoanalytic approaches to culture were Hamlet's delays understood as mechanisms of his unconscious.[25] Freud and Lacan are useful here; later, we will discuss how the unconscious functions in both *Hamlet* and *Moby-Dick* by providing the protagonists with unique, unsolvable inner mysteries which impedes their movements.

Margreta de Grazia claims that "[a]mong the Romantics, *Hamlet* frequently served to represent a modern alternative to ancient tragedy" (254), in that "[t]he activity foregrounded in the play took the form of thought rather than action or plot, occurring within the interior recesses of the protagonist" (254). Georg Wilhelm Hegel asserted that

> the appearance of the ghost in *Hamlet* is treated as just an objective form of Hamlet's inner presentment. With his dim feeling that something dreadful must have happened, we see Hamlet come on the scene; now his father's ghost appears to him and reveals to him the whole crime. After this monitory disclosure we

> expect that Hamlet will at once punish the deed by force and we regard his revenge as completely justified. But he hesitates and hesitates. . . . Hamlet hesitates because he does not blindly believe in the ghost . . . . (231)

A. C. Bradley presumes two Hamlets "in the critical move that subsequent generations would deride" (De Grazia 258), turning the clock backward to "Hamlet as he was just before his father's death" (Bradley 109), as opposed to the gloomy Hamlet we can see in the play's present moment. Given "the Hamlet of earlier days" (111), Bradley ascribes Hamlet's delay to his "melancholy" (110), although he does not analyze Hamlet's melancholy in a technical, psychological sense.

By contrast, Freud described the relationship between Hamlet's psyche and his delayed vengeance from the standpoint of a clinical psychologist:

> Hamlet is able to do anything—except take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took that father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized. Thus, the loathing which should drive him on to revenge is replaced in him by self-reproaches, by scruples of conscience, which remind him that he himself is literally no better than the sinner whom he is to punish. Here I have translated into conscious terms what was bound to remain unconscious in Hamlet's mind . . . . (265)

For Freud, it is the diphasic process of oedipal desire and repression that delays Hamlet's actions. As De Grazia points out, that "[o]nce the action of *Hamlet* has been identified with the thwarting of an intended action, the play serves to dramatize the psychic process in which inhibitions (resistances, repressions, traumas, obsessions, fixations, cathexes) check impulses (urges, desires, drives, compulsions)" (260). In Freud's argument, we should note two points:

first, that Hamlet himself cannot grasp the source of his inner, unconscious struggle, which delays his actions; second, that Hamlet's inner riddle is mirrored in his double, Claudius.

Jacques Lacan, who "approves the master theory, however, only to push beyond it by considering what Freud overlooked: the wound, scar, or stigma that repression leaves behind" (De Grazia 261), assigns the cause of Hamlet's delay to what he calls the phallus, represented in the ghost of Hamlet's father and Claudius. What is noteworthy in Lacan's discussion is, first, that "in the tragedy of Hamlet, unlike that of Oedipus, after the murder of the father, the phallus is still there. It's there indeed, and it is precisely Claudius who is called upon to embody it" (50). However, "one cannot strike the phallus, because the phallus, even the real phallus, is a *ghost*" (Lacan 50; emphasis in original). Lacan regards the phallus as what Hamlet can never comprehend because of its nullification; thus, for Lacan, *Hamlet* "ends not as a tragedy of revenge but as a tragedy of desire—not with the attainment of its end but with the disclosure of its unattainability" (De Grazia 262-63). If Hamlet seized what the phallus was, he would eliminate the delay. But he cannot unfold the riddle of the phallus even at the end.

Second, we should focus on how Lacan's "reticulated commentary self-consciously follows Hamlet's gyrating course" (263). Lacan deems, paradoxically, that Hamlet's delay is a shortcut to answering the riddle of the phallus. Lacan, like Shakespeare, recognizes the value of delay. Lacan's analysis of *Hamlet* gives us a clue to interpreting the delays in *Moby-Dick* insofar as he, developing Freud's speculation, insists that: (1) Hamlet's delay is caused by his inner riddle (perhaps it may be the Void); (2) such a riddle is embodied in his double; (3) a spiral detour seems the only way to approach Hamlet's inner mystery. Keeping those points in mind, we shall next examine the cause of delay in *Moby-Dick*.

Hamlet is, as we have seen, hindered by his inner mystery. He does not grasp what is beyond the object of his frustration. Neither do Ahab and Ishmael, who strive toward self-determination knowing full well that they cannot attain it by destroying Moby Dick, which symbolizes their inner self. Ishmael therefore cannot but suspend his suicide until he unmasks what causes him "hypos" (18), namely, until he deciphers his inner riddle. Michael T. Gilmore proclaims that "Ishmael's concern with knowing has a touch of obsession, even of paranoia, about it" (88); "The book's chapters fall into a pattern. Ishmael undertakes a thorough investigation of some part of the whale's anatomy or behavior only to reach the conclusion that reliable knowledge is impossible" (89). As with *Hamlet*, the sailor's unfathomable knowledge demands embodiment in some external, other being. Just as Hamlet's inner mystery is embodied in Claudius, so those of Ishmael and Ahab materialize on the body of Moby Dick in the form of hieroglyphic signs. In Ishmael's case, his inner self is further represented by Queequeg. John T. Irwin puts a special emphasis on the hieroglyphs in his reading of *Moby-Dick*. He quotes (*American Hieroglyphics* 285-86) Melville, who writes: "By my retentive memory of the hieroglyphics upon one Sperm Whale in particular, I was much struck with a plate representing the old Indian characters chiseled on the famous hieroglyphic palisades on the banks of the Upper Mississippi. Like those mystic rocks, too, the mystic-marked whale remains undecipherable" (*Moby-Dick* 246). Irwin also refers to this passage regarding Queequeg in *Moby-Dick* (*American Hieroglyphics* 285):

> "[Queequeg's] tattooing, had been the work of a departed prophet and seer of his Island, who, by those hieroglyphic marks, had written out on his body a complete theory of the heavens and the earth, and a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth; so that Queequeg in his own proper person was a riddle to unfold; a

> wondrous work in one volume; but whose mysteries not even himself could read, though his own live heart beat against them. . . .”(*Moby-Dick* 366-67)

If Ishmael and Ahab had grasped the meaning of the hieroglyphs on Moby Dick or on Queequeg, they might have unmasked the riddle – namely, they might have understood that what they sought to strike outside themselves actually resides within themselves, and that attaining their goal requires their own self-destruction. Melville distinguishes between Ishmael and Ahab by providing them with different destinies. After being saved by “the coffin life-buoy” (427), in a return to the outset of the book, Ishmael, who announces, “Call me Ishmael” (18) in the beginning, becomes a narrator telling the mystery, and lives in the world of *Moby-Dick* again and again, infinitely existing within the delay, while Hamlet tries to eliminate the delay of his vengeance, slaying his embodied, ungraspable inner riddle, however vain it is. But he, in the end, cannot solve the riddle, only to put off his self-destruction.

Below, I explore the scenes in which the inner mysteries of Ishmael and Ahab, which are literally inscribed upon Moby Dick and Queequeg, postpone their actions. In Chapter 36, “The Quarter-Deck,” Ahab shouts, “If man strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there’s naught beyond. But ’tis enough” (140). For Ahab, Moby Dick itself is literally a “wall,” so his assault upon his interior mystery, “some unknown but still reasoning thing . . . from behind the unreasoning mask” (140), is obstructed and frustrated. Like Ahab, Ishmael knows that the void lies beyond Moby Dick. He prefaces Chapter 42, “The Whiteness of the Whale,” with a remark that there was thought a “rather vague, nameless horror concerning him [Moby Dick] . . . and yet so mystical and well nigh ineffable was it, that I almost despair of putting it in a comprehensible form” (159).

Ishmael attempts to unfold this "ineffable" mystery, stating that "in essence whiteness is . . . the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors" (165); that it is like "a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows" (165). In short, the whale's whiteness is incomprehensible because it is colorless – everything blends into the undefined space of the void. No surprise, then, that he asks, "Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt?" (165).

These statements illuminate how Ahab's vengeance is postponed by the whiteness of the whale – that is, the unintelligible enigma which resides inside him. Even if this is so, why does the mystery embodied in Moby Dick delay Ishmael's self-determination? In teasing apart Ishmael's reflections in Chapter 42, Irwin juxtaposes Nathaniel Hawthorne's

> remark that the shape of the meteor's track, which Dimmesdale saw as a scarlet letter, was of "so little definiteness, that another's guilt might have seen another symbol in it." With the loss of belief in an external absolute, the self expands to fill the void, but at the moment when the self becomes the absolute, at the moment when it sees that everything is a projection of itself, then the self realizes that it has become nothing, that it is indistinguishable, "a colorless all-color." (*American Hieroglyphics* 286)

Considering Hawthorne's "colorless all-color," Irwin says of the whiteness of Moby Dick that

> [t]he external world appears to be a void, but if all the various appearances of that world are only projections of the self, then the real void is within the self. And if, for Ishmael, Moby Dick has come to symbolize this predicament, then the attempt to hunt down the whale and kill it is a quest that must ultimately be suicidal. (287)

Moby Dick is, simply, the mirror image of the external world – including Ishmael. Therefore, his destruction of the whale would be his suicide. However, he, like Hamlet, knows that it is vain to eliminate only his adversary's material body, and that what he seeks to eliminate must instead lie somewhere else. Melville also finds the impossibility of seizing one's other, enigmatic self in the Greek mythology of Narcissus, "who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned." (20) Melville says, "It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all" (20).

This "image of the ungraspable phantom of life" appears again in Chapter 4, "The Counterpane," as a "nameless, unimaginable, silent form or phantom" (37). Ishmael, waking on a bed in the Spouter Inn, finds Queequeg's arm thrown over him. In his mind, Queequeg's arm recalls a childhood memory of a strange sensation:

> I felt a shock running through all my frame; nothing was to be seen, and nothing was to be heard; but a supernatural hand seemed placed in mine. My arm hung over the counterpane, and the nameless, unimaginable, silent form or phantom, to which the hand belonged, seemed closely seated by my bedside. For what seemed ages piled on ages, I lay there, frozen with the most awful fears, not daring to drag away my hand; yet ever thinking that if I could but stir it one single inch, the horrid spell would be broken. (. . .) [F]or days and weeks and months afterwards I lost myself confounding attempts to explain the mystery. Nay, to this very hour, I often puzzle myself with it. (37-8)

The supernatural hand lengthens and slows Ishmael's experience of time, freezing his movement "[f]or what seemed ages piled on ages" and confining him to the amorphous and interminable, timeless world of memory. In fact, the themes of confinement and slow-moving

time saturate this particular memory, in which Ishmael's stepmother shut him in a bedroom as a punishment for crawling up a chimney, "though it was only two o' clock in the afternoon of the 21st June, the longest day in the year in our hemisphere" (37). He then undressed himself "as slowly as possible so as to kill time" (37). His memory of the mystic hand is recalled by Queequeg's arm, "tattooed all over with an interminable Cretan labyrinth of a figure" (37). In this passage, Melville obviously frames Queequeg as Ishmael's counterpart, as a symbol of Ishmael's inner enigma. John Halverson regards Queequeg as Ishmael's "helpful shadow" (439), and Irwin also points out that "the suicidal bent of Ishmael's introspective temperament . . . is hieroglyphically foreshadowed when Queequeg's trancelike meditation at the Spouter Inn is mistaken for suicide" (*American Hieroglyphics* 290). Just as Moby Dick, the mirror image of Ahab, stands as a wall, so Ishmael's double, Queequeg, hampers his movement: "though I [Ishmael] tried to move his [Queequeg's] arm—unlock his bridegroom clasp—yet, sleeping as he was, he still hugged me tightly" (38).

In addition, we can see that Queequeg mirrors and delays Ishmael by wearing his clothes. Ishmael says, "I begged him as well as I could, to accelerate his toilet somewhat, and particularly to get into his pantaloons as soon as possible" (39). One might suppose that Melville describes Queequeg's trouble with the toilet because he feels compelled to show Queequeg's savagery. He writes that Queequeg's "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 never would have dreamt of getting under the bed to put them on" (38-39). But considering that Melville describes some other delays in this chapter, it seems more appropriate to conclude that the function of Queequeg's troubles with the toilet are meant to delay Ishmael's movement. Given the parallel between Queequeg's arm and the supernatural hand

encountered by young Ishmael, when Queequeg is characterized as Ishmael's double, the hand becomes an embodied synecdoche for his alter ego. That is, both young Ishmael and grown-up Ishmael are delayed by the inherent and interior mystery of being, symbolized in the supernatural hand and in Queequeg, respectively.

In *Moby-Dick*, Melville inherits Shakespeare's delay in *Hamlet* – protagonists in both texts are impeded by their inner riddle, which is represented to them in concrete, external persons such as Claudius, Moby Dick, and Queequeg. Yet, Melville does not follow Shakespeare's conclusion in *Hamlet*, in which Hamlet slays his enemy and thus himself. Ishmael survives the calamity in which "the yawning gulf" (427) swallows Moby Dick and the *Pequod*, even though his mirror images, the whale and Queequeg, disappear. Regarding Ishmael's resurrection, Boudreau insists that

> Does "coffin," however, signify a trap or a trope for Ishmael? In his case the coffin, trap of death, is also a trope, for it is literally turned, made "tropical" ("trope: [. . .] Latin *tropus*, from Greek *tropos*, a turn, way, manner") by the *Pequod*'s carpenter, converted into a life buoy. When the stricken ship goes down, Queequeg's coffin, released by a "cunning spring," shoots up to become the life preserver of Ishmael, who alone survives—who is uplifted, in a manner resurrected, "raised in glory." (345)

Boudreau also remarks that *Moby-Dick* is a two-stranded tale of a tropical Ishmael, ending with his survival on a coffin/life buoy, and an atropical Ahab ("Atropos: [. . .] Greek, from *atropos*, inexorable, inflexible: a-, not + trop-, stem of *trepein*, to turn"), whose end is death in a watery grave (346). Furthermore, Ishmael narrates the world after his doubles pass on; in

Hamlet, the protagonist does not appear in the chorus after he slays his double. Melville elaborately creates this difference since, according to *Melville's Marginalia Online*, he marks the scene in which Hamlet entrusts the role as a chorus to Horatio.

I will consider, in closing, where Ishmael's "ungraspable phantom of life" goes after the wreck of the *Pequod*. Has it vanished with Moby Dick and Queequeg, or is it still alive? Carl F. Strauch says, "Ishmael shows that he is increasingly coming to accept a living whale cosmos as his own suicidal impulse wanes" (478), but this remark should be open to doubt because it seems important in *Moby-Dick* that such a suicidal impulse never wanes, which is to say that the "ungraspable phantom of life," which induces Ishmael to suicide, survives even after the death of Moby Dick and Queequeg. At the end of the story, the ungraspable phantom rescues Ishmael from the catastrophe in the form of the coffin life-buoy inscribed with Queequeg's "grotesque figures and drawings" (366). Ishmael remains alive with the riddle – albeit not by his own will – instead of striking through it, and becomes a narrator who reveals the mystery within the very delay brought by it.

That the narrative does not end with Ishmael's death, but with his striving toward a reconciliation of himself with what has happened to him, symbolizes Melville's emphasis on resurrection. In Chapter 102, "A Bower in the Arsacides," Ishmael visits "the lord of Tranque, at his retired palm villa at Pupella" (344), and has a chance to admeasure the skeleton of a sperm whale:

> The skeleton dimensions I shall now proceed to set down are copied verbatim from my right arm, where I had them tattooed; as in my wild wanderings at that period, there was no other secure way of preserving such valuable statistics. But as I was crowded for space, and wished the other parts of my body to remain a blank page for a poem I was then composing—at least, what untattooed parts

> might remain—I did not trouble myself with the odd inches; nor, indeed, should inches at all enter into a congenial admeasurement of the whale. (346-47)

We cannot know if Ishmael has tattooed a literal or metaphorical poem upon his body, but we can at least declare that, in the end, he receives the hieroglyphic signs denoting his inmost mystery from Queequeg, and attempts to sift through the meanings of the signs as a narrator. According to Federico Bellini, in this scene "Ishmael decides to make a blank page of his own skin" (33), furthering my interpretation of Ishmael's survival as resurrection. Rather than die, Ishmael resumes his voyage over and over again as a narrator, deferring the true ending of *Moby-Dick* eternally: indeed, he explicitly exclaims, "God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught—nay, but the draught of a draught" (125). In contrast to Hamlet, Ishmael's delay in carrying out his duty revolves around not what to eliminate from his life narrative, but what to accept, because acceptance can take him to the core of the mystery. It is therefore not trivial that young Ishmael regards his intolerably long punishment by his stepmother as the time for "resurrection" (37).

For Melville, a doubting Calvinist, executing one's duties on time means living along the path of predestination set by God. Calvinists must always be one step behind their preordained fate – they cannot outrace it. That is why Ishmael and Ahab repeatedly delay their pursuit of their double, Moby Dick, who is in any case constantly swimming further in front of them. While Ahab perishes alongside the white whale, Ishmael obtains immortality by becoming the narrator of the story and following Moby Dick for eternity. Therefore, I conclude that Melville constantly reiterates the significance and frustration of delay of reaching destination for resurrection. In fact, he confronts the themes of immortality and prolonged time flows in his short story, "The Apple-Tree Table," wherein a mystic bug lies in an egg for "one hundred and fifty years" (1349), representing the incarnation of "resurrection

for the spirit of man" (1349). The matter of delay haunted Melville up until right before his death, where his last work, *Billy Budd, Sailor*, leverages postponement as a major theme. He left *Billy Budd, Sailor* incomplete – perhaps in order to delay his business forever and achieve immortality.

Chapter III

Melville's Diptychs and Immortality:

"The Two Temples" and "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs"

Melville's three short tales "The Two Temples," "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs," and "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" are closely related in that they each feature a two-part structure in which the former and the latter parts represent contrasting motifs, such as America/England, winter/summer, calmness/fierceness, and so on. Jay Leyda calls these "diptychs" (xx).

With it clarified that Melville provokes resurrection within the eternal following motion, we can elucidate that his adoption of the diptych style, where the first half contrasts with the second half, also makes it easy for him to engender immortality in his stories. As mirrors set facing each other, the two halves of Melville's diptychs reflect almost the same phenomena, but never coincide with each other because of the opposite nature of their motifs. Melville produces the immortal world in these diptychs and displays unearthly conceptions that cannot be understood by earthly dichotomies, such as genuine/fake, pious/impious, and poverty/wealth. It is significant that Melville carries on following these unattainable images reflected in coupled mirrors because, for him, such perpetual movement toward an unreachable aim brings him clues to finding salvation. Critics have pointed out Melville's nullifier of earthly values by juxtaposing the contradictory motifs in the diptychs. For instance, Richard Harter Fogle refers to two benefits brought forth by the duplicated structure:

> First, Melville is refuting incomplete and shallow optimism, or mere simple-mindedness, by demonstrating that good and evil exist alike, by showing the same object in different perspectives. Second, and correspondingly, Melville's is a world of violent contrast, the dimpling water and the shark beneath, a world full of ironies which come of man's presumption in taking the part of life that he sees for the whole of it. (5–6)

Robert Bruce Bickley, tracing the origins of Melville's diptych to earlier works such as *Mardi*, *Moby-Dick*, and "The Encantadas," comments:

> In each pair of sketches, as critics have suggested, the whole is in effect greater than the sum of its parts. The motifs and patterns in the second half of each diptych evoke the first half and implicitly comment upon it, even as a rereading of the first part evokes the second. At the same time, Melville's subtle use of ironic first-person narration increases the satiric force of his sketches. Melville's narrators see themselves as observers and social critics of sorts, but in different ways each becomes a victim of the institution that he holds up for criticism. (76–77)

Moreover, Marvin Fisher suggests the thematic relevance between "The Encantadas" and the three diptychs and remarks that

> Each story offers a split view of a single issue—religious communion, attitudes toward poverty, and the consequences of moral innocence and impotence—and they are all familiarly discussed as diptychs, an appropriate metaphor borrowed from the hinged painted icons that depict two related scenes of spiritually symbolic significance. (35)

Fisher finds particular similarities between "The Two Temples" and "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs," in that their purposes are "to illuminate the distinguishing role and the meaning of *charity* in Christian society, and the consequent lack of communal feeling or

concern in the New World or the Old" (62; emphasis in original). As Fisher compares "The Two Temples" to "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" with regard to Christianity, we can shed light on the two stories among the three diptychs, because they particularly exemplify Melville's efforts to call salvation into his stories through infinitude brought on by the mirrored structure of a diptych. First, we examine "The Two Temples," in which the hero-narrator is excluded from a religious community in New York, though he is later welcomed by an artificial church in London.

1. The Unearthly World beyond the Surface of Water in "The Two Temples"

It is not only in "The Two Temples," but also in the other works such as *Moby-Dick*, *The Confidence-Man*, and "Bartleby, the Scrivener," that Melville revisits the theme of a stranger alienated from a community. In *Moby-Dick*, one of the most famous opening lines in American literature, "Call me Ishmael," reflects the Biblical character Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, who along with his mother is isolated from Abraham after the birth of Isaac (Gen 16:12). Melville also portrays all sailors on *The Pequod*, from Captain Ahab down, as an "*Isolato*" (107). It is obvious, as Samuel Kimball points out, that "[t]he word 'strange' appears in nearly every chapter of *Moby-Dick*" (528), and that the whaling story attempts to focus on people outside communal society. *The Confidence-Man* also focuses on an outsider, as its first line remarks on a swindler, the story's protagonist: "it was plain that he was, in the extremest sense of the word, a stranger" (841). In addition, the short story "Bartleby" tells of a scrivener who is cut off from society, with no relatives or friends. Given that Melville evokes strangers as a recurring motif in several of his works, we should consider whether his novels accept isolated people or not. If so, how do they accept them? "The Two Temples," which we address here, shows that a stranger is welcomed to the unearthly world lying in the other side of a mirror, or more precisely speaking, under the surface of the water, into which

Narcissus, of Greek mythology, finds another self. Based on the Greek myth, "The Two Temples" sketches the other world beyond the surface of water where one's mirroring image lives and finds salvation.

"The Two Temples" is striking among Melville's 16 short pieces written between 1853 and 1856, in that it was not published during his lifetime. He wrote the story for *Putnam's Monthly Magazine,* but an editor rejected it because of its sarcastic attitude toward New York's Grace Church and the prominent sexton Isaac Brown, which aroused the editor's anxiety that the story might offend religious readers' sensibilities. It is, in fact, conceivable that Melville intended to criticize the church and the sexton because, in the first half of the story, "Temple First," he describes the Episcopal community as exclusive, while in the second half, "Temple Second," he portrays a church-like theater in London as a place that gives the narrator salvation. Though Melville seems to criticize the Episcopal community in "The Two Temples," we cannot be too careful when reading his own views about American religious communities, because he also includes affirmative sketches of American society in other works, especially "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs," one of his three short diptych pieces. Critics have, nevertheless, devoted themselves to interpreting the author's ironic feelings toward his society. Richard Harter Fogle, for instance, declares that "[b]y juxtaposing the church and the stage, Melville has artfully indicted the church for absolute hypocrisy, has demonstrated that its doings are diametrically opposite to its sayings" (38). Further, Ray B. Browne asserts that Melville's "criticism of America, in her snobbishness, her sham, her crassness, her forced isolation of people—all are summed up in the final comment in the sketch" (208). Bruce R. Bickley concurs, "[T]he narrator of 'The Two Temples' finds, paradoxically, that an American church may place the aristocrat before the common man. The English, however, seem capable of making an almost religious form of

communion possible even outside the institutional walls of the church" (80). Jonathan A. Cook, reading typological motifs in "The Two Temples," insists:

> The paired sketches challenge conventional American religious typology by revealing the disparity between Christian precept and practice in an exemplary New York congregation, while showing that the spiritual function of the church was better served by a London theater, an institution often associated in America with dramatic sensationalism and prostitution. (26)

Although Cook's study is worth notice, in that it newly reveals several Biblical motifs, it also goes along with the conventional readings the above critics propose. Among those sociological readings, Dennis Berthold, in particular, develops an interesting discussion for our purpose. As Melville displays his dedication to the playwright Sheridan Knowles in the outset, and depicts an English actor William Charles Macready, "The Two Temples" noticeably reflects theater culture at that time. Berthold therefore explains it in terms of the Astor Place Riot of May 10, 1849, which was caused by a conflict between Macready and the American actor Edwin Forrest. Melville was, according to Berthold, directly influenced by the riot, not only because he lived near the Astor Opera House in Manhattan, but also because he attached his signature to a written petition supporting Macready, who canceled his performance in New York in consequence of the tumult. Given Berthold's study, what should be noted here is that, even though readers in those days must have immediately associated Macready with Forrest, Melville somehow did not mention the latter in "The Two Temples." The lack of reference to Forrest can be, indeed, attributed to Melville's political position in support of Macready rather than Forrest. Here, we will attempt to reveal other possible reasons why he conceals Forrest's name, scrutinizing the factors of the story and the related socio-cultural factors.

Through the diptych style, Melville duplicates elements appearing in the story, but he consistently seems to depict only one counterpart of doubles, like the example of Macready and Forrest, because he writes the other without obviously writing it. Although Melville never refers to Forrest, he alludes to him in a way that describes his counterpart, Macready, whom people at that time would easily have recalled was a rival of Forrest. Melville superimposes Forrest on Macready's image; that is to say, that he does not sketch Macready himself, but rather a person who emerges between the two actors. Thus, Melville nullifies the border between the two, seeking an intermediate image of them.

Although many studies on "The Two Temples" have interpreted the diptych structure of "Picture First" and "Picture Second" as mirror images, they dismiss the idea that "Temple Second" is describing the world cast in the water. It is not a mirror, but instead the surface of the water that partitions the two temples, the genuine American church and the artificial English one. Therefore, we will focus on motifs relevant to the sea and a voyage, for they can be a clue to reading "The Two Temples" in relation to *Moby-Dick*, in which Melville refers to the myth of Narcissus, which has laid a foundation for countless literary works on the matter of self-consciousness. As seen in Chapter II, the narrator of *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael, says, "that same image [as Narcissus saw in the fountain], we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all" (20). In the unearthly world beyond the surface of water, where "the ungraspable phantom of life" appears, Ishmael seeks salvation. He declares that a whaling voyage is "my substitute for pistol and ball" (18). This is thus a mirroring image of the second self that is reflected in the other world that Narcissus strives to grasp and for which Ishmael searches. If this is the case, we will also find the same kind of "ungraspable" world in "The Two Temples," particularly in "Temple Second." However, "The Two Temples" does not aim to reach that other-worldly realm, but instead seeks a way to live with the everlasting pursuit of the ungraspable shadow.

The permanent following of one's destination is rooted in Melville's mind as profoundly as in the other stories we have examined.

Let us begin by considering three cultural backgrounds that Melville kept in mind when writing "The Two Temples." First, we address the Irish playwright James Sheridan Knowles, to whom Melville intended to dedicate the story; second, we consider the English actor William Charles Macready, who appeared in Knowles's plays and is mentioned in "The Two Temples;" third, we recall Grace Church, on Broadway in New York, which Melville criticized bitterly. Whereas Melvilleans have frequently referred to the cultural motives related to "The Two Temples," we once more highlight the fact no matter how easily readers at that time would have come upon one half of the pair if the other was shown, Melville did not allude to a counterpart at any point during the story. Thus, the lack of a counterpart is not merely a careless mistake of the author, but rather an intentional strategy to describe the doubles as a single person.

Melville dedicated "The Two Temples," to Sheridan Knowles. A playwright, Knowles' talent was often compared to William Shakespeare. He was born in Ireland in 1784 and is most-known for *The Hunchback* (1832). While Knowles' name is mentioned in the dedication, Melville does not quote him in "The Two Temples." Instead, he has the narrator enjoy a play that features "Macready in the part of Cardinal Richelieu" (1250). The play that Melville indicates here is *Richelieu; Or the Conspiracy* (1839), by Edward Bulwer-Lytton, who was born in London in 1803 and was a colleague of Knowles'. Melville's readers would easily see Knowles and Bulwer-Lytton as the most representative dramatists of theater culture in mid-nineteenth century England. In addition, the playwrights both wrote many works in which Macready appeared. Melville mentions Knowles so as to imply his counterpart, Bulwer-Lytton, without directly referring to him.

The second pair, English actor William Charles Macready and American actor Edwin Forrest, were long-standing rivals, and their confrontations often caused political struggles not only between England and America but also between the upper and the lower classes in American society. The most intense political movement caused by their conflict was known as the Astor Place Riot. Macready enjoyed popularity among the upper class because of his sophisticated style of acting, whereas Forrest, known for his ostentatious performances, drew support from the lower classes. Forrest's supporters advocated for canceling Macready's performance of *Macbeth* and created a disturbance at the Astor Opera House on May 10, 1849, and Macready responded by indicating his intention to return to England. *The New York Herald*, however, collected 47 signatures, one of which was Melville's, and published a petition for the resumption of the performance:

> Dear Sir: —The undersigned, having heard that the outrage at the Astor Place Opera House, on Monday Evening, is likely to have the effect of preventing you from continuing your performances, and from concluding your intended farewell engagement on the American Stage, take this public method of requesting you to reconsider your decision, and of assuring you that the good sense and respect for order, prevailing in this community, will sustain you on the subsequent nights of your performances. (qtd. in Berthold 429)

Owing to this petition, Macready did appear on stage again, but this only accelerated the riot. About 15,000 people who had gathered at the Astor Opera House threw eggs, stones, bricks, and other objects. The police fired their guns at them; 22 people were killed, and 38 were injured. Melville was exposed to the crisis not only because he had signed the petition, but also because he lived near the theater. Though he was deeply connected to the riot, he did not mention Forrest in "The Two Temples." In fact, if he had mentioned both Macready and Forrest, he would have been more seriously been affected by the riot. We can assume,

however, that Forrest's absence is not for such a practical reason, but rather a result of Melville's craftsmanship and conscious choice not to mention him.

The last pair in question are Grace Church and Trinity Church. "The Two Temples" was, as stated before, rejected by *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* because of Melville's sarcastic attitude toward Grace Church. Charles F. Briggs, an editor at *Putnam's*, wrote to Melville on May 12, 1854:

> I am very loth to reject the Two Temples as the article contains some exquisitely fine description, and some pungent satire, but my editorial experience compels me to be very cautious in offending the religious sensibilities of the public, and the moral of the Two Temples would array against us the whole power of the pulpit, to say nothing of Brown, and congregation of Grace Church. (Horth 636)

The next day, May 13, 1854, George Palmer Putnam also wrote to Melville: "There seems to be some reason to fear that some of our Church readers might be disturbed by the point of your sketch. I regret this very much, as we sh^{d} have been glad to have had it in this number. —Do you think this could be avoided?— " (Horth 637).

These letters show that Briggs and Putnam regarded one of the churches described in "The Two Temples" as Grace Church, but the scholar Beryl Rowland casts doubt on their assumption, asserting:

> "None of our religious societies have been able to compete with the Protestant Episcopalians," stated the *New York Mirror*, 25 June 1845, "either in the splendor or size of their houses of worship." Trinity Church at the head of Wall Street, and Grace Church near Union Place, are now by far the most tasteful and ornamental buildings in the city, although it will be nearly a year before they are both completed."
>
> Designed by Richard Upjohn, Trinity was started in 1839 and consecrated on 21 May

> 1846, just two months after the consecration of Grace Church. ("Grace Church and Melville's Story of 'The Two Temples'" 344)

Given the above, Rowland concludes:

> Had the story been published, his readers, with the exception of Brown, would probably have been unaware of the inclusion of the descriptive features from Trinity, nor, with the present exception, has anyone checked them since. The strategy may have given Melville particular satisfaction in this instance. It enabled his to assail simultaneously the ostentation and the superficial Christianity of the two newest and most fashionable churches in New York. (346)

In short, although Melville seemingly intends to attack only Grace Church, he attempts to suggest both churches are gaudy. This is one of his consistent strategies of hiding one of a pair and alluding to it without direct reference in his stories. In these three pairs, Knowles/Bulwer-Lytton, Macready/Forrest, and Grace Church/Trinity Church, Melville mirrors one in the other and nullifies the border between them. In sum, the cultural backgrounds reflected in "The Two Temples" can be construed as crucial factors composing the central theme, the doubling of one person and one thing.

By skillfully sketching the cultural settings of his time—James Sheridan Knowles, William Charles Macready, and Grace Church—Melville evokes their duplicity like a diptych in a state of closing its two leaves. Now, we can examine the narrator's wandering between two realms: New York as a "genuine" world and London as an "artificial" one. While the narrator is isolated from a church in New York, he receives charity from an artificial church in London and finds salvation. Thus, Melville elaborates the duplicities of the churches, in that the genuine one appears counterfeit to the narrator's eyes, while the artificial one is genuine. It is noteworthy that the narrator attains salvation in the duplicity between

authenticity and artificiality. More precisely speaking, salvation comes to him in the authenticity lying within artificiality.

At the beginning of "Temple First," the narrator says, "here have I tramped this blessed Sunday morning, all the way from the Battery, three long miles, for this express purpose, prayer-book under arm; here I am, I say, and after all, I can't get in" (1242). This remark reveals that the narrator is perhaps visiting a different church from the one he usually attends. This is confirmed in the following passage:

> How disdainful the great, fat-paunched, beadle-faced man looked, when in answer to my humble petition, he said they had no galleries. Just the same as if he'd said, they didn't entertain poor folks. But I'll wager something that had my new coat been done last night, as the false tailor promised, and had I, arrayed therein this bright morning, tickled the fat-paunched, beadle-faced man's palm with a bank-note, then, gallery or no gallery, I would have had a fine seat in this marble-buttressed, stained-glassed, spic-and-span new temple. (1242)

"[T]he great, fat-paunched, beadle-faced man" drives away the narrator because "they had no galleries," which implies that the narrator has no regular seat here, causing the sexton to worry about whether there would be enough space to accommodate the visitor. Although we cannot confirm whether the church truly had no space when the narrator visited, or if the sexton intended to be nasty to the narrator, we can at least say that the narrator seems not to be a regular member of the church. He is, at any rate, "excommunicated; excluded" (1242) from the religious community. However, when the narrator is reluctantly about to return home, he lights upon a small door leading to a tower contiguous to the church and sneaks into it. In this small way, he takes part in divine service, yet remains an outsider. Reflecting on his situation, he remarks, "Though an insider in one respect, yet am I but an outsider in another" (1244). Further, in outwitting the sexton, he chuckles to himself for the present, but a

misfortune befalls him when the service is over. The narrator tries to leave from the door he had entered, only to find it has been locked. Left alone inside the church, the narrator is once again excluded from the congregation by chance. He then thinks of how he can escape and notices ropes from a cathedral bell, “the usual signal made at dwelling-houses to convey tidings of stranger’s presence” (1247–78). He says to himself in a tone of self-mockery, “But I was not an outside caller; alas, I was an inside prowler” (1248). At length, the narrator rings the bell, and the sexton immediately returns, dragging him from the tower. What should be focused on in this chain of events is that, when the narrator escapes, he falls into a situation where there is no choice but to declare himself a stranger. Melville could have written another way for the narrator to escape the church, yet he consciously depicted him as a stranger to call our attention to the recurring image of an isolated person. As we have elucidated that “Temple First” repeatedly depicts the narrator as a stranger, we cannot help but notice how he is accepted by a community far from his own country when reading “Temple Second.”

The week after the narrator has trouble with the church in New York, he leaves for Philadelphia, where he meets “an interesting young orphan lady and her aunt-duenna” (1249), who plan to travel around Europe and look for “some young physician, whose disengagement from pressing business, might induce him to accept, on a moderate salary, the post of private Esculapius and knightly companion to the otherwise unprotected fair” (1249). He acquires the position and then travels with them to England; however, he is dismissed because “the lady’s maternal relations had persuaded her to try, though the winter, the salubrious climate of the foggy Isle of Wight, in preference to the fabulous blue atmosphere of the Ionian Isles” (1249). The narrator, despite getting an advance on his salary, finds himself penniless in London and wanders the city. Just as he is a stranger in “Temple First,” he is one again in “Temple Second,” lamenting, for example, “A stranger in London on Saturday night, and

without a copper! What hospitalities may such an one expect? What shall I do with myself this weary night?" (1249). "Better perish mid myriad sharks in mid Atlantic, than die a penniless stranger in Babylonian London. Forlorn, outcast, without a friend, I staggered on through three millions of my own human kind" (1250). "I had needed charity, but never had asked it, and certainly never, ere this blessed night, had been offered it. And a stranger; and in the very maw of the roaring London too!" (1252). "I went home to my lonely lodging, and slept not much that night, for thinking of the First Temple and the Second Temple; and how that, a stranger in a strange land, I found sterling charity in the one; and at home, in my own land, was thrust out from the other" (1255–56).

On Saturday nights, churches are not typically open, so the narrator is compelled to walk around central London. Reaching a theater in which the famous actor Macready is appearing "in the part of Cardinal Richelieu" (1250), he becomes inpatient to enjoy the play. When the narrator stands in a daze before the doors, "some sort of a working-man" (1252) calls to him and offers him a ticket, remarking, "You want to go in; I know you do. Take it. I am suddenly called home" (1252). While the narrator feels at a loss after receiving charity for the first time in his life, he decides to enter. As he watches the drama, "a ragged, but good-natured looking boy" with something like a coffee pot and a mug says to him, "dad's gone to Yankee-land, a seekin' of his fortin'; so take a penny mug of ale, do, Yankee, for poor dad's sake" (1254). In short, the narrator, who is isolated from his own society, is finally accepted by a strange community at a theater in England.

In contrast to the exclusive church in New York, the narrator receives charity in London. This has prompted critics to note Melville's sarcastic stance toward American religious society in "The Two Temples." However, we should not rush to conclude that Melville is denying American religious society while supporting the English community. Instead of determining Melville's religious and political views, here we analyze details of the

latter world, which welcomes the isolated narrator, not English society itself, to clarify Melville's steady attempt to reflect one half of a pair in the other. After receiving the ticket from a stranger, the narrator enters the theater, which he finds to be quite similar to the church in New York. He says, "Entering, I wandered on and up, and up and on again, through various doubling stairs and wedge-like, ill-lit passages, whose bare boards much reminded me of my ascent of the Gothic tower on the ocean's far other side" (1253). Moreover, he glimpses echoes of the nasty sexton in Richelieu, as portrayed by Macready:

> [N]ow the curtain rises, and the robed Cardinal advances. How marvellous this personal resemblance! He looks every inch to be the self-same, stately priest I saw irradiated by the glow-worm dies of pictured windows from my high tower-pew. And shining as he does, in the rosy reflexes of these stained walls and gorgeous galleries, the mimic priest down there; he too seems lit by Gothic blazonings.—Hark! The same measured, courtly, noble tone. See! the same imposing attitude. Excellent actor is this Richelieu!
>
> He disappears behind the scenes. He slips, no doubt, into the Green Room. He reappears somewhat changed in his habilaments. Do I dream, or is it genuine memory that recalls some similar thing seen through the woven wires? (1255)

As these passages indicate, the theater in "Temple Second" reflects the church in "Temple First;" that is, the former is a mirror image of the latter. Here, we focus our attention on the fact that Melville, in "Temple Second," frequently uses images related to water, because of our purpose to illustrate that Melville strives to sketch a reflection in the water much like those Narcissus in Greek mythology and Ishmael in *Moby-Dick* see. The halves of "The Two Temples" are considered a diptych. Although many think of them as mirror images, it is, in fact, not a mirror but rather the surface of water that separates the two parts. Melville surely kept the myth of Narcissus in mind even after he published *Moby-Dick*, and he realized that

an isolated person can be embraced by a world in which "the ungraspable phantom of life" (*Moby-Dick* 20) was glimpsed, so that he describes "Temple Second" as the world in water. For instance, Melville describes the narrator wandering around London as if he is at sea:

> I ***drifted*** amid those indescribable crowds which every seventh night pour and roar through each main artery and block the bye-veins of great London, ***the Leviathan***. Saturday Night it was; and the markets and the shops, and every stall and counter were crushed ***with the one unceasing tide.*** A whole Sunday's victualling for three millions of human bodies, was going on. Few of them equally hungry with my own, as through my spent lassitude, the unscrupulous human whirlpools eddied me aside at corners, as any straw is eddied in ***the Norway Maelstrom***. (1250; emphasis added)

Aside from the above passage, the narrator also refers to crowds in London as "the jam and uproar of those turbulent tides against which, or borne on irresistibly by which, I had so long been swimming" (1251). He describes the inside of the theater as if he is standing on a ship's deck: "The rail was low. I thought of deep-sea-leads, and the mariner in the vessel's chains, drawing up the line, with his long-drawn musical accompaniment. And like beds of glittering coral, through the deep sea of azure smoke, there, far down, I saw the jewelled necks and white sparkling arms of crowds of ladies in the semicircle" (1253). To consider what the narrator sees "at the very main-mast-head of all the interior edifice" (1255), we should refer to a passage in the chapter 35 of *Moby-Dick*, whose title is "The Mast-Head":

> [L]ulled into such an opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie is this absent-minded youth by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him; every dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some

> undiscernible form, seems to him the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it. (136)

At the top of a mast-head, sailors are lured by an ungraspable illusion embodying his soul, the same sort of image as "the ungraspable phantom of life" in Chapter 1 of *Moby-Dick*. It can therefore be concluded that both the sailors in *Moby-Dick* and the narrator of "The Two Temples" find ungraspable doubles of themselves in the bottomless depths of the sea.

If "Temple Second" is the world beyond the surface of water, there must be a second self of the narrator. Actually, the narrator becomes another person when he enters the theater. After the man gives him a ticket, which is "one of those checks given to persons inside a theater when for any cause they desire to step out a moment" (1252), the narrator is admitted as a substitute, not in his own right. In *Moby-Dick*, Melville refers to almost the same situation as that faced by the narrator of "The Two Temples" when Ishmael survives the calamity of a battle with the white whale and is rescued by the *Rachel*: "On the second day, a sail drew near, nearer, and picked me up at last. It was the devious-cruising *Rachel*, that in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan" (427). This reveals a common idea with "The Two Temples:" that, when the isolated in his stories are accepted, they become a proxy of someone else. Given this, we should not dismiss the scene in which the narrator replaces the man outside the theater. Therefore, Melville seeks salvation in the world where the self appears as another. At the end of the story, the narrator remarks, "The curtain falls. Starting to their feet, the enraptured thousands sound their responses, deafeningly; unmistakably sincere. Right from the undoubted heart. I have no duplicate in my memory of this. In earnestness of response, this second temple stands unmatched. And hath mere mimicry done this? What is it then to act a part?" (1255). Here, the narrator finally finds genuine salvation in an artificial church. As he questions what it means to act a part, Melville underscores the value of acting in the above passage, perhaps because acting evokes another

self, namely, an attractive but ungraspable illusion reflected in water that we cannot help but seek, as Narcissus and Ishmael do.

This section begins with the question of where the isolated narrator is accepted and concludes that he is welcomed by London, which represents the world lying beyond the surface of water. In Melville's eyes, such a place, in which a mystic mirror image of one's self is reflected, appears as something that seems to provide him salvation. However, if we attempt to grasp it, we are exposed to untold peril, as Ishmael finds when trying to capture the same elusive shadow as Narcissus and suffers a calamity at the end of the whaling narrative. This leads us to consider whether Melville finds salvation only in the world of the dead. In fact, the narrator of "The Two Temples" considers the River Thames to be "the muddy Phlegethon" (1251), one of five rivers of Hell. It is worth noting that Melville does not distinctly describe London as the hereafter, but sketches it ambiguously, to the extent that we can regard it as both an earthly and unearthly world. Whereas there is almost no doubt that Melville is more captivated by the latter, he ventures to provoke it into this world. This is exactly why he adapts the style of a diptych, which can effectively portray the duality between the world of our elusive shadows and this world. Still, Melville's pursuit of the ungraspable shadows appearing in this world will last forever in the literary diptych of "The Two Temples," like mirrors set facing one another.

2. The Truth Emerging between the Real and the Unreal in "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs"

Though "The Two Temples" was not published during Melville's lifetime, "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" first appeared in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*

on June 1, 1854. It sketches the contrasting situations of poverty in America and England in the form of diptych. Melville fixed his eyes on paupers throughout his life as a novelist, perhaps because he himself experienced economic hardship triggered by his father's bankruptcy when he was 11 years old. The family's economic collapse forced him to leave Manhattan for Albany, where his mother's family lived.

F. O. Matthiessen deals with the theme of poverty represented in *Redburn: His First Voyage*, which noticeably reflects Melville's own experience of seeing paupers in London, and points out:

> The latent economic factor in tragedy remained part of Melville's vision at every subsequent stage of his writing. It may seem dwarfed into insignificance before the implacable power of Ahab's revenge; yet the reader is not meant to forget that the first reason Ishmael gave for going to sea was "having little or no money in my purse." (400)

Following Matthiessen, Bruce R. Bickley, who focuses on Melville's short stories, asserts that "[t]hematically, 'Bartleby,' 'The Two Temples,' 'Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs,' and 'Jimmy Rose' are related: all confront the problem of the proper charitable stance towards those who are deprived, if not forsaken, economically and socially" (80). And, Bickley questions, "The question directed to the reader comes as a type of social and moral challenge: who, then, is going to save the poor?" (86), taking into account the words and deeds of the narrator and Blandmour, who avoid responsibility for saving the poor. Bickley's comment can be applied to a series of Melville's short stories that thematize poverty; for example, "Bartleby," in which the lawyer-narrator does not immediately save Bartleby, who has nowhere to go and lives in his office. He even urges him to move away. Aside from "Bartleby," we see this in "The Two Temples" and "Jimmy Rose," neither of whose narrators extend mercy to paupers by themselves, even though they face wretched plights.[26] Therefore,

it can safely be said that Melville, in his short works dealing with poverty, repeatedly denotes the failure of charity from the rich to the poor and the indifference of the rich to the actual circumstances of the poor.

Despite the above, we should not forget that these short stories do depict charitable behaviors from the poor to the rich, while ordinary charity from the rich to the poor ends up failing. For example, the poor Bartleby is regarded by the narrator as the holy person destined to accomplish "some mysterious purpose of an all-wise Providence" (662).In "The Two Temples," it is "some sort of a working-man" (1252) who gives the ticket to a play to the narrator, who is at a loss after being penniless in London. In "Jimmy Rose," the title character begins as a millionaire but ends up a beggar, but still attempts to dispense charity to those around him. That story's narrator remarks, "Though in thy own need thou hadst no pence to give the poor, thou, Jimmy, still hadst alms to give the rich" (1289). These short stories thus render the position of the rich and the poor reversed through these acts of inverted charity. Such a reversed relationship between the rich and the poor in alms-giving has not been focused on enough by critics, even though many have tackled the problem of poverty in Melville's works again and again.

Among these stories, shedding light on "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" is important because it represents what the poor dispense to the rich, namely, the value of unreality. Through a sketch of reversed charity, Melville questions the value of imagination. However, the novel element has been, as Ray B. Browne argues, that "[t]he obvious subject of satire is foolish and dangerous ignorance of political facts" (209), thus this is explained as merely a satirical story against both the tone of American society at the time, when charity was not as prevalent as it is now, and at misdirected charitable efforts in Britain. In fact, Blandmour, in the first half of the story, and a civil servant, in the second half, do not

attempt to face the reality of the poor. The narrator also fails to give alms to the poor, even though he makes sarcastic comments about them. Gavin Jones points out:

> From the moment that Blandmour personifies nature, as both almoner (official distributor of alms) and philanthropist (unofficial doer of good), Melville's tale becomes an extended contemplation of the poetics of social evasion, the linguistic techniques that can twist a state of poverty from scarcity to abundance. (48)

We can conclude that "'Poor Man's Pudding' is thus a study of the materiality of poverty" (Jones 48), which "has the power to bend and disrupt the linguistic realm" (49). Jones also asserts that "socioeconomic states have cultural and psychological effects that disable communication between the poor and a middle-class narrator who resists recourse to the poetical and figurative tricks that placate public stakes of material need" (50). One of the subjects of satire in Melville's "Poor Man's Pudding" is Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, whose assumption is that "poverty somehow contains the sources of its own alleviation" (Jones 48). Melville also calls out other innocent intellectuals, for example, Washington Irving (Fisher 66), Ralph Waldo Emerson (Fisher 64–65), Benjamin Franklin (Browne 209), and the writer of *The Poor Rich Man and the Rich Poor Man*, Catharine Maria Sedgwick (Bickley 81–82).

In addition to the matter of the rhetoric concealing the truth of poverty, the narrative structure of the story is like a diptych, in which "Picture First" ("Poor Man's Pudding") and "Picture Second" ("Rich Man's Crumbs") oppose each other using contrasting motifs and has attracted critics' attention. Among the contrasting motifs of the story, we will pay special attention to the contrast between hot and cold, because it is a significant clue for connecting "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" to Melville's other works with regard to the theme of poverty. Melville's use of the comparison between hot and cold comes from the Biblical story of Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31). A rich man calls to Abraham, "Father

Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire" in Hell (Luke 16:24). Melville seems fond of this part of Luke, because he quotes it in other tales too, such as *Moby-Dick*, when emphasizing the contrast between hot and cold. Wandering around New Bedford to find lodging on "a very dark and dismal night, bitingly cold and cheerless" (23), the narrator Ishmael recollects that

> Poor Lazarus there, chattering his teeth against the curbstone for his pillow, and shaking off his tatters with his shivering, he might plug up both ears with rags, and put a corn-cob into his mouth, and yet that would not keep out the tempestuous Euroclydon. Euroclydon! says old Dives, in his red silken wrapper . . . give me [Dives] the privilege of making my own summer with my own coals.
>
> But what thinks Lazarus? Can he warm his blue hands by holding them up to the grand northern lights? Would not Lazarus rather be in Sumatra than here? Would he not far rather lay him down lengthwise along the line of the equator; yea, ye gods! go down to the fiery pit itself, in order to keep out this frost? (25)

In addition to *Moby-Dick*, in "The Encantadas, or Enchanted Isles," Melville writes, "'Have mercy upon me,' the wailing spirit of the Encantadas seems to cry, 'and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame'" (765). These representations of an extreme polarity of temperature based on Luke's Lazarus story are keys to elucidating "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs," in which the real appears as the warm, and the unreal as the cold. Although the polarity between warm and the cold seems merely a device for constructing the narrative diptych, it indeed works as a clue to help us consider what is real and what is unreal. As "The Two Temples" shows the superimposed image of a genuine church and an artificial one, "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" also presents an intermediate realm between the real and the unreal

through the matter of poverty. Melville does not consider the real and the unreal to be divisible, but rather something like two sides of the same coin.

The first half of the story, “Poor Man’s Pudding,” lists substitutions for necessities, as devised by the indigent Coulters family, such as “Poor Man’s Manure” (1227), “Poor Man’s Eye-water” (1228), and “Poor Man’s Egg” (1228), named by Blandmour. Each of these items functions well enough for the Coulters, whether they like them or not. As “Poor Man’s Pudding” iterates various substitutions, we gradually understand why Melville shows us this series of replacements. At the climax of the first part, the most important proxy the Coulters seek is revealed: their two dead children, William and Martha. Even if the Coulters can never recapture the children’s warmth, they can attempt to maintain their warmth forever. In other words, the Coulters seek the real in the unreal.

In contrast to “Poor Man’s Pudding,” the second half of the story, “Rich Man’s Crumbs,” represents the unreal in the real. In the summer of the year in which the narrator visited the Coulters at the end of March, he takes a trip to London, and “a civic subordinate” (1236) leads him to the Lord Mayor’s Charities. During the tour, the guide repeatedly suggests that the alms they distribute are the same as what the princes have, when they are actually mere remnants of the “grand Guildhall Banquet” (1236). Even though these leftovers are the same as the dishes served to the nobility, they are not the banquet itself, so the poor cannot truly fill their stomachs. This causes a disturbance. In superimposing the two parts of “Poor Man’s Pudding and Rich Man’s Crumbs,” Melville portrays the truth emerging between the real and the unreal.

The first half of the story, “Picture First,” contrasts Blandmour to the narrator, in that the former glamorizes the lives of the poor with flowery rhetoric and does not face the reality of poverty, while the latter feels doubt about what Blandmour says from the beginning. As the narrator visits the impoverished Coulters, he is finally convinced that Blandmour’s words

are covering the truth about the poor. He says him, "you are not what may rightly be called a rich man; you have a fair competence; no more. Is it not so? Well then, I do not include *you*, when I say, that if ever a Rich Man speaks prosperously to me of a Poor Man, I shall set it down as—I won't mention the word" (1235; emphasis in original). Melville points out the differences between the narrator and Blandmour and opposes the real and the unreal, which is one of the main themes of this half of the story. We ultimately aim to investigate how Melville overcomes the binary opposition embodied in the characters to focus on other details, especially the contrasts in temperature, because they are connected to the comparisons between the real and the unreal and serve as the key for our purpose.

From the outset, Blandmour says to the narrator, "[Y]ou see, my friend, that the blessed almoner, Nature, is in all things beneficent; and not only so, but considerate in her charities, as any discreet human philanthropist might be" (1227). To confirm his statement, Blandmour exemplifies snow, calling it "Poor Man's Manure" (1227) and insists that snow is charity from nature. The narrator asks, however, "[T]ell me, this warm spring snow may answer very well, as you say; but how is it with the cold snows of the long, long winters here?" (1227). Blandmour replies, "Why, do you not remember the words of the Psalmist?—'The Lord giveth snow like wool;' meaning not only that snow is white as wool, but warm, too, as wool" (1227). As the above conversation shows, this half of the story begins with a scene that brings our attention to the details describing the comparison between warmth and cold. Blandmour successively asserts that "the winter's snow *itself* is beneficent; under the pretense of frost—a sort of gruff philanthropist—actually warming the earth, which afterward is to be fertilizingly moistened by these gentle flakes of March" (1228; emphasis in original). Note that Blandmour's remark here plays an important role in linking the binary opposition between warmth and cold with another contrasting pair, that is, reality ("itself") and unreality ("pretense of frost"). It is obvious that Melville intends to represent the comparison between

reality and unreality, because Blandmour enumerates several kinds of substitutions for daily necessities, such as “Poor Man’s Eye-water” (1228) for eyedrops, “Poor Man’s Egg” (1228), “Poor Man’s Plaster” (1228), and “Poor Man’s Pudding.” Blandmour emphasizes that “through kind Nature, the poor, out of their very poverty, extract comfort” (1229) and recommends that the narrator visit an impoverished family to taste “Poor Man’s Pudding.” Then, the narrator visits the Coulters. Along with various substitutions, the narrator himself appears as one kind of unreality when he calls on the Coulters: “I introduced myself into Coulter's house on a wet Monday noon (for the snow had thawed), under the innocent ***pretense*** of craving a pedestrian’s rest and refreshment for an hour or two” (1229; emphasis added).

Disguised as a pedestrian, the narrator succeeds in entering the Coulters’ home, but he cannot help but hide his surprise at its shabby state, where Mrs. Coulter does the housekeeping battling against the merciless cold wind and the damp. “[T]he dame stood upon a half-rotten, soaked board to protect her feet, as well as might be, from the penetrating damp of the bare ground” (1229). Although there is a hearth, it does not work efficiently because of the fuel’s dampness:

> [I] sat rubbing my hands before the ineffectual low fire, and—unobservedly as I could—glancing now and then about the room, while the good woman, throwing on more sticks, said she was sorry the room was no warmer. Something more she said, too—not repiningly, however—of the fuel, as old and damp; picked-up sticks in Squire Teamster’s forest, where her husband was chopping the sappy logs of the living tree for Squire’s fires. (1230)

As Mrs. Coulter makes an effort to warm the house with old, damp wood, she also champions the warmth of a meal when her husband returns home. Although her concern for the warm meal seems merely a scene of everyday life, her attention to its warmth, in particular, is

noteworthy, because the story gradually unveils the significance of the opposition between the warmth and the cold in a way that sketches the dinner in the Coulters' house. Mrs. Coulter says, "You [the narrator] see, sir, . . . William there wants, of mornings, to carry a cold meal into the woods with him, to save the long one-o' clock walk across the fields to and fro. But I won't let him. A warm dinner is more than pay for the long walk" (1231). While Mrs. Coulter emphasizes the importance of a warm dinner, her husband does not understand its value: "'I don't know about that,' said William, shaking his head. 'I have often debated in my mind whether it really paid. There's not much odds, either way, between a wet walk after hard work, and a wet dinner before it . . .'" (1231). Mr. Coulter suddenly begins to talk about a horse he is going to buy from his master, Squire, mentioning, "[A]lready, before having it, I have christened it 'Martha'" (1233). After the husband returns to work, the narrator comes to know the origin of the horse's name when Mrs. Coulter laments the death of her children: "[H]ow I wish little William and Martha lived—it is so lonely-like now. William named after him, and Martha for me" (1233). "You should have seen little William, sir. Such a bright, manly boy, only six years old—cold, cold now!" (1233). Here, we learn the reason why this part of the story consistently recounts the opposition between cold and warmth. It intends to place the Coulters' dead children never becoming warm again at the climax. The coldness of the dead children pierces the Coulters' hearts, along with the rigors of the end of winter. The wife wails:

> Ah, sir, if those little ones yet to enter the world were the same little ones which so sadly have left it; returning friends, not strangers, strangers, always strangers! Yet does a mother soon learn to love them; for certain, sir, they come from where the others have gone. . . . But, still, still does dark grief leak in, just like the rain through our roof. I am left so lonesome now; day after day, all the day long, dear William is gone; and all the damp day long grief drizzles and drizzles down on my soul. (1234)

Mrs. Coulter wishes to embrace her dead children not as "strangers" but "friends." Even if the children never return, she longs for William and Martha themselves and their irreplaceable warmth. The two contradictions, warmth/cold and reality/unreality, culminate in this scene. The narrator listens to Mrs. Coulter's grief and tastes "Poor Man's Pudding." He says, "Bitter and mouldy is the 'Poor Man's Pudding,' groaned I to myself, half choked with but one little mouthful of it, which would hardly go down" (1234), as if the pudding epitomizes Mrs. Coulter's sorrow and anguish over the deaths of her children. The narrator thinks it is high time to leave the Coulters, not only because he can "stay no longer to hear of sorrows for which the sincerest sympathies could give no adequate relief" (1234) but also because he feels embarrassed by his helplessness in the face of the Coulters' pain. Further, he himself is an unreality (as he pretended to be a pedestrian when he arrived) to be excluded from the Coulters, who must endure a cruel fate while helplessly surrounded by proxies for the necessities of living and even dead children. At their moment of farewell, the narrator still pretends to hurry his journey ("Under pretense that my journey called me forthwith, I bade the dame good-by" [1235]). After he returns to Blandmour, he recalls:

> This ill-ventilation in winter of the rooms of the poor—a thing, too, so stubbornly persisted in—is usually charged upon them as their disgraceful neglect of the most simple means to health. But the instinct of the poor is wiser than we think. The air which ventilates, likewise ***cools.*** And to any shiverer, ill-ventilated warmth is better than well-ventilated cold. (1235; emphasis in original)

The narrator finds in the manner of the Coulters that they know how to keep warm in the cold winter and how to seek reality in a world full of substitutes and fakes, as the wife and husband see the image of their deceased children in the horse and perhaps an unborn baby (the narrator says, "she looked pale and chill. But her paleness had still another and more secret cause—the paleness of a mother to be" [1229]). Even though William and Martha can

never return to their parents, the Coulters attempt to touch the real warmth of their children in the chilly room into which a cold wind constantly blows. That is, the Coulters know how to turn unreality into reality. More precisely, they strive to call reality into unreality. This is exactly what Melville represents as the alms that the poor give to the rich in "Poor Man's Pudding."

When "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" is represented as a diptych, the second half of the tale evokes a mirroring image of the first; namely, unreality in reality. In August of the year when the narrator glimpses the straitened circumstance of the American paupers, he visits London, where he is invited by a civil servant to an inspection of the lord mayor's charity. During the inspection, the narrator often makes sarcastic comments, because the charity official is attempting to boast about the charity in spite of the actual situation, where the needy do not fill their stomachs with leftovers from "the grand Guildhall Banquet to the princes" (1236), but rather scramble for alms. The guide reiterates that the alms are the same as those served to the nobles, that is, a real feast itself; but, of course, they are mere leftovers, not a true feast but rather a pretense of one. "Picture Second" therefore shows unreality in reality, as opposed to "Picture First."

"Picture First," as seen above, links the contrast between reality and unreality to the contrast between warmth and cold, as does "Picture Second." In both parts, reality emerges as warmth, and unreality as cold. The inspector declares that the donated foods are the same as those served at banquets, saying to the narrator, for example, "See that pasty now, snatched by that pale girl; I dare say the Emperor of Russia ate of that last night'" (1238); "And see yon pheasant too—there—***that*** one—the boy in the torn shirt has it now—look! The Prince Regent might have dined off that" (1238; emphasis in original). "Well, that's as you take it, sir. But see—now I'd wager a guinea the Load Mayor's lady dipped her golden spoon into yonder golden-hued jelly. See, the jelly-eyed old body has slipped it, in one broad gulp, down

his throat" (1239). However eloquently he dwells on the charity, there is no doubt that this food is not the warm dinner itself, but only "the broken meats—the ***cold*** victuals and crumbs of kings" (1238; emphasis added). Considering that "Picture First" depicts reality as warmth and unreality as cold, "Picture Second" ensures that the alms of the Lord Mayor's Charity are not real, since they are described as cold foods. Even if the guide boasts, "What a generous, noble, magnanimous charity this is! unheard of in any country but England, which feeds her very beggars with golden-hued jellies" (1239), the offerings are only from what *was* a splendid dinner. The narrator thus cannot help taking a skeptical view of the official's remarks and asks, "[D]o you really think that jellies are the best sort of relief you can furnish to beggars? Would not plain beef and bread, with something to do, and be paid for, be better?" (1239). As the narrator tells us that "these Lazaruses seemed ready to spew up in repentant scorn the contumelious crumbs of Dives" (1240), paupers, who are not satisfied with the offerings, explode in rage against the leftovers without the main courses. They protest, for instance, "the plundered wreck of a pheasant, or the rim of a pasty—like the detached crown of an old hat—the solids and meats stolen out" (1238); "[t]he two breasts [which] were gouged ruthlessly out, exposing the bare bones, embellished with the untouched pinions and legs" (1238); "disemboweled pasties, plundered pheasants, and half-sacked jellies" (1240). These foods are, indeed, the real celebratory meal itself, but they are regarded as unreality for the poor. While the poor turn into a raging mob, the narrator barely escapes from the Guildhall, and in the last sentence, the narrator sighs, "Heaven save me equally from the 'Poor Man's Pudding' and 'Rich Man's Crumbs'" (1241).

In glimpsing the lives of American and British paupers, Melville finds reality within unreality in America and unreality within reality in England. Thus, the poor show the rich what appears in the duality between them, even though they don't intend to do so. Melville aims to create this duality between reality and unreality, although both parts of the story seem

to criticize the political situations around poverty, particularly in England, as seen in the comment "The native American poor never lose their delicacy or pride; hence, though unreduced to the physical degradation of the European pauper, they yet suffer more in mind than the poor of any other people in the world" (1234). Melville also pretends to criticize English society, perhaps because "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs" was originally written for the American readers of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Melville, however, depicted English society positively and, on the contrary, American life negatively in the other short stories written in the same period; for example, "The Two Temples" and "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" indicate that Melville did not aim to attack English society alone. We can assume that his intention when writing the stories went beyond merely censuring certain political situations. Instead, Melville exercises his craftsmanship in sketches of reality and unreality as two sides of the same coin. For Melville, reality and unreality cannot be clear-cut, and he attempts to present something glimpsed when both are superimposed like a diptych.

Melville's idea on the duality between reality and unreality culminates with the diptychs expressed in the short stories "The Two Temples," and "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs," but the germ of the idea can be seen in other, prior works, especially *Moby-Dick*. As many critics have pointed out, one of the central themes of *Moby-Dick* is that of revealing the mask that covers the essence of things, as in chapter 36 "The Quarter Deck," when Captain Ahab cries, "All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But 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. If man will strike, strike through the mask!" (140). Ahab tenaciously pursues the white whale that bit his leg off, out of a sense of vengeance, but his revenge is not achieved. He remains unfulfilled until learning what is behind the mask of Moby Dick's whiteness. It is this desire that drives Ahab

to seek this self-destructive vengeance. In addition to Ahab, Ishmael, the novel's narrator, tries to represent reality shrouded by the mask of the whiteness in Chapter 42, "The Whiteness of the Whale." He says, "It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me. But how can I hope to explain myself here; and yet, in some dim, random way, explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught" (159). In this chapter, Ishmael analyzes the kinds of white things found in the world. Particularly when discussing the whiteness of snow, he approaches the heart of the matter: "[I]s it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows . . . ?" (165). Those of us reading "Rich Man's Crumbs and Poor Man's Pudding" cannot dismiss this point, because these stories are connected by the motif of snow, which calls our attention to the difference between essence and appearance, namely, reality and unreality. Thus, we need to examine Ishmael's explanations of whiteness further to elucidate how Melville uses it to describe what is beyond the mask. Ishmael muses on the whiteness of snow and adds: "[T]he mystical cosmic 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" (165).

Ishmael regards white or colorless light as that which covers the true colors of things around us and suggests that it is the world wrapped in the mask of the whiteness that we usually see. He says, "[L]ike wilful travelers in Lapland, who refuse to wear colored and coloring glasses upon their eyes, so the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him" (165). The pursuit of Moby Dick is, therefore, the representation of a desire to unmask the whiteness shrouding the essence of things in the world, which is common to us all but seemingly impossible to

achieve. Ishmael asks us, “Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt?” (165). As Captain Ahab’s pursuit of Moby Dick is fated to culminate in the destruction of the white whale and all the crew of the *Pequod* except for Ishmael, we cannot strike the mask and capture reality or the essence of things alone, because it always lies in opposition to it, that is, its unreality or appearance.

The view represented throughout *Moby-Dick* is repeated in “Poor Man’s Pudding and Rich Man’s Crumbs;” therefore, it is not by chance that these stories share the motif of whiteness. To sum up, “Poor Man’s Pudding and Rich Man’s Crumbs” also deals with the matter of the difference of reality covered by a mask, as *Moby-Dick* represents it by dint of the whiteness of the whale.

We have revealed that “Poor Man’s Pudding and Rich Man’s Crumbs” symbolizes reality within unreality in “Picture First” and, in turn, the unreality within reality in “Picture Second,” and that the figure of truth appears in the duality between them. Some of Melville’s short stories deal with the theme of poverty, such as “Poor Man’s Pudding and Rich Man’s Crumbs,” “The Two Temples,” and “Jimmy Rose,” in which the rich (donor) trade places with the poor (recipients) in charity. The stories also seem to show how the poor can bring truth to the rich regarding the duality between reality and unreality. For instance, in “The Two Temples,” the narrator becomes penniless in London and wanders around. He unexpectedly finds a theater, but has no money to buy a ticket and can only look enviously at its doors. Then a workman appears before him and gives him a ticket the narrator is perplexed, as this is the first time he has ever received charity. He repeatedly asks himself whether or not he should go in, and finally decides to do so. The narrator is deeply touched by the power of a fabricated church and clergyman, saying, “hath mere mimicry done this? What is it then to act a part?” (1255). He finds the mimicry more splendid than something

authentic when he watches the rest of the play. The workman, therefore, gives the narrator a chance to find reality in unreality.

Similar to the above, Jimmy, the central character in “Jimmy Rose,” embodies the truth of lying about unreality in his life. Jimmy was once a millionaire in New York, but descends into a vagrancy because of the failure of his business. Still, Jimmy behaves with nobility, even though he depends on charity. His cheek brightens in the same way as before, so that the narrator considers “whether meal and milk, and tea and toast could keep them flourishing; whether now he painted them” (1287). As the rosy glow in Jimmy’s cheeks symbolize, he embodies the true nobility of a mimic. Thus, Melville sketches the poor as those who know that reality and unreality are inseparable, like two sides of a coin, and that the truth can appear between them.

The diptych style is so effective that Melville adopts it when writing “Poor Man’s Pudding and Rich Man’s Crumbs.” Melville’s writing indicates his confidence that the core of art, that which represents the truth, is found in the ambiguity between reality and unreality, like a diptych. However, we may be suspicious, to some extent, concerning whether Melville as a novelist is the same as Blandmour and the civil servant, in that he conceals the actual situations of the poor with his eloquent words. Still, Melville himself differs from his characters because he well knows the jeopardy into which poets and novelists are apt to fall, namely, that of rhetoric, while he describes Blandmour and the civil servant as being blind to this fate. As a poet, Blandmour is, in particular, the epitome of such an artist. Melville, as a novelist, is conscious of the peril writers face and creates an imaginary world reflected in the actual world and vice versa, like mirrors facing one another.

Chapter IV

Melville's Domestic Fictions and the Symbolization of the Past:

"The Apple-Tree Table" and "I and My Chimney"

Both of Melville's domestic fictions, "The Apple-Tree Table" and "I and My Chimney," represent unreachable aims and the eternal following motion toward a mystery; this is in keeping with his other stories, which we have examined previously in their respective ways. "The Apple-Tree Table," published May 1, 1856, in *Putnam's Monthly Magazine*, has often been discussed with the other two short tales written between 1853 and 1856, "I and My Chimney," which was issued two months before by the same publisher, and "Jimmy Rose," which appeared on November 1, 1855, in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Judith Slater deals with six of Melville's short tales, including the three ("Cock-a-Doodle-Doo!," "The Lightning-Rod Man," and "The Piazza"), and argues that the works "all treat what might be called the 'Ishmael' theme" (267). Slater also remarks, "'Jimmy Rose' uses some of the same materials as 'My Chimney,' although its focus is quite different. The characters are nearly identical: both stories have a conservative, sentimental old narrator whose 'progressive' wife and daughters are intent on remodeling an old house" (273); and "The domineering, 'modernistic' wife and the husband submissive in all but one particular reappear in 'The Apple-Tree Table.' This sketch is a farcical treatment of the domestic conflict which figures in 'My Chimney' and, to a lesser extent, in 'Jimmy Rose'" (275).[27] Richard Harter Fogle also points out that "the characters of 'The Apple-Tree Table' are about the same people as the principals of 'Jimmy Rose' and 'I and My Chimney,' although little is said of the age of the husband-narrator" (78–79). Furthermore, Broadus Ray Browne claims,

"'The Apple-Tree Table' involves substantially the same characters as the stories 'Jimmy Rose' and 'I and My Chimney.' There are a rather eccentric, passive husband brow-beaten by his aggressive, realistic, shrewish wife, two daughters who are overly superstitious, and a democratic Irish Catholic maid named Biddy" (272). Considering these arguments, we focus on "The Apple-Tree Table" and "I and My Chimney" in particular because the two pieces feature Melville's method of provoking immortality by the eternal following motion toward an unreachable destination. First, we consider "The Apple-Tree Table," whose central motif is a mystical bag that has lived for more than 150 years in an egg, thus revealing that Melville considers the past to coexist with the present. In "this story, time is not one flow, as we usually assume, but several flows, a set of time differentials. To put it another way, he thinks that the past has never truly passed away, but merely slept, so that it may happen to awake and exist with the present. Melville describes this concept of several time flows in *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities*, in which the pamphlet by Plinlimmon preaches the difference between heavenly wisdom and earthly wisdom using a metaphor of the time difference between Greenwich and China. Melville also lays down several time flows in the "The Apple-Tree Table" to bring the never-passing past to light. In other words, Melville creates what we will call the immortal past. Second, we address "I and My Chimney," in which the past exists in the present as a symbol of the narrator's magnificent old chimney, focusing on the fact that the story assumes the form of a detective story. It tells readers that the narrator's house conceals a secret chamber or closet, but does not seem to unveil it, even in the end. Melville describes the mysterious closet in terms that make it quite clear, however. The closet is very obvious to the eyes, but not easily graspable. We, as readers, take a great deal to reach the closet, because it is one of the motifs that we cannot help but pass through alongside the ungraspable meaning of the magnificent chimney in the narrator's home. The chimney has long worried many critics, and it remains a symbol of an obvious but unsubstantial object.

The narrator and an architect, Scribe, can never measure it accurately, nor know what it really is. Given that the chimney has been read as a motif symbolizing the past, we can assume that Melville understands the past to be a notion that stands obviously but which also is elusive. As with Melville's notion of the past appearing with the present in "The Apple-Tree Table," "I and My Chimney" shows that we cannot grasp the past, not because it has already passed away, but because, though it lies plainly, we somehow go through much as we cannot but help go through a transparency. Thus, both of the short tales respectively and elaborately generate a permanent going-forward motion toward salvation.

1. Duplicated Times: The Visual and Auditory Perceptions of Time in "The Apple-Tree Table"

Throughout "The Apple-Tree Table," mysterious, unidentifiable sounds from an old table worry the narrator's family. As the subtitle suggests, the uncanny sounds are described as a supernatural phenomenon, so critics have attempted to infer Melville's views on spiritualism as being embodied in the work. In addition, Melville's adaptation of two motifs profoundly related to spiritualism, which was widely practiced at the time when Melville was writing the story, has attracted readers' attention. One is Cotton Mather, a Puritan minister from New England who was involved in the Salem Witch Trials and who left more than 400 writings, such as *Magnalia Christi Amaricana* (1702) and *Manuductio ad Ministerium* (1726). Melville invokes *Marginalia* in "The Apple-Tree Table." The other is the Fox sisters: Lear, Margaretta, and Catherine. They were famous for spiritual rapping, which they claimed to use to communicate with spirits.[28] It is therefore quite natural for Melville scholars to interpret the story in terms of its relationship with spiritualism, yet they have somehow sidestepped a

problem: the relevance between spiritualism and the representation of time. This is in spite of Melville skillfully portraying spiritual phenomena through the tick of a clock as he aims to symbolize multiple time flows peculiar to his works.

This concept of multiple time flows differs from our common perception of time, which we regard as a consistent and continuous flow. Denoting the uncanny sounds in the story, Melville reveals seemingly irrational, mystical time flows similar to those he deals with in *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities*, in which Pierre picks up Plinlimmon's pamphlet, which advocates for two completely disparate standards, namely, heavenly truth and earthly truth, much as we have time differences.[29] In both *Pierre* and "The Apple-Tree Table," Melville ventures to depict unearthly values through the motif of a clock. We should, therefore, read "The Apple-Tree Table" in relation to his distinctive view of multiple time flows, not based on our common appreciation of time as a consecutive flow. "The Apple-Tree Table" breaks the continuity of time, describing the discordance between movements of clock hands on a dial plate and ticks, that is, time is divided into visual and auditory times. When the clock hands of a genuine clock in the narrator's room stop, he still hears a mysterious ticking coming from the apple-tree table. The movements and sounds of clocks' hands usually correspond to each other, and if they do not, it must give rise to confusion. In other words, when we get the time from a clock, our visual and auditory perceptions generally correlate. Yet, Melville creates discordance between them, since he intends to create duplicated time flows. The disjunction of visual and auditory perceptions is also symbolized in the portrayal of the story's characters. Although these primary perceptions cannot be separated in a person, in "The Apple-Tree Table," the wife relies wholly on visual perception, while her two daughters depend entirely on auditory perception, and the narrator is on neutral ground. With this in mind, we should focus on the division of roles allotted to each character.

In addition to the binary opposition between visual and auditory perceptions, critics have focused on the contrast between spiritualism and rationalism represented in "The Apple-Tree Table." However, they have not clarified the connection between these contrasts of visual/auditory perceptions and spiritualism/rationalism. Melville connects the pairs of concepts, as a spiritual phenomenon is apt to be perceived auditorily, while a reasonable occurrence tends to be perceived visually. Melville scholars, instead of clarifying the connection between them, have pursued his ideological background, based on an analysis of the characters' roles. For instance, Frank Davidson, who attempts to read the "author's thoughts on religion at a critical time in his life" (479), asserts that:

> [t]he husband, or narrator, is, presumably, Melville himself, irresolute concerning a religious faith, "wandering to-and-fro," as Hawthorne said, "over these deserts." […] The wife may be Mrs. Melville, who was a Unitarian. She may represent Melville's mother, as she seems to do in "I and My Chimney," a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. . . . Like Democritus she operates from a cool head rather than a warm heart. […] Her two daughters, Anna and Julia, perhaps represent youthful aversion to the frightfulness of Calvinism. Julia responds happily to a religious sentiment when it appears in beautiful form, somewhat as a transcendentalist might. She shares with the transcendentalist, too, belief in correspondency of nature and the human spirit. (486)

Another character, Professor Johnson, reflects "Oliver Wendell Holmes in particular, who was scientist, professor, and opponent of Calvinism" (487). Following Davidson, Malcolm O. Magaw says that the narrator's wife is "an amateur rationalist," Dr. Johnson is "a scientific rationalist," Julia is among "those who believe in the immortality of the soul," and the narrator is "the skeptic" (366). These interpretations by Davidson and Magaw share a common idea: Melville speaks his mind through the descriptions of the narrator, who wanders between rationalism and spiritualism. Critics have interpreted this short story

especially in terms of the relationship with spiritualism, because Melville consulted two documentary records directly related to spiritual phenomena widely known at the time when he was writing "The Apple-Tree Table." Douglas Sackman points out that Melville referred to *History of Berkshire Country*, which contained an anecdote about mysterious bugs that had lived in a wooden table for almost 70 years, even though Melville modified several details, such as the number of bugs and that of years for which they had existed. Furthermore, according to Davidson, an anecdote of mysterious bugs is mentioned in Henry David Thoreau's *Walden; or Life in the Wood* (1854),[30] and there is a strong possibility that Melville read the book. Besides, as Carolyn Lucy Karcher says, Melville must also have known the Fox sisters and modeled the subject matter of "The Apple-Tree Table" after them, even though their popularity had declined by the time he wrote his story (102). In fact, Melville refers to the Fox sisters in the text: "an incident, be it remembered, which, like every other in this narration, happened long before the time of the 'Fox girls'" (1332). As such, it seems natural for people at that time to read "The Apple-Tree Table" as an alternative to the anecdote of the Fox sisters. Given these interpretations based on the binary opposition between rationalism and spiritualism, we can relate them to the matter of visual and auditory perception to reveal that Melville creates duplicated times, dividing the flow of time into one that is perceptible to the eyes and another perceived by the ears. This is the "spiritual manifestation" of the unearthly concept of multiple flows of time that Melville attempts to describe in "The Apple-Tree Table."

We must also examine the fact that Melville, allotting distinctive roles to his characters, elaborately relates two binary oppositions: rationalism/spiritualism and visual/auditory perceptions. We focus on the characters' noticeable roles, particularly in the scene where the narrator's family members discuss whom they should consult regarding a spiritual phenomenon, after they learn that the mysterious bugs are making the supernatural

sounds (1348). The daughter, Julia, cries, “do go and consult Madame Pazzi, the conjures” (1348), while the wife, who is a rationalist, says, “Better go and consult Professor Johnson, the naturalist” (1348). In the end, the narrator decides to seek the advice of Professor Johnson, but this does not prove that he fully takes the standpoint of a rationalist, because he is skeptical of the professor’s ideas and cannot wholly accept his scientific explanation, even though he attempts to persuade his daughters not to believe in occult powers: “‘Now, Julia,’ said I, ‘after that scientific statement of the case (though, I confess, I don’t exactly understand it), where are your spirits? It is very wonderful as it is, but where are your spirits?” (1349). Thus, the narrator wavers between rationalism and spiritualism, behaving as if he believes in only reasonable phenomena in the presence of his wife and daughters. Melville portrays the wife as one who relies entirely on rationalism and visual perception. In a totally contrasting way, he sketches the two daughters, who accord disproportionate emphasis to spiritualism auditory perception. The two oppositions, rationalism/spiritualism and visual/auditory perceptions, are connected to each other in a scene where the narrator waits for the mysterious ticks alone, late at night, rousing himself by recalling an anecdote of “old Democritus in the tombs of Abdera, when one midnight the mischievous little boys of the town tried to frighten that sturdy philosopher with spurious ghosts” (1338). “[W]hen at the dead hour, intent on his [Democritus’s] studies, he heard the strange sounds, he did not so much as move his eyes from his page, only simply said: ‘Boys, little boys, go home. This is no place for you. You will catch cold here’” (1338-39). Here, it is clear that Melville opposes a rational scholar who believes only in visible things to irrational ghosts which appears as odd sound. Moreover, the narrator insists that Cotton Mather’s *Magnalia* is “Old wive’s fables” (1332), but another day he accepts Mather as “a practical, hard-working, earnest, upright man, a learned doctor” (1332), because “he himself had been eye-witness. Cotton Mather testified whereof he had seen” (1333). It can be therefore said that Melville, at least in

"The Apple-Tree Table," portrays rationalists as those who regard visual sensation as important. For instance, the narrator's wife, as a rationalist in the tradition of Democritus, makes too much of the sense of sight, so she refuses to use the old apple-tree table that the narrator finds in a garret because it appears dust-covered. Her attitude toward the table is completely changed only after it has been remade:

> In these fancies, my wife, for one, took little interest. She disrelished the idea of so unfashionable and indigent-looking a stranger as the table intruding into the polished society of more prosperous furniture. But when, after seeking its fortune at the cabinet-maker's, the table came home, varnished over, bright as a guinea, no one exceeded my wife in a gracious reception of it. It was advanced to an honorable position in the cedar-parlor. (1331)

The wife is also the first to expose the perplexing sounds when the old table begins to alarm the family: "'Heavens, mamma—you are not going to take up the carpet?' screamed Julia. . . . The carpet being removed, and the ear applied to the naked floor, not the slightest ticking could be heard. 'The table—after all, it is the table,' cried my wife" (1336–37). She takes a knife and cuts into the wood so as to unmask the strange sounds when the narrator perceives "a faint heaving up, or bulging of the wood" (1345). Furthermore, the following conversation between the narrator and his wife demonstrates that she attaches too much importance to visual sensation: "'Now tell me,' said she, addressing me, as soon as they [the daughters] had withdrawn, 'now tell me truly, did a bug really come out of this crack in the table?'"/ 'Wife, it is even so.'/ 'Did you see it come out?'/ 'I did'" (1343). The wife becomes overly excited visualizing the origin of the strange sounds and giving reasonable explanations to them, the tendency of which manifests itself in a scene where the narrator's family waits for the supernatural sound in front of the old table all the night through. When Julia and Anna become frightened by several explosive sounds, "pop! pop! pop!" (1346), the wife says, "it's

that new bottled cider, in the cellar, going off. I told Biddy to wire the bottles to-day" (1346). Hearing "Rap! rap! rap!" (1347) from the outside, she also remains unruffled and remarks, "it's the baker with the bread" (1347). In other words, the wife replaces strange occurrences of unknown origin with one rational phenomena after another and tries to grasp these happenings in a reasonable way, not in spiritual, superstitious way. As opposed to the rational wife, who believes only in visible things, the daughters, Julia and Anna, are likely to believe in spiritualistic, invisible phenomena. Their tendency is conspicuous in the scene quoted above, where the family eagerly waits for the mysterious sounds, and in the following description near the beginning of the story:

> [A]s for my daughter Julia, she never got over her strange emotions upon first accidentally encountering the table. Unfortunately, it was just as I [the narrator] was in the act of bringing it down from the garret. Holding it by the slab, I was carrying it before me, one cobwebbed hoof thrust out, which weird object, at a turn of the stairs, suddenly touched my girl, as she was ascending; whereupon, turning and seeing no living creature—for I was quite hidden behind my shield—seeing nothing, indeed, but the apparition of the Evil One's foot, as it seemed, she cried out, and there is no knowing what might have followed, had I not immediately spoken. (1331)

When "the Evil One's foot" touches Julia, she is blindly convinced that it is a satanic act and does not properly grasp the situation. While the narrator's wife believes in only rational visible things, Julia does not attempt to use visual perception; she accepts what she cannot see (in the above scene, an invisible evil spirit). Even when the mysterious ticks are revealed and Professor Johnson explains the situation scientifically, she persistently clings to spiritualism, claiming, "Say what you will, if this beauteous creature be not a spirit, it yet teaches a spiritual lesson" (1349) because, for her, an invisible spirit embodied in the supernatural bugs

is much more precious than the visible bugs themselves. Although Melville allots the spiritualist role mainly to Julia, it can be said that the other daughter, Anna, also acts as a spiritualist, in that both of them incline to spiritualism, rather than a scientific view, in a conversation with Professor Johnson:

> "It is not an unusual thing, this?" anxiously asked Anna.
>
> "Very unusual, Miss."
>
> At which Julia and Anna exchanged significant glances.
>
> "But is it not wonderful, very wonderful?" demanded Julia.
>
> "Very wonderful, Miss."
>
> My daughters exchanged still more significant glances, and Julia, emboldened, again spoke.
>
> "And must you not admit, sir, that it is the work of—of—of sp——?" (1348)

Among the wife and daughters, the narrator wavers between rationalism and spiritualism, and visual and auditory perceptions; he even admits of himself, "I gently oscillated between Democritus and Cotton Mother. But to my wife and daughters I assumed to be pure Democritus" (1346),[31] and he does not adopt Professor Johnson's scientific explanation for the supernatural phenomena in the scene mentioned here. Although the narrator, as Democritus, strives to be a rationalist who believes only in the visible, his eyes do not permit him to do so: "My eyes felt strained; they pained me. I was conscious of it. I knew I was injuring them. I knew I should rue this abuse of them next day; but I read on and on" (1333). Soon after, he feels eye strain, and the uncanny sounds attack him:

> I listened with all my ears.
>
> Tick! Tick!
>
> Was it a death-tick in the wainscot?
>
> With a tremulous step I went all round the room, holding my ear to the wainscot.

> No; it came not from the wainscot.
>
> Tick! Tick!
>
> I shook myself. I was ashamed of my fright.
>
> Tick! Tick!
>
> It grew in precision and audibleness. I retreated from the wainscot. It seemed advancing to meet me.
>
> I looked round and round, but saw nothing, only one cloven foot of the little apple-tree table. (1334)

When the narrator cannot help but rely on only his auditory sense, because of his fatigued eyes, the mysterious ticks appear, but he asserts that the sound is "a sort of buzzing in my ear" (1335). He cannot depend on both his ears and his eyes, as he says, "could I believe my senses? I saw something moving, or wriggling, or squirming upon the slab of the table" (1340). Yet, he ultimately decides to stay "home all that day, every hour or two bending over the table, both eye and ear" (1345). It can therefore be remarked that the narrator teeters between visual/auditory perception and rationalism/spiritualism, although he pretends to be a rationalist who dismisses invisible occult ideas.

Above, we have analyzed the close relationship between rationalism/spiritualism and visual/auditory perceptions, since the latter can be a particular clue to explain why Melville depicts the mysterious bugs as ticks; that is, a clue to understanding his evocation of an unearthly concept of time through the use of mystical bugs. Although we grasp time as a continual, consistent flow in general, Melville splits it into several flows, as shown in the following scene, in which the narrator is alone reading a book when he hears the sound in question:

> Tick! Tick!
>
> Yes, it was a faint sort of ticking.

> I looked up at my great Strasbourg clock in one corner. It was not that. The clock had stopped.
>
> Tick! Tick!
>
> Was it my watch?
>
> According to her usual practice at night, my wife had, upon retiring, carried my watch off to our chamber to hang it up on its nail.
>
> I listened with all my ears. (1334)

Here, we must note the following two points: First, the narrator tells us that the ticking he hears is completely different from our ordinary conception of time, contrasting his "great Strasbourg clock" and his watch (ordinary time) to the ungraspable ticks (extraordinary time). The second point is that the mystical ticking can be perceived only by listening, even though the movement of hands on a clock and ticking sounds normally correspond when we measure time with a clock. Melville, therefore, breaks the correspondence of the hands' movements and the ticking to evoke an irrational, unearthly time flow. Aside from this description, Melville emphasizes that the mysterious ticking symbolizes the unconventional concept of time when the narrator says, "Try as I would, I could not succeed much at reading. Somehow I seemed all ear and no eye; a condition of intense auticular suspense. But ere long it was broken. Tick! tick! tick!" (1339). Furthermore, in the other scene, the wife's behavior contrasts the time provoked by the supernatural ticking with our ordinary time, marked by the narrator's watch: "When breakfast was cleared away she took my watch, and, placing it on the table, addressed the supposed spirits in it, with jocosely defiant air; 'There, tick away, let us *see* who can tick loudest!'" (1338; emphasis added). What is interesting for our purpose is that this not only shows the contrast of unearthly time flow embodied in the supernatural ticking and the ordinary time flow marked by a watch, but also that the wife cannot "see" the former. In other words, Melville splits visual and auditory perception, both of which, by their

very natures, cannot be separated in a person, just as he splits a consistent time flow into visible rational time and invisible (audible) irrational time. Melville contrasts the ordinary time flow produced by the correspondence between the movement of hands and the ticks to mystical time, inviting us to acknowledge the awoken past.

Considering that Melville represents visual sense as a reasonable means of perception and, in contrast, presents auditory sense as a spiritual manifestation, it is safe to say that the time symbolized by the mysterious bugs' ticking, which can only be perceived aurally, epitomizes a spiritual, unearthly kind of time, namely, the past that had once passed away but now reappears before the narrator's family. Since bugs lying in the eggs for "one hundred and fifty years" cause the mysterious ticking, we see that these bugs are symbols of the past. Thus, as the bugs remain unhatched for 150 years before awakening, the past, which must have already fallen asleep, remains asleep for a long time, but finally stirs just as the narrator goes to a garret ("With a crooked nail, I tried to pick the lock, when scores of small ants and flies, harf-torpid, crawled forth from the key-hole, and, feeling the warmth of the sun in the pane, began frisking around me" [1330]). "The Apple-Tree Table" renders a completely different world from ours, one where the past and present and live together, since the past never vanishes but repeats a cycle of sleeping and waking, as the narrator jokes with his daughters—"Have not live toads been found in the hearts of dead rocks, as old as creation?" (1344). As demonstrated here, Melville does not regard time as a consistent, continual flow, but understands it as being composed of several flows. Therefore, he splits some time flow into rational, visible time (the present, as marked by a clock) and spiritual, invisible time (the past, as marked by the mysterious bugs). Given this, we can account for the demise of the bugs as soon as they are seen not as death but, as Julia says, the "glorified resurrection for the spirit of man" (1349), because they will, perhaps, awake many years from now. This story casts doubt upon our conventional concept of time and demonstrates an unorthodox concept

of time. As the subtitle, an "Original Spiritual Manifestation" suggests, "The Apple-Tree Table" engenders Melville's original spiritualist concept of the immortal past.

2. Searching the Secret Closet in "I and My Chimney"

Melville's short story "I and My Chimney" contains a riddle about "a secret chamber, or rather closet" (317) hidden somewhere in the narrator's house, but no scholar has, as yet, seriously tried to track it down. This may be because critics do not consider the work to be a genuine detective story,[32] since Melville does not clearly reveal the answer at the end of the tale. Instead of focusing on the mystery, most criticism has been devoted to interpreting the story as a parable of a magnificent chimney built on the narrator's dwelling.[33] It is regarded as ranking equal to Melville's other masterpieces, such as "Bartleby, the Scrivener" and "Benito Cereno" (Fisher 199; Campbell 10). There is no doubt that this story compels us to decipher the symbolism of the chimney, but in order to understand it, we must first take a detour to consider the riddle of the chamber, for both the chimney and the secret closet are similar in a way that embodies what always passes through our net of recognition in spite of being in plain sight. This is not unlike the works of one of Melville's contemporaries, Edgar Allan Poe. In Poe's "The Purloined Letter," Minister D— hides in plain sight a secret letter stolen from the boudoir of a woman, but the police fail to find it because of its extremely obvious location.

Although the chimney presents a considerable inconvenience to the family, on account of its dimensions, the narrator obstinately decides to live with it, and his obsessions about the chimney cause conflict between him and the other family members. In spite of his devotion to the chimney, his wife and daughters consider the chimney an obstacle, and they cannot entirely understand its meaning for him. They are not the only ones who cannot wholly understand the meaning; the reader is also kept in the dark. The chimney is presented

so allegorically that the more we attempt to grasp it, the more it seems to evade us, as in the case in “Bartleby,” which Milton R. Stern calls “one of the weird pieces in which readers find whatever they came to seek” (14), which also puzzles us. Merton M. Sealts, for example, provides a biographical reading in which he interprets the chimney as “the heart and the soul of Herman Melville” (147), who was forced to take “the examination of his mind made a few years before the story was written, at the instigation of his family” (153). Similarly, Scribe the architect feels compelled to investigate the narrator’s chimney. Sealts confirms his biographical reading “with the knowledge of the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of his [Melville’s] father, represented by the mystery concerning the late kinsman [Julian Dacres] of the story” (153).

Following Sealts, Newton Arvin, who passes his biographical reading through the lens of psychoanalysis, points out that “I and My Chimney” has a “tone of surface good humor, with a suppressed understrain of deep resentment, is so naturally kept up, and the great spinal chimney, with its dark subterranean base, is so expressive a symbol of a man’s essential self, that the sketch would always be worth preserving from oblivion” (236). Arvin also insists that “Melville felt himself emotionally trapped between his mother and his wife” (204), so that “the wife is represented as a gorgon of domestic energy and tyranny who is determined to abolish the great chimney that is central and fundamental to her husband’s existence, his essential and deepest self” (204). In addition to Arvin, Edward Hoffman Rosenberry and Richard Harter Fogle relate the great chimney to Melville’s own mental state when he struggled as an unsuccessful writer (Fogle 76–78; Rosenberry 180–84). William J. Sowder and Ray Broadus Browne interpret the chimney as political symbolism. Sowder claims that the sketch in which the narrator and the wife quarrel about the abolishment of the chimney represents a dispute over slavery in the American South (128–45). Browne asserts

that the quarrel between the husband and the wife embodies the confrontation between England and America, conservatism and liberalism, and concludes that "the chimney not only represents conservative order, but in fact represents the British constitution" (264). Other critics, such as Sarah Wilson and Rasmus R. Simonsen, focus on the unique structure of the narrator's mansion, with rooms that double as corridors. Wilson considers Melville's view on gender roles, remarking, "In the model of the self that Melville wants to found in unconventional domestic space, gender identity resembles one of the rooms in this house. It is never a terminal state, never a space that is accessed and existed through one door. It is itself a route of communication and circulation" (74-75). From the viewpoint of queer studies, Simonsen states that "I and My Chimney" attempts to invert "a stable binary system or connotative hierarchy" (29) and that "[t]he chimney, as the *idée fixe* of the story, guides the inversion of conventional hierarchies such as top/bottom, straight/crooked, masculine/feminine, and natural/depraved" (27).

While these readings seem appropriate and, to some degree, succeed in explaining this puzzling short story, we have not yet examined the characteristics of the chimney itself, that is, the reader is never allowed to reach a certain meaning of it. Of course, all literary masterpieces are capable of withstanding various interpretations, but in "I and My Chimney" especially, the ungraspable meaning is worthy of careful consideration, for it is, itself, the main theme of the story. Melville describes what cannot be wholly comprehended even if it stands clearly, as symbolized by the motif of the narrator's chimney. To denote the sense that something clear but ungraspable always slips through the net of our recognition, he elaborates via details in which he intentionally uses the prepositions "through" and "around."[34] The characters go through or around the same place over and over again, so that they never reach their destinations. Thus, Melville intends to contrive circumstances where not only the characters, but also the reader, cannot help going through or around something. If this is the

case, we can suppose that the answer to the riddle of the secret chamber is also one of the components making up the ungraspable nature of the chimney. As Melville might hope, readers will have dismissed a vital clue for reaching the secret chamber, in spite of its being in plain sight. Indeed, he alludes to the key for it, but there is nothing to do but dismiss the chamber, because it is presented so obviously that readers do not regard it as important. Melville hides the secret chamber in plain sight to make readers go through or around it, as the characters do.

There is a mysterious point about the chimney: No one can grasp its dimensions. In fact, it seems natural that its magnificence makes it difficult for characters to take its measurements. We need to focus on this point, using it as a clue for deciphering the meaning of the chimney, because Melville consciously tells us of its difficulty again and again. To begin, it is not easy for the narrator, who seems to be the person most familiar with the chimney, to grasp its dimensions:

> Even to me, its dimensions, at times, seem incredible. It does not look so big—no, not even in the cellar. By the mere eye, its magnitude can be but imperfectly comprehended, because only one side can be received at one time. . . . And so, an adequate conception of the magnitude of this chimney is only to be got at by a sort of process in the higher mathematics, by a method somewhat akin to those whereby the surprising distances of fixed stars are computed. (1305)

However affectionate the narrator is toward the chimney, he is an amateur when it comes to architecture, so it is expected that he finds it toilsome to expand its dimensions; but when an architect, Scribe, visits the home, he also gives up on his measuring attempts, saying, “But large as it appears above the roof, I would not have inferred the magnitude of this foundation, sir” (1313). Scribe later visits the narrator again, and in this attempt to measure the chimney,

he suspects that there is a secret chamber or closet inside it. Scribe does not mention this to the narrator at that time, but saves it for another day, when he writes to the narrator, "Trusting that you may be guided aright, in determining whether it is Christian-like knowingly to reside in a house, hidden in which is a secret closet" (1318). No sooner does the narrator's wife learn the contents of Scribe's letter than she begins scheming to demolish the chimney and reveal the secret chamber. The narrator feels uneasy and calls Scribe again, offering him a bribe if he will prove that there is no chamber inside the chimney. When Scribe visits for the third time and remarks that the figures of the chimney's dimensions do not add up if there is no chamber, the narrator points out Scribe's miscalculations one after another, so as not to admit the chamber's existence. Scribe acknowledges his mistakes, but his omission is somehow strange:

> "But, Mr. Scribe," said I stroking my chin, "have you allowed for the walls, both main and sectional? They take up some space, you know."
>
> "Ah, I had forgotten that," tapping his forehead; "but," still ciphering on his paper, "that will not make up the deficiency."
>
> "But, Mr. Scribe, have you allowed for the recesses of so many fire-places on a floor, and for the fire walls, and the flues; in short, ***Mr. Scribe, have you allowed for the legitimate chimney itself—some one hundred and forty-four square feet or thereabouts, Mr. Scribe?***"
>
> ***"How unaccountable. That slipped my mind, too.***" (1323; emphasis added)

It is strange to think that an architect would dismiss walls and pipes when calculating, but more than anything else, it is absolutely impossible that he would absent from his mind the existence of the chimney itself, even if he was an amateur. The chimney stands apparent, but refuses to be grasped at all. Moreover, it is not only the volume, but also the meaning, of the chimney's existence that cannot be comprehended. While the chimney causes inconvenience

to the narrator's family life, he is tied to living with it and considers it to be the master or king of the house:

> My chimney is grand seignior here—the one great domineering object, not more of the landscape, than of the house; all the rest of which house, in each architectural arrangement, as may shortly appear, is, in the most marked manner, accommodated, not to my wants, but to my chimney's, which, among other things, has the centre of the house to himself, leaving but the odd holes and corners to me. (1299)

It is no exaggeration to say that the narrator's house is built for the chimney, and only a little space is spared for the residents. The chimney is so large that there is no foyer or any kind of hall, which often causes quarrels between the narrator and his wife:

> She avers that endless domestic inconveniences arise—more particularly from the chimney's stubborn central locality. The grand objection with her is, that it stands midway in the place where a fine entrance-hall ought to be. In truth, there is no hall whatever to the house—nothing but a sort of square landing-place, as you enter from the wide front door. A roomy enough landing-place, I admit, but not attaining to the dignity of a hall. (1306)

Apart from the wife, Scribe is also amazed by the bothersome structure, saying, "[S]ir, this house would appear to have been built simply for the accommodation of your chimney" (1314). However, the narrator stubbornly defends the chimney and does not permit anyone to leave it. No one but the narrator (and perhaps not even he himself) can understand why he sticks to the troublesome chimney and so do readers. The chimney passes through our net of recognition, which is to say that, even if we strive to reach a destination —in this case, the meaning of the chimney—we cannot help but go through it. As mentioned above, Scribe fails to measure the volume of the chimney because of simple oversights. Such errors serve as one

of the descriptions of a phenomenon of "going through," in terms of cognition. This is an abstract, epistemological "passing," but Melville parades the details related to "going through" not only in abstract, but also concrete, terms throughout the story to express what is obvious but ungraspable. The first mention of this epistemological "passing" is made by the narrator and Scribe, but we should also note that the phenomenon, in more practical terms, is embodied in the structure of the house, where no one can get to where he wants to go:

> The consequence was, almost every room, like a philosophical system, was in itself an entry, or passage-way to other rooms, and systems of rooms—a whole suite of entries, in fact. ***Going through*** the house, you seem to be forever going somewhere, and getting nowhere. It is like losing one's self in the woods; round and round the chimney you go, and if you arrive at all, it is just where you started, and so you begin again, and again get nowhere. Indeed—though I say it not in the way of fault-finding at all—never was there so labyrinthine an abode. (1311; emphasis added)

The rooms in the house are rather a type of passage, so that one inevitably goes through the room he is heading for and never reaches it. In addition, the house does not have a ceiling for the first floor, which enables Melville to evoke a labyrinthine residence whose rooms are indistinguishable from its passageways: "[T]he ceiling, so to speak, of the place where you enter the house, that ceiling is, in fact, the ceiling of the second floor, not the first. The two floors are made one here; so that ascending this turning stairs, you seem going up into a kind of soaring tower, or light-house" (1306). Aside from the structure of the mansion, Melville frequently uses the preposition "through," even in seemingly unnecessary cases, to nullify the border between the rooms and the passage and to illuminate the sense of slipping from our recognition something standing obviously before us. This tendency is, for instance, displayed conspicuously when the narrator mentions that his wife plans to destroy the chimney:

> How often my wife was at me about that projected grand entrance-hall of hers, which was to be knocked clean ***through*** the chimney, from one end of the house to the other, and astonish all guests by its generous amplitude. . . . She spent many long nights elaborating her plans; in imagination building her boasted hall ***through*** the chimney, as though its high mightiness were a mere spear of sorrel-top. (1307; emphasis added)

Furthermore, when speaking of the housemaid, Biddy, the narrator says, "Biddy, the housemaid, tells other people's housemaids, that her mistress will spy a spot on the dresser straight ***through*** the pewter platter, put up on purpose to hide it" (1307; emphasis added). When telling of his wife's plans to renovate the house, he declares:

> As far as I [the narrator] could see ***through*** it, it seemed to involve the general idea of a sort of irregular archway, or elbowed tunnel, which was to penetrate the chimney. . . . Doubtless it was a bold stroke of genius, that plan of hers, and so was Nero's when he schemed his grand canal ***through*** the Isthmus of Corinth. Nor will I take oath, that, had her project been accomplished, then, by help of lights hung at judicious intervals ***through*** the tunnel, some Belzoni or other might not have succeed in future ages in penetrating ***through*** the masonry, and actually emerging into the dining-room, and once there, it would have been inhospitable treatment of such a traveler to have denied him a recruiting meal. (1310-11; emphasis added)

It is obvious that Melville often uses the preposition "through" when he describes the narrator's wife. Thus, her words and deeds embody the sense of "going through," while those of the narrator symbolize the sense of "staying [in] one place." Recall that Melville often decorated his novellas from the same period as "I and My Chimney," such as *Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs*, *The Two Temples*, and *The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids*, by composing them as opposed two parts, called "diptychs," with contrary motives. Certainly, "I and My Chimney" has no such an obvious structure, but the

contradictory representation of the narrator and his wife also sheds light on the story's theme of unreachability. We should now argue that "staying," or more precisely speaking, "going around one place," is represented by the narrator's behaviors.

While Melville portrays the wife, who always looks toward the future, with an image evoked by the preposition "through," he has the narrator stay in the same place from the outset of the story: "I and my chimney, two grey-headed old smokers, reside in the country. We are, I may say, old settlers here; particularly my old chimney, which settles more and more every day" (1298). Further, the narrator is described as a person who does not aggressively appear in front of people: "from standing behind my old-fashioned chimney so much, I have got to be quite behind the age too, as well as running behind-hand in everything else" (1298). He half-jokingly says, "Indeed, those rumors about my behindhandedness are so far correct, that I have an odd sauntering way with me sometimes of going about with my hands behind my back" (1298). The narrator, therefore, stays with the chimney and never attempts to move forward. By the end of the story, he becomes a regular homebody, going outside less frequently than before, in order to guard the chimney all the time. "It is now some seven years since I have stirred from home. My city friends all wonder why I don't come to see them, as in former times. They think I am getting sour and unsocial" (1327). Since "I and My Chimney" both begins and ends with "staying," we should not dismiss the phenomenon. While the narrator consistently remains in the same place, he also keeps himself at the same point in terms of the time flow; thus, he is likely to prefer the old:

> Old myself, I take to oldness in things; for that cause mainly loving old Montaigne, and old cheese, and old wine; and eschewing young people, hot rolls, new books, and early potatoes, and very fond of my old claw-footed chair, and old club-footed Deacon White, my neighbor, and that still nigher old neighbor, my betwisted old

> grape-vine, that of a summer evening leans in his elbow for cosy company at my window-sill, while I, within doors, lean over mine to meet his; and above all, high above all, am fond of my high-mantled old chimney. (1308–9)

The narrator stays at the same point spatiotemporally, which is opposite to his wife, who is always moving forward with eyes on the future. Melville represents the wife as follows: "While spicily impatient of present and past, like a grass of ginger-beer she overflows with her schemes; and, with like energy as she puts down her foot, puts down her preserves and her pickles, and lives with them in a continual future . . ." (1308). The wife passes through the present and lives in the future, but the narrator is left behind the people and things around him, choosing to stay in the past. More precisely speaking, it is incorrect to conclude that the narrator does not move at all in terms of space and time, because it is accurate to say that he does not stay in the same place and time, but goes around them forever. For example, he suddenly exhibits a strange behavior: "when I was a little out of my mind, I now think—getting a spade from the garden, I set to work, ***digging round the foundation***" (1304; emphasis added), though he also says, "By the mere eye, its [the chimney's] magnitude can be but imperfectly comprehended, because only one side can be received at one time" (1305). Also, when Scribe visits, they "made two more circumnavigations for the first and second floors" (1314). According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "Circumnavigation" is defined as "to go completely around (as the earth) especially by water; also: to go around instead of through." It is interesting for our purposes that, in the above definition, Merriam-Webster defines "through" as a word opposed to "around." Like the compilers of the dictionary, Melville seems to have the two prepositions in opposition to each other in his mind, so that this binary opposition is embodied in the contrasting behaviors of the narrator and the wife. Melville, deliberately uses these prepositions to portray the characters and evoke something

clear but ungraspable, symbolized by the magnificent chimney whose exact volume and meaning of existence no one can comprehend.

The narrator, the wife, and Scribe cannot understand what the chimney is, nor can readers. Perhaps, the secret chamber is so obvious that we go through or around it without recognizing it as the answer to the mystery, even if we read the story again and again. Indeed, throughout "I and My Chimney," Melville does not reveal the answer, but instead indicates the way to solve the riddle. Thus, we should suspect what is too plain to see. There is an only place in the story where Melville alludes to the answer of the secret chamber:

> At the second landing, midway up the chimney, is a ***mysterious door***, entering to a ***mysterious closet***; and there I [the narrator] keep ***mysterious*** cordials, of a choice, ***mysterious*** flavor, made so by the constant nurturing and subtle ripening of the chimney's gentle heat, distilled through that warm mass of masonry. (1306; emphasis added)

It is Scribe who first raises the issue of the secret chamber, but he cannot know of the space described in the above quotation, for, as we have noted earlier, he also makes one simple mistake after another when measuring the house. The narrator has absolutely no awareness that the closet which he so easily accesses is the "secret" chamber at issue, and neither do the readers. However, given that "I and My Chimney" again and again presents the fact that what is in plain sight cannot be revealed, that place labeled as a "mysterious" closet is exactly where we hope to reach. Melville never tells his readers the solution to the riddle, but he sets it out noticeably. Before publishing "I and My Chimney," he dealt with the same theme in Chapter 124 of *Moby-Dick; or The Whale*. Under Captain Ahab, *The Pequod* attempts to sail eastward in the Pacific Ocean before noon, but no one realizes that they are going in the opposite direction until Ahab does. The narrator of *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael, says, "Upon this

every soul was confused; for the phenomenon just then observed by Ahab had unaccountably escaped every one else; but its very blinding palpableness must have been the cause" (388). In *Moby-Dick*, Melville, as in "I and My Chimney," shows that over-"palpableness" evokes a paradoxical blindness.

Although we have brought the secret chamber to light, perhaps no one, apart from the narrator, can set foot in the space. Instead, all others might be doomed to go through or around over and over, because "I and My Chimney" is told only from the narrator's viewpoint, so only he knows where the door is. In addition, as the narrator says, "even if there were [a] secret closet, [a] secret it should remain, and secret it shall" be (1321), so he tries to keep the secret. If we get to there, we must remember the cautionary tale of the gentleman who visits Anna. He loses his way to the exit and wanders throughout the house (1312). We, too, would have no choice but to roam through or around the labyrinthine structure. "I and My Chimney" portrays the allegory of the chimney as impossible to interpret with only one meaning and stresses that people underestimate the mystical chimney. They fail to see how vain it is to pursue the absolute meaning of things when confronted with a mystery. The secret closet, therefore, works as one of the principal motifs composing the theme of "I and My Chimney." In spite of its plainness, or rather because of its over-plainness, we become blind to it. In short, Melville involves the reader in the eternal following motion toward the mystery in "I and My Chimney."

Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, mystical images, ones that are "near enough to reach for, yet too distant to grasp" (Delbanco 59), recur in Melville's writings. Through this thesis, we have examined the notion further and attempted to identify its cause. We can attribute this to Melville's Calvinistic views of life, in which predestination is a constant source of captivation. Melville was convinced that he could not live according to his own free will.

This view can especially be seen in the theme of the duplicative relationship between the first and second selves. Melville depicts the second self as a prophetic double that embodies divine will; as a result, the first self always goes behind it. Melville struggled with the divine in his works throughout his lifetime; therefore, his eternal pursuit of the second self appears to reflect the arbitrary God of Calvinism. Given that dualistic images feature in almost all of Melville's writings, such unreachability, that is, the insolvable discrepancy of binary oppositions, was his central concern as a novelist.

The recurring motifs of Melville's work that we have examined here, such as the unreachable pursuit and dissonant images that appear in diptych-like short stories, can be regarded as two mirrors facing each other; they are the embodiments this concern. In addition, as we have examined in "Benito Cereno," whose slogan is "*Seguid vuestro jefe* (follow your leader)" (58), the eternal following motion itself can be an effective means of understanding the bottomless darkness of God. Melville tells us that, when we trace the footsteps of the divine, we can grasp Him by means of the bodily way against intelligence. Now, we close our discussion with a suggestion of the placement of Melville's works in the American Renaissance, especially with regard to his characters' internal discrepancies.

The concept of the "American Renaissance" was originally defined by F. O. Matthiessen, who first identified five writers—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman (note that Matthiessen excluded Poe, due to his inconsistency with the other writers in terms of his indifference to American society)—whose works make up the canons of antebellum American literature and referred to the "mid-nineteenth century as a *re-birth*" (vii) in American culture. This fruitful period for American literature is often identified as a flowering of romanticism. R. P. Adams, in discussing the romantic aspects of mid-nineteenth century American literature, defines romanticism in his paper "Romanticism and the American Renaissance":

> [A] romantic artist will strive, not to imitate an ideal perfection of form which has always existed, but to originate a form which has never existed before and which will uniquely express what he alone feels and knows. To do so, he will rely more on imagination than on logic, more on symbols than on signs or allegories, more on unconscious than on conscious powers. He will believe that he is creating a genuine new thing and thereby changing and renewing the whole of his organic universe. (420)

As Adams was publishing his paper in 1952, Lionel Trilling and Richard Chase provided contrasting views on the romanticism of American literature.[35] In "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," collected in *The Liberal Imagination* from 1951, Trilling considers the factors of romanticism in America that Adams mentions and points out:

> American writers of genius have not turned their minds to society. Poe and Melville were quite apart from it; the reality they sought was only tangential to society. Hawthorne was acute when he insisted that he did not write novels but romances—he thus expressed his awareness of the lack of social texture in his work. (212)

Trilling regards romance in America as a defect in the flowering of literature because he presupposes that the novel is "a perpetual quest for reality, the field of its research being always the social world, the material of its analysis being always manners as the indication of the direction of man's soul" (212). By contrast, Chase considers it quite differently in *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, published in 1957. He notes that "the best American novelists have found uses for romance far beyond the escapism, fantasy, and sentimentality often associated with it" (x), He insists that

> The imagination that has produced much of the best and most characteristic American fiction has been shaped by the contradictions and not by the unities and harmonies of our culture. In a sense this may be true of all literatures of whatever time and place. Nevertheless there are some literatures which take their form and tone from polarities, opposites, and irreconcilables, but are content to rest in and sustain them, or to resolve them into unities, if at all, only by special and limited means. The American novel tends to rest in contradictions and among extreme ranges of experience. When it attempts to resolve contradictions, it does so in oblique, morally equivocal ways. (1–2)

Thus, given Chase's claim, Melville is a very "American" author, in that his central concern is the "contradictions" that fight against socio-cultural unity, and he strives to combine polarities into a single state, like two sides of the same coin, through literature. More precisely, Melville does not totally intend to integrate polarities into one, as dialecticians do, but instead looks for the means of uniting contradictions, allowing a difference between them as it is. As such, Melville often depicts things as having dual images. In this regard, Melville's view differs from Emerson's, which seems to apply to all correspondence between men and nature, symbolized in the following famous quote: "Standing on the bare ground, —my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, —all mean egotism

vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am part or parcel of God" (1709). Whereas Emerson aims to merge himself with nature and God as "a transparent eyeball," Melville, as stated again and again, forbids the characters in his prose to unite totally with God. This contrast can be also be seen in Hawthorne and Whitman's works, as Matthiessen asserts that Hawthorne's "desire to provide 'a neutral ground where the Actual and Imaginary may meet' happens to contrast significantly with a note of Whitman's that 'imagination and actuality must be united'" (264).

If irreconcilability is quintessential for American Renaissance authors, and in particular for Melville and Hawthorne, what is noteworthy is that their most important works hold the same text titles as the central motifs they include, as John. T. Irwin, illustrating Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter," insists:

> The tale is one of the earliest and most sophisticated of a group of American symbolist works in which textual self-inclusion is a function of the coincidence of the text's title and the name of the central symbolic object the tale presents. In such works—*The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby-Dick* are other examples—the qualities the text attributes to the symbolic object are for the most part the attributes of the text itself. The object called the purloined letter, described by and thus contained in the story called 'The Purloined Letter,' is a self-included linguistic representation of the text's own representational status, in effect a symbol of the conditions of linguistic representationality. (*Mystery* 22)

Exemplifying these texts' titles, Irwin here refers to the matter of a container and the contained. This kind of difference between the titles and their contents embodies the core of symbolism: A symbol holds a discrepancy in itself (in passing, Melville emphasizes the discrepancy between the title and its central motif, as in the case with *Moby-Dick* and the whale Moby Dick). Thus, we can assume that, if an author fails to evoke the difference

between a symbol (container) and its meanings (the contained), the symbol ends merely in an allegory. However, if he is successful in calling out the differences in the symbol, his work becomes a genuine piece of symbolic literature. Melville seems to know this is the clue to creating true symbolism, and it manifests in his works as the permanent pursuit of the second self. With this in mind, the disagreement inside oneself (in the case of Melville, that is the first self pursuing its own free will while the second self obeys a predetermined fate) should not be resolved. If writing romantic literature entails salvation for Melville himself, it is because, say, Moby Dick, Bartleby, and Billy Budd tell him the truth, which emerges as estrangement inside oneself. Further, when Melville engenders a symbol holding such duplicity into a literary work, his own internal, eternal quarrel with God can turn into salvation. Tackling his romances, Melville must have noticed that it is not significant for him to solve the struggle with divine, but rather to keep writing about the inconsistency between himself and an arbitrary God through literature.

Notes

1. Keppler defines the term the second self as follows: Like "Double" it suggests two foldness without implying duplication: like "inner self" it suggests a deeper relationship but not one that is confined to a state of mind" (3). Keppler also insists that "[t]he first self is the one who tends to be in the foreground of the reader's attention, usually the one whose viewpoint the reader shares" (3); and in contrast, "[t]he second self is the intruder from the background of shadows, and however prominent he may become he always tends to remain half-shadowed" (3).

2. Regarding Herman's parents, Delbanco argues:

> Among the strains between his parents were their religious differences. Although Allan habitually spelled the word GOD with capital letters, he adopted his own father's mild Unitarianism, which, according to more pious members of the family, including his wife, tended to diminish the majesty of God in favor of the dignity of man. Maria not only took her churchgoing more seriously but was warmly committed to Calvinist creed to which her family had subscribed in its Dutch Reformed version. (22)

3. Regarding Herman's piety, Thompson remarks that "[u]ntil he left home, at the age of eighteen, Melville seems to have developed a deeply-rooted belief in the essential truth of his religious heritage. . . . Melville did not completely rebel against his Calvinistic heritage until after he had written and published his first two travel-narratives, *Typee* and *Omoo*." (4–5)

4. For the theme of typology in American literature, see Berkovitch.

5. Beryl also argues that "'The Two Temples,' where an eccentric adaptation of typology is specifically combined with allegory, Melville underlines his intention by referring to St. Paul's famous illustration of allegorical interpretation in Galatians 4:22ff" (603).

6. Irwin focuses on these descriptions in Poe's works in order to explain that "[t]he paradox of analytic self-inclusion, of absolute self-consciousness, that lies at the heart of Poe's detective stories is one of Borges's recurring themes" (*Mystery* 13).

7. For example, see Hoffman 425.

8. It is worth noting that as the peddler thrusts lightning rods at the narrator's heart, in "Benito Cereno," Babo, who acts a role as a mind in the rebellion, presents dagger at Captain Delano's heart (115).

9. See Newman 221–27.

10. See the definition of "hermetic" in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*.

10. See Bickley 122.

11. For more details of the relationship between "Benito Cereno" and Melville's diptychs, see Karcher 120–27.

12. Until this scene, the old sailor has not been mentioned at all.

13. See Newman 110–11.

14. See Ecclesiastes 1:13; 1:16; 1:17; 1:18; 2:3; 2:9; 2:12; 2:13; 2:19; 2:21; 2:26; 7:10; 7:11; 7:12; 7:19; 7:23; 7:25; 8:1; 8:16; 9:10; 9:13; 9:15; 9:16; 9:18; 10:1; 10:10; 12:9.

15. See Higgins 467–83.

16. See Ecclesiastes 1:1, 1:12, 2:8, 2:12, 4:13, 4:14, 4:15, 5:9, 8:2, 8:3, 8:4, 9:14, 10:16, 10:17, 10:20.

17. See Ecclesiastes 3:14, 5:7, 8:12, 8:13, 9:2, 12:5, 12:13.

19. For the genesis of *Moby-Dick*, see also Stewart, Barbour, and Hayford.

20. Julian Markels insists that "[Melville] left a play like *Macbeth* completely unmarked in The Hilliard & Grey edition not because he was less exited by it than by some others but because he was deeply familiar with it already" (35).

21. For more details of the outline of Melville studies in connection with Shakespearean works, see Rawlings 51–94.

22. For instance, Paul comments that "[t]he Town-Ho's Story contains Melville's germ of tragedy and his portrayal of the retributive justice of the whale. In this there is a glimmer of relief from the overwhelming sense of evil that engulfs Ahab" (213). In addition, Geiger argues that "this chapter records the divine punishment of injustice and, correlatively, the divine enforcement of justice" (465).

23. Spofford says that "Melville paints both Steelkilt and Radney an ambiguous dark grey, so too the question of divine intervention remains unanswered" (270). Moreover, Rose, who mentions the conflict between the two sailors, takes "into account the ambiguity not only of the whale but of every important character in the episode and, by extension, in the novel itself" (542).

24. In addition to the mentioned scenes, Ward regards the cetological chapters in *Moby-Dick* as necessary digressions whose "sheer weight of fact keeps the metaphysical and spiritual meaning of *Moby-Dick* solidly anchored to matter-of-fact reality" (169).

25. See also Jones, who developed Freud's interpretation of *Hamlet*.

26. Some critics argue the psychological changes of the narrator of "Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs." For example, Cooper asserts that "through the course of telling his story, the storyteller changes from a seemingly dispassionate and reliable narrator to one who is overcome by the traumas he has inadvertently awakened in himself" (144).

27. Charvat also groups "The Apple-Tree Table" with "I and My Chimney" and "Jimmy Rose.

28. For more details of Fox Sisters, see Chapin.

29. See Melville's *Pierre* 247–52.

30. See Thoreau 224.

31. Pribek examines the relationship between "The Apple-Tree Table" and Democritus, and explains that the narrator embodies Melville's wavering mind between spiritualism and rationalism.

32. Sealts points out that "Dacres" is an anagram of 'sacred' (150).

33. While many critics attempt to understand the meaning of the mysterious chimney, Seelye reveals the meaninglessness of pursuing it, arguing that "in a world of Melville's stories noting is known for certain, communication is impossible, and promised relationship never are fulfilled" (92); and that "the chimney of the story becomes at once the narrator's alter ego and a symbol (like the whale) of All that is best left undisturbed" (92).

34. Simonsen focuses on the inversion of conventional hierarchies such as "straight / crooked" (27).

35. See Watanabe 41–56.

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