

ANALYSIS

Moby-Dick (1851) and *Pym* (1838)



Herman Melville

(1819-1891)

Bulkington is the exemplar in *Moby-Dick* (1851) who guides the Pequod on its passage out to sea. To explain his role as guiding spirit is to define a key element in the allegory of Ishmael's psychological development, one whereby Melville acknowledges Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838) while contrasting his own vision.

Interpretations have identified Bulkington with "the original of Harry Bolton, whose death on a whaling cruise was described in *Redburn*"; or with Melville's cousin Thomas Wilson Melvill, "veteran of four whaling voyages";¹ with Henry Chatillon, the western guide of Francis Parkman;² with Thomas Hart Benton;³ with Billy Budd;⁴ with Hawthorne and Thomas Jefferson;⁵ and, most instructively, with Poe.⁶

The character that has been shown to resemble Poe in *The Confidence-Man* is "slender," "haggard" and "untanned," a "shatter-brain" with "raven curls,"⁷ whereas Ishmael says that Bulkington "stood full six feet in height, with noble shoulders, and a chest like a coffer-dam. I have seldom seen such brawn in a man. His face was deeply brown and burnt."⁸ What connects this brawny sailor to Poe is that he has just come off the Grampus, the name of Pym's ship in *Pym*. There is no external evidence that Melville had read *Pym*,⁹ but internal evidence is striking and precise. Several critics have pointed out many similarities between *Pym* and *Moby-Dick*, without considering Bulkington or contrasting in detail the visions of the books.¹⁰

Bulkington leaves the Grampus for the Pequod, a choice or progression. Ishmael says the Grampus "is regarded as premonitory of the advance of the great sperm whale" (124). Likewise, while acknowledging the augur of Poe, Melville implies that *Pym* is premonitory of the advance of *Moby-Dick*. With a different ship, he conveys his philosophical relationship to Hawthorne, the Christian: Ishmael is transported by "the Moss," evoking Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, but only as far as Nantucket, where "the little Moss came snugly to anchor" (63). By then, Ishmael has already rejected Christianity and "wed" the pagan, Queequeg. It is true that Bulkington resembles the brawny thinker who seeks Truth in Hawthorne's "The Intelligence Office" and that Melville identifies this figure with Hawthorne in his review, written

while he was composing *Moby-Dick*,¹¹ but at that time Melville had not finished reading the “Man of Mosses,” was just coming to understand his vision and considered him at first impression “a seeker, not a finder yet.” His later judgment is expressed by the symbol of the Moss: Hawthorne is at anchor in a snug harbor, in contrast to Bulkington, for as Melville also says in his review, “You must have plenty of sea-room to tell the Truth in” (547, 544).

The Grampus in *Pym* is capsized in a storm, presumably lost, whereas in *Moby-Dick* the Grampus has returned full after a long voyage and the ship that is ultimately lost is the Pequod. Bulkington only could have gone along so far with Pym, and the ships of Melville and Poe are different. Another detail that evokes Poe while differentiating from him is Ishmael’s identification of Bulkington as a Virginian, but a mountaineer rather than a city man such as Poe, whose Pym associates himself with the society of gentlemen in Richmond, Virginia. Mountains in Virginia bring to mind Monticello and Jefferson, whose democratic ideals are antithetical to *Pym* and exalted in *Moby-Dick*. Inasmuch as Melville was a whaler and identified himself anonymously as a Virginian in his review of Hawthorne’s *Mosses*, it would be more apt to identify Bulkington with the Jeffersonian author than with Poe. It seems most respectful of the text, however, to define Bulkington as an allegorical figure rather than try to identify him reductively with someone else. Throughout *Moby-Dick*, especially in chapters such as “Jonah Historically Regarded,” while basing his fiction on “the plain facts” (177) Melville at the same time ridicules literal-mindedness and urges reading of his book in a figurative mode.

Though his allegorical role has yet to be elaborated, the general ideas Bulkington embodies, or bulks forth, have been defined: He is the “natural seeker for truth”;¹² the seeker and “guide to spirit,”¹³ and “Man Seeking Truth.”¹⁴ He represents freedom, independence, and self-reliance.¹⁵ He has his “psychic center in the right place” and his name suggests “Apollo’s Bull King, the one creature who was able to stand calm and balanced in Dionysian chaos.”¹⁶ He is “the autonomous individual.”¹⁷ The moral opposite of Ahab,¹⁸ Bulkington is the Democratic hero: “the possibility that Ishmael may become Bulkington is a possibility that he may mature.” Bulkington is “Man fully formed, fully human, fully wise.”¹⁹

At sea the first night, when he discovers Bulkington at the helm, Ishmael says, “I looked with sympathetic awe and fearfulness upon the man, who in mid-winter just landed from a four years’ dangerous voyage, could so unrestingly push off again... The land seemed scorching to his feet” (97). This spirit is introduced at the outset of *Moby-Dick*: “Why is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at some time or other crazy to go to sea?” (13). Bulkington is a robust healthy soul developed--by going to sea, to see: “In the deep shadows of his eyes floated some reminiscences that did not seem to give him much joy” (23). The helmsman embodies the vision of Melville’s book, whose proportion of joy to sorrow, light to dark, reflects the earth: “The sun hides not the ocean, which is the dark side of this earth, and which is two thirds of this earth. So, therefore, that mortal man who hath more of joy than sorrow in him, that mortal man cannot be true--not true, or undeveloped. With books the same” (355). Bulkington contrasts with jolly Stubb, who is a stub of a man. He looms so large in significance that the reader is challenged to comprehend him: “Know ye, now, Bulkington?” (97)

The helmsman is a “huge favorite” with his shipmates, yet independent (24). Bulkington offsets Ahab as a model of masculinity to the androgynous Ishmael, “bride” of Queequeg. Ishmael defines Bulkington allegorically as the “mortally intolerable truth; that all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore” (97). This echoes an earlier celebration of an unspecified man, evoking both Ahab and Bulkington, with “greatly superior natural force” who has been led by seafaring “to think untraditionally and independently” (71). As in *Pym*, the land is the familiar world of tradition, conformity and the limitations of the rational conscious mind; whereas the sea is the soul: truth, depth, and the boundless divine. Going to sea, figuratively, is spiritual growth--heroic and hazardous.

In “The Lee Shore” chapter Ishmael compares Bulkington to a “storm-tossed ship” along a lee shore, recalling the painting aligned with Father Mapple’s pulpit: “a gallant ship beating against a terrible storm off a lee coast” (43). The Christian painting includes an angel above the storm with a ray of sunlight beaming down from its face onto the ship, which Ishmael interprets as a promise of salvation. In “The Lee Shore” Melville counters the Christian vision with Ishmael’s description of Bulkington drowned in a storm

with no angel, celebrating the spirit of the helmsman by resurrecting it as a pantheist deity: "Take heart, take heart, O Bulkington! Bear thee grimly, demigod! Up from the spray of thy ocean-perishing--straight up, leaps thy apotheosis!" (98)

Of the few interpretive comments on this event, none pursue the allegorical implications, though one points the way: "The spirit of his 'deep, earnest thinking'...transcends his certain death."²⁰ As Bulkington "dives" into the deep, his spirit rises from the "bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature" (140). His aspiring spirit is identified with vapor from ocean spray leaping upward, and the ocean is compared to God: "as in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God" (97). The avatar of this God in *Moby-Dick* is the bulky whale, whose spout leaps "straight up" like the spirit of Bulkington. Later, Stubb calls himself "as good a fellow as ever spouted up his ghost," and elsewhere Ishmael says "--the ghost is spouted up" (467, 358). Ishmael first sees Bulkington in the whale—"The Spouter-Inn," with its bartender Jonah, "the whale's mouth--the bar," and on its sign outside: "a tall straight jet of misty spray" (23, 18). In "The Fountain" chapter Ishmael uses the metaphor of mist to represent his own thinking, and says, "I am convinced that from the heads of all ponderous profound beings, such as Plato, Pyrrho, the Devil, Jupiter, Dante, and so on, there always goes up a certain semi-visible steam, while in the act of thinking deep thoughts" (313).

In the psychological allegory of *Moby-Dick*, the cerebral drama of Ishmael, the loss of Bulkington--the power of deep, independent thought--makes inevitable the tyranny of Ahab. Literally, the death of so capable a man as Bulkington is a Gothic event among many that balance Ishmael's salvation on a coffin in the end, as the sole survivor. Figuratively, as the independent human spirit is overwhelmed by the power of Nature, the storm, Ishmael succumbs to Ahab, submerging as a narrative voice. That the independent spirit is not dead in Ishmael is implied by his having called Bulkington his "sleeping-partner" in this narrative (23). Ishmael saves himself by raising within his soul the spirit of Bulkington, who inspires him to seek "the highest truth" through experience and "deep, earnest thinking," or water-gazing--for, "as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded for ever" (13). The pantheism of his thought is conveyed by the contrast between Father Mapple's sermon on Jonah and Melville's motif of Bulkington: Jonah runs away from God by going to sea, is cast overboard in a storm and swallowed by a whale; Bulkington seeks the highest truth by going to sea, is swept overboard by a storm and identified with the spout of a whale. In both visions the whale represents a means of salvation, but for Mapple the whale is an agent of the divine, whereas for Melville the whale is divinity itself: For the Christian, salvation is escape from the whale, or Nature; whereas for the pantheist salvation is spiritual union with the whale--becoming a "whaleman."

The spirit of Bulkington rises again as "The Spirit-Spout": "a silvery jet was seen far in advance of the white bubbles at the bow. Lit up by the moon, it looked celestial; seemed some plumed and glittering god uprising from the sea." When it is identified as a whale spout, "The best man in the ship must take the helm." The ship rushed along "as if two antagonistic influences were struggling in her--one to mount direct to heaven, the other to drive yawingly to some horizontal goal." The vertical influence in Ishmael is the pantheistic spirit of Bulkington united with the whale as expressed by the spout; the horizontal influence is the puritanical spirit of Ahab--Promethean, capitalist, egocentric--trying to conquer the whale, or Nature. The spout is sighted first by Fedallah, the embodiment of Ahab's monomania, but Ishmael sees it in a different spirit. Thereafter, "this solitary jet seemed for ever alluring us on." It is believed "that unneighbourable spout was cast by one self-same whale; and that whale, Moby-Dick" (199, 200, 201).

The search for Moby-Dick, or "Truth" in the intellectual aspect of the allegory (286), is led by "the lonely, alluring" spirit-spout to the giant squid, an "apparition of life" (236, 237). The squid is parallel to the white human figure at the end of *Pym* in being an apparition of life in the depth of the human soul. Melville dives deeper than Poe. In the deep thinking of Ishmael, or Bulkington, the formless creature with tentacles grasping air conveys the Existential nausea at nothingness and meaninglessness that rarely surfaces but must be faced before a soul can find Moby-Dick, "the ungraspable phantom of life" (14). That the squid is believed "to furnish to the sperm whale his only food" indicates that meaninglessness is displaced, or devoured, by meaning--myth, or ultimate Truth (237). Subsequently, in his "Afric Temple of the Whale," Ishmael defines his myth with a pantheistic trinity that displaces the Christian trinity: the sun is the Creator, the "weaver-god" is the Holy Ghost, and Bulkington united with the whale is his alternative to

Christ. "In the skull, the priests kept up an unextinguished aromatic flame, so that the mystic head again sent forth its vapory spout" (381, 374).

As an expression of the divine, the whale spout is a mystery, a pantheistic fountain in contrast to the Christian fountain icon that recurs in Hawthorne. "You cannot go with your pitcher to this fountain and fill it, and bring it away" (313). Formidable like God, if approached too closely the spout may peel off your skin or blind you. Ahab is "within the smoky mountain mist, which, thrown off from the whale's spout, curled round" when he casts his harpoon into Moby-Dick, who knocks Ishmael out of the whaleboat (466). "--aye, chance, free will, and necessity--no wise incompatible--all interweavingly working together" (185). Allegorically, Ishmael is saved through a number of "redeemers" who represent aspects of his psyche: Through the humane instinctiveness of Queequeg, the objectivity of Pip, the existentialism of the carpenter, the deep aspiration of Bulkington, and the divinity of Moby-Dick, Ishmael transcends the narcissism of humans dramatized in "The Doubloon" and epitomized in Ahab, or Narcissus, "who because he could not grasp the tormenting...image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned" (14). United with divine nature in the whale, Bulkington prevails over Ahab in the soul of Ishmael. To read *Moby-Dick*; or, *The Whale* truly, the reader too must overcome subjectivity, pursue the Truth like Ishmael and enter the whale in a transcendent spirit.

Arthur Gordon Pym leaves the conventional limitations of the land, embarks from Nantucket on a spiritual whaling voyage, rejects Christianity, and has some experiences comparable to Ishmael's, but the similarities yield to differences summarized in the fact that Pym makes a psychologically vertical journey down to the South Pole and back again, whereas Ishmael journeys round the world and attains his "vital centre" (470). If there is a "hole at the pole" that leads to the center,²¹ Pym never gets that far. Melville counters Poe by affirming the whole rather than a pole.

The vision of Pym is inclined to be linear, binary and psychologically polarized, as is most clearly expressed in the polarizing of black and white; whereas the vision of *Moby-Dick* is integrated, cyclical, round like the earth and psychologically holistic, as expressed in Melville's reconciliation of black and white. Stereotyping reduces much of the imagery in *Pym* to sign language. The most vicious mutineer on Poe's *Grampus* is the black cook, the blacks on the island of Tsalal are all stupid and evil, and in the final episode the black Nu-Nu dies as whiteness prevails in Pym's vision of ultimate Truth.²² Poe increasingly polarizes opposites--white and black, truth and falsehood, the aristocratic South and the democratic North--as Pym moves south. The false "United States" of the North yields to the true, dis-integrated order of the South, as Poe affirms a polarized mind at the South Pole.

Melville counters Poe: The old black cook on the *Pequod* is a moralist who preaches compassion to sharks, one of the noble harpooners is black Daggoo, the little black cabin boy Pip is cast in the role of the conventionally white good angel, the divine whales are nearly always black, Truth swims in the dark, and in "The Whiteness of the Whale" whiteness is analyzed as an archetypal phenomenon beyond reductive human categories such as good and evil. White and black are recurrently imaged in complementary relationship, as in whales with both white and black bones. *Pym* polarizes opposites in stereotypical terms, whereas *Moby-Dick* affirms a spirit of equality, as imaged in Pip and Dough-Boy, who "made a match, like a black pony and a white one, of equal developments" (345). In the end Ishmael attains a unity such as that expressed by the ancient yin/yang symbol, in which a white field containing a black spot and a black field containing a white spot are the opposites swirlingly reconciled.

Little black Pip prays to a "big white God aloft there somewhere in yon darkness" (155), to which the pantheistic Melville contrasts the divine white whale down below in the darkness, and Queequeg's little black god Yojo. In the white world, black Pip is a corrective to Ahab, the inflated ego, the white god of the *Pequod*. For his part, the narcissistic Ahab is obsessed with the white whale and plunged in blackness: "So far gone am I in the dark side of earth" (433). The white man's attitude toward the white whale is self-destructive. Overcome by his object, Ahab drowns in subjectivity, whereas Pip, as a slave, is objectified. Pip is paradox: He appeals to the heart, yet is objective. Abandoned at the "centre of the sea," he loses his ego and attains "heaven's sense" (347). He is transcendent—"mad"--uniting the opposites in Ishmael: heart and head, black and white, nothing and all. While his shipmates project their narcissisms onto the doubloon, as they do onto Moby-Dick, Pip sees it objectively. Pip is a pupil of God's eye, and represents

what Ahab needs for salvation: objectivity, humility and a compassionate heart: "Thou touchest my inmost centre, boy; thou art tied to me by cords woven of my heart-strings." Pip appeals to him: "rivet these two hands together; the black one with the white" (428).

Pip is the good angel. The Parsee--fanatical subjectivity—is the bad angel. In his rage to conquer the whale, however, Ahab refuses to help the captain of the *Rachel* search for his missing son and rejects Pip, telling him to stay below: "There is that in thee, poor lad, which I feel too curing to my malady." Pip replies, "I remain a part of ye" (436). At the end of the next chapter Pip is evoked by an omen, when a hawk flies off ahead with Ahab's hat and drops it into the sea—"a minute black spot." Shortly thereafter, at the end of the chase when *Moby-Dick* rises, enlarging under Ahab's boat, the whale is a "white living spot" (441, 448).

Ahab, a captain of the world, does not reconcile with his Pip and opposites conflict. Enslaved, poor Pip "not unmeaningly blended with the black tragedy of the melancholy ship, and mocked it!" (405). All but Ishmael go down with Ahab, for their "centre had now become the old man's head" (450). The dominating spirit of Ahab is overcome in one alone, the one transported by the whale, and the spirit of Bulkington, beyond the cycloid of Ahab. The conflict resolves in Ishmael, imaged at the end when he is drawn into the white vortex toward a "black bubble at the axis of that slowly wheeling circle"—the "vital centre"—reversing Ahab's egocentric reference to Pip as "the circumference" to himself (470, 436). The image affirms his democratic pantheism: "The great God absolute! The centre and circumference of all democracy! His omnipresence, our divine equality!" (104). At the pip of Ishmael's center, up shoots the coffin of Queequeg--and he is saved in body as in soul.

Pym lacks Pip, Queequeg, and Bulkington. He lacks heart, the wisdom of the body and the capacity for transcendence of self. He has a linear mentality, as evident in his matter-of-fact prose style and scientific tone. In the end he is just as polarized as Ahab, whose prow likewise is "Pole-pointed" (468). Because his "salvation," implied by his living through the polar episode and somehow returning home, is unexplained in the literal story, his allegory loses integrity. Pym is redeemed from what Poe regards as ignorance without the psychological development exemplified by Ishmael. He is incomplete like his narrative, the last chapters of which are said to be lost. His development is arrested at a Gothic pole, without the transcendence Ishmael attains through Queequeg, Bulkington, and Pip. Pym never transcends himself through spiritual union with another, nor with Nature in general. He is polarized against Nature as a horror. He does not "marry" Dirk Peters, his counterpart of Queequeg, the dusky wilderness figure who mediates between his conscious and unconscious minds. Furthermore, Peters is only half wild--a half-breed--whereas Queequeg is spiritual kin of the whale, as implied by his diving, his strange markings and the parallel responses of Ahab (399). Ishmael transcends self through Queequeg and Bulkington by uniting in spirit with the whale, whereas Pym is solipsistic and anthropocentric, his counterpart of the white whale a huge white "human figure," his ultimate Truth, or God, an enlarged projection of himself. This characteristic inability of western Man to evolve beyond narcissism is epitomized by Melville in Ahab, who like Poe projects his polarized view onto Nature.

The last episode of *Pym* is so effectively written that it impressed even Henry James. Yet the salvation of Pym is so improbable that one intensive analysis declares that he "never returned" and treats him as dead at the Pole, disregarding the first sentence of *Pym*, in the Introductory Note, where Pym declares that he returned to the United States, and also the indication in the final Note.²³ *Pym* sustains a Gothic satire of Christian faith, as when Pym thanks God for timely aid just after the survivors have resorted to cannibalism, and concludes with a mock salvation: Pym's survival is implicitly less absurd than the Christian faith in a better life after death. Gothicism denies any real salvation at the end.

The final apocalyptic image of whiteness and a chasm at the Pole resembles the visionary painting of "an ideal" by Roderick Usher, in the seventeenth paragraph of "The Fall of the House of Usher": a white vault or tunnel "at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth...a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor." This ideal inverts the Christian image of heaven, reflecting Poe's bipolar iconoclasm. The artist attains a vision of primal unity through spiritual development that disintegrates him, a "progress" corresponding to that of the universe, according to the cosmology Poe later expressed in *Eureka*. Pym is similar to the rational narrator in "Usher" who

must escape in order to tell the tale, and he literally experiences the sort of vision Usher painted, but he is not as advanced as the artist and does not go down like Usher. Dis-integrated and polarized, he returns to the ironically named United States.

Melville implies that his major contemporaries, among American fiction writers, were Hawthorne and Poe. After his dedication to Hawthorne, he ushers in *Moby-Dick* by acknowledging "The pale Usher--threadbare in coat, heart, body, and brain; I see him now." Poe, or his Usher, is evoked by each successive detail in this sentence, as well as by Usher's "queer handkerchief, mockingly embellished with all the gay flags of all the known nations of the world" (1). The vision of Poe is aristocratic and insular in "Usher," mocking the international brotherhood and democratic feeling that Melville celebrates. In turn, Melville casts Usher as a consumptive grammar school teacher with a pretense of worldliness, an outdated pedant who lived in books, supplied some "old grammars" and is dead now. In contrast, Ishmael has been a robust "country schoolmaster" (14). His college is a whaleship (101), where he learns a new grammar and the master in the end is not Ahab, but the whale. Later, Pip calls attention to the philosophical insularity of humans in general as he watches the crew project their narcissisms upon the doubloon, the whale and the world: "I look, you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look." The ironic response to Pip illustrates the incomprehension Melville associates with limited or outdated grammars: "Upon my soul, he's been studying Murray's Grammar! Improving his mind, poor fellow!" (362).

From Melville's perspective, as embodied in Bulkington, *Pym* is an inauthentic model of the inner sea voyage. Poe is "a late consumptive usher to a grammar school" of Gothic tradition (1). He is too much limited to sign language, an "old grammar." His penguins, for example, refer to conventional humans with the reductiveness of a sign, in contrast to the multiplicity of meanings generated by Melville's whales. Poe's psychological polarization sets reason and the unconscious, land and sea, sign and archetype, at odds, whereas the new grammar of fiction--archetypal allegory--requires integration. Poe experiences disintegration and clings to reason like Pym clings to the hull of the capsized Grampus. His method in *Pym* is too predetermined and his scope too limited for the questing spirit of Bulkington, who moves on to the Pequod.

What Melville learned about writing allegorically, especially between *Mardi* and *Moby-Dick*, he seems to have learned primarily from Hawthorne, whose grammar, at his best, was new: realistic narrative that emerges organically as an allegory of complex symbols from the depths of the soul. Poe condemns allegory in his 1847 review of Hawthorne, though he is allegorical himself in a less coherent and holistic way, thinking in signs. His example of an allegory is *Pilgrim's Progress*, "old grammar" in which the meanings are largely preconceived, the structure is predetermined and abstraction reduces the fiction to mechanism. Like most critics,²⁴ Poe has not learned the new grammar of fiction: He understands allegory only in a medieval sense, as a system of signs calculated to correspond one-to-one with ideas, not as a coherence of complex symbols that emerges in the creative process, organic to a narrative informed by "deep thinking," as exemplified by Hawthorne, Melville, and Modernists such as Joyce and Faulkner.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, for example, Hawthorne contrasts the sign allegory of the Puritans, which reduces Hester to a sandwich-board abstraction, with his own allegory of symbols, revealing the complexity of human nature and the forms of God, redefining salvation. Similarly, Melville depicts the Puritan allegorical tradition in Father Mapple, dramatizes in Ahab the evil that reductive sign language can do, generalizes the universal tendency to sign language in the crew of the Pequod responding narcissistically to the doubloon/whale/world as signs, responses predetermined by old grammar,²⁵ and subsumes them all within the redemptive allegory of complex symbols discovered by Ishmael. On the contrary, in his 1842 review of Hawthorne, Poe advocates that a tale be conceived backwards from the "single effect to be wrought out." In his theory Poe is predominantly a technician, a manipulator of signs, an illusionist whose design is "pre-established." This priority is manifest throughout *Pym*, where literal-minded details and digressions break the coherence of allegory, and especially in the final Note, a self-reflexive, hinting explication of the text as a system of signs, reinforcing the polarized thought expressed by the text. *Pym* attains a "preconceived" vision in one experience and goes home, ending back on land among the gentlemen in Richmond, whereas Bulkington keeps on questing in the spirit of the whaleman.

In his letter to Sophia Hawthorne, 8 January 1852, Melville says of *Moby-Dick*, "I had some vague idea while writing it, that the whole book was susceptible of an allegoric construction, & also that *parts* of it were--but the specialty of many of the particular subordinate allegories, were first revealed to me, after reading Mr Hawthorne's letter" (568). However modest he may be here, it is evident that for Melville, writing allegorically is to some extent an unconscious creative process of discovery, archetypal, transcending the self. Such allegory is not a pre-established design conceived backward, it is a quest. Archetypal or Modernist allegory is revelation. The design is born in the process, the deep sea voyage. Such allegory emerges in the course of discovering implications, analogies and interconnections: "O Nature, and O soul of man! how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies! not the smallest atom stirs or lives in matter, but has its cunning duplicate in mind" (264).

Moby-Dick is an exegesis of analogies linked to the monadic symbol of the whale. Meditation, or literary analysis, gradually discloses such meanings, like Ishmael watergazing as he floats along, deeply perceptive because he is wedded to his unconscious or primal self, his feminine side the receptive "bride" of Queequeg, his masculine side the questing spirit of Bulkington. Ishmael reads the world as an allegorical whole, a text with subtexts, as Melville suggests in his letter to Hawthorne, 17 November 1851: "Why, ever since Adam, who has got to the meaning of this great allegory--the world?" (566). In contrast, as expressed throughout his work, particularly in *Pym* and *Eureka*, Poe sees the universe as chaotic rather than coherent, and reality as a subjective projection of the mind. Transcendence of self is impossible: no Queequeg, no Bulkington, no Pip. Because an archetypal allegory expresses a coherent world and requires transcendence of self, Poe could not write an archetypal allegory. Like Ahab and the deconstructionist critics of the late twentieth century, Poe reduces the world to a sign language that polarizes the psyche, dis-integrates the mind and is death to the soul.

Poe is a proto-Postmodernist in *Pym*, a predecessor of Thomas Pynchon deconstructing his narrative with absurdities, thinking in bipolar terms, delighting in the decadent, contriving puzzles, refusing closure and imbuing it all with a spirit of hoax. Melville is Modernist, "deep thinking" in archetypal allegory, using the mythic method and multiple points of view, affirming spiritual growth, wholeness, integrity and transcendence. At the outset Ishmael explains his motive for going to sea as "a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul" (12). The earth is two thirds darkness, but one third bright as well. Ishmael rejects as an affliction the misanthropy and grimness personified in American literature by Poe and introduces the redemptive motif of circulation and spiraling evolution that leads to the vortex and rebirth. After *Moby-Dick*, of course, Melville turned somewhat Gothic himself in *Pierre* and *The Confidence-Man*, concluding in *Billy Budd* with a vision that is conservative and tragic. Nonetheless, his rejecting Poe's Gothic vision exemplifies a pattern of literary history repeated in the early 20th century Modernist transcendence of Naturalism, then again in resurgent Modernist reaction against Postmodernism, confirming the vision in *Moby-Dick* of archetypal recurrence: "There is no steady unretracing progress in this life...once gone through, we trace the round again" (406).

Melville "gams" with Poe as he does with Hawthorne, Emerson and other writers. Gam: "A *social meeting of two (or more) Whale-ships, generally on a cruising-ground; when, after exchanging hails, they exchange visits by boats' crews*" (206-207). Intelligence and reading matter, also, are exchanged. Unlike Poe, Hawthorne and Emerson are not whalers, in Melville's metaphorical terms. Nevertheless, he received intelligence from them on the "sea of Life," and answers with his own: Emerson in "The Mast-Head"; Hawthorne in "The Chapel," "The Quarter-Deck," "The Try-Works," and Starbuck, for instances. The gams in *Moby-Dick*, with ships and with writers, serve to define by contrast the experience of Ishmael.

NOTES

¹ Luther S. Mansfield and Howard P. Vincent, eds., *Moby-Dick* (Hendricks House 1962) 607.

² William Powers, "Bulkington as Henry Chatillon," *Western American Literature* 3 (1968) 153-55.

³ Alan Heimert, "*Moby-Dick* and American Political Symbolism," *American Quarterly* 15 (1963) 498-534.

⁴ Richard Chase, *Herman Melville: A Critical Study* (Macmillan 1949) 59; and William Rosenfeld, "Uncertain Faith: Queequeg's Coffin and Melville's Use of the Bible," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 7 (1966) 322.

⁵ Willie T. Weathers, "Moby-Dick and the Nineteenth-Century Scene," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* I (1960) 477-501.

⁶ Harry Levin, *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville* (Knopf 1960) 25; Mansfield and Vincent, 607.

⁷ See Harrison Hayford, "Poe in *The Confidence-Man*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 14 (1959) 207-18.

⁸ Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*, eds. Harrison Hayford and Hershel Parker (Norton 1967) 23. Further references in text.

⁹ See Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Melville's Reading* (U Wisconsin 1966) 86.

¹⁰ See Patrick F. Quinn, *The French Face of Edgar Poe* (Southern Illinois 1957) 205-15. Quinn argues "kinship" between Poe and Melville, citing similarities between *Pym* and *Moby-Dick* such as opening sentences of the two stories, embarkation from Nantucket, motives for going to sea, presages of doom, protagonists subordinate witnesses rather than heroes, both have ferocious yet saving companions to whom they are connected in rope incidents, water associated with meditation and unconscious life, hieroglyphs in caves of Tsalal like doubloon on the Pequod, morsel of flesh dropped by seagull like Ahab's hat dropped by sea hawk, fascination with whiteness. See also Grace Farrell Lee, "Pym and *Moby-Dick*: Essential Connections," *The American Transcendental Quarterly* 37 (1978) 73-86. Lee considers additional similarities such as encounters with death ships and communal rites, while arguing that Melville saw a mythic pattern of descent and return, death and rebirth in *Pym*, and "weaves it intricately into his own narrative." In his edition of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (Penguin 1975), Harold Beaver emphasizes similarities and comments on differences briefly: "While Pym whole-heartedly accepts the polarizing of white from black...Ishmael from the start confounds all such racial, as well as metaphysical stereotypes" (280-81).

¹¹ Noted by Weathers, 482-83.

¹² F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (Oxford 1941) 447.

¹³ Powers, 154; Rosenfeld.

¹⁴ S. A. Cowan, "In Praise of Self-Reliance: The Role of Bulkington in *Moby-Dick*," *American Literature* 38 (1967) 554. Cowan sees Bulkington as an Emersonian philosopher.

¹⁵ Lawrance Thompson, *Melville's Quarrel with God* (Princeton 1952) 170-71; J. Parke, "Seven *Moby-Dicks*," *New England Quarterly* 28 (1955) 337; Robert L. Peters, "Melville's *Moby-Dick*," *Explicator* 16 (1958), Item 44.

¹⁶ H. C. Brashers, "Ishmael's Tattoos," *Sewanee Review* 70 (1962) 151, 152.

¹⁷ Levin, 230.

¹⁸ William Ellery Sedgwick, *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind* (Harvard 1944) 125. Also Thompson and Chase.

¹⁹ Chase, 280.

²⁰ Charles Feidelson, Jr., ed., *Moby-Dick* (Bobbs-Merrill 1964) 149.

²¹ Popular theory of Captain J. C. Symmes expounded in a circular (1818) and dramatized in *Symzonia: A Voyage of Discovery* (1820).

²² Racial implications are discussed by Levin, 120-23; and by Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (Dell 1967) 397-99.

²³ Edward H. Davidson, *Poe: A Critical Study* (Harvard 1964), 165, 175, 177.

²⁴ Such as Charles Feidelson, Jr., *Symbolism and American Literature* (U Chicago 1953) 326: "There is no indication anywhere in Melville's writings of a distinction between 'allegory' and 'symbolism.' Like Emerson, he used these words interchangeably, and they meant for him what we ordinarily mean by the latter." Coherent symbolism is allegory. If we use only the term "symbolism" for what Melville wrote, we are failing to recognize coherence, as distinct from occasional symbolism.

²⁵ For a linguistic discussion of grammars in "The Doubloon" see Philip F. Gura, "Language and Meaning: An American Tradition," *American Literature* 53 (1981) 19.

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