COLORBLIND FRATERNITY: UNSEATING RACISM, MALES, AND BROTHERHOOD IN SELECTED WORKS BY HERMAN MELVILLE

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines four works by Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*, *Typee*, *Omoo*, and *Benito Cereno* as examples of a minority of nineteenth-century American literature that deconstruct negative black male stereotypes and promote unity through brotherhood. Melville works through juxtapositions and reversals in his use of language as a means of unseating such negative stereotypes. In doing so, he invites his audience to challenge and potentially eliminate the racial stereotypes.

Melville believed in indirect invitations to reform, such as displacing his characters from his readers' environment, so that racial problems would not seem so

"close" them. He also relies upon an ethnically diverse spectrum of characters in order to express his critique without resorting to simplistic white/black binaries. One obvious aim of Melville's invitation to question racial stereotypes was his advocacy of brotherhood. He believed that men should be seen and judged as individuals. Racial stereotypes hindered his hope for establishing such a brotherhood.

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CHAPTER 1

TYPEE, OMOO, MOBY-DICK AND BENITO CERENO

1.1 Mevlille's Four Texts

This ethnic study examines racial issues concerning black males in Herman Melville's *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Benito Cereno* in attempt to uncover his methods for unseating negative black male stereotypes [my phraseology not Melville's] and examining his endeavor to promote unity through brotherhood. To examine this process I will approach the novels within the context of a basic conception about language and reality as defined by Heidegger, Kant, and Hegel. These assumptions will raise questions about and highlight significant characters of Melville's portrait of racial issues. In addition, this investigation will, when relevant, draw upon historical, sociological, cultural, character, African-American and gender studies to facilitate discussions of the differences between white and black characters. I will begin this introduction with an examination of Heidegger's theories of language as they relate to Melville's word choices and his ultimate goal: unity through brotherhood.

1.1.1 Theoretical Perspectives

According to Heidegger, language is the world. Therefore, we are "in" language, a part of it, both creation and creator in that it influences and manipulates us as much as we influence and manipulate it. He claims that we must rely upon

metaphoric language to understand the world; that is, we must explain the world us and assign various meanings given specific contexts in order to attach an understanding to the different meanings. We are who we are through our language as we create others, ourselves, and the world around us through our language. Melville did not rely upon Heidegger as theoretical support for his use of language; Heideggarian theories about language can, however, offer important insights into Melville's texts. In particular, I can suggest how Melville hoped that his conscious manipulation of language would change his readers. Heidegger defines this type of change in the following words:

> To undergo an experience1 with language, then, means to let ourselves be properly concerned by the claim of language by entering into and submitting to it. If it is true that man finds the proper abode of his existence in language-whether he is aware of it or not-then an experience we undergo with language will touch the innermost nexus of our existence. We who speak language may thereupon become transformed by such experiences, from one day to the next or in the course of time. (Heidegger 57)

Heidegger's theory of language helps us to understand the significance behind Melville's intentional language choices: word selection, syntax, metaphors, imagery, and descriptions. For example, through description Melville paints a picture of black males that counters popular nineteenth-century racial categories, and he more generally attempts to unseat negative black male stereotypes and promote a brotherhood of all

races by reversing reader expectations, juxtaposing black/white, good/bad, and superior/inferior characters. These juxtapositions and reversals are not bound by binary oppositions but are fluid throughout the texts. This intentional manipulation of language serves Melville's goal. Through language, Melville attempts to reach "the innermost nexus" of his contemporary audience to bring about a change in their thinking and as Heidegger would say, a change in their Being.

Heidegger's theories about language influence this examination of Melville's texts in terms of his language choices. In addition to Heidegger, Kant's ideas of analytic judgment and synthetic judgment as they relate to Melville's goal will also serve as a theoretical background in this investigation. Kant's theory of human judgment originates in his theories of human knowledge. Analytic judgments are valid because they are constituted by a priori knowledge. That is, analytic judgments hold true because they remain constant despite any varied experience. Synthetic judgments, by contrast, require extensive proof of their validity, as they are not constitutive of a priori knowledge. For most nineteenth-century Americans, the inferiority of blacks was accepted as analytic judgment. Using Kant's terminology, Melville views popular nineteenth-century attitudes about race as synthetic judgments that do not hold true under Melville's extensive scrutiny. According to Kant, if even one experience offers a different conclusion, then this judgment cannot be analytic judgment but must be synthetic judgment. Analytic judgments originate in a priori knowledge; therefore, these judgments remain true no matter how few or how many times they are tested. On the

other hand, synthetic judgments require numerous tests where conclusions remain consistent. For example, Melville creates Typee as a text that reads as a realistic account of the Typee tribe based upon the narrator's personal observations. While Melville did spend time in the islands in his youth as a shipmate, this text is a fictional embellishment of his reality. However, Melville and his publisher did not want Typee to be read as fiction, but rather as a traveler's account. In presenting the text in this manner Melville creates verisimilitude, attempting to make the descriptions more real for the reader. If readers accept this way of reading, they enter into a racial argument, whether consciously or subconsciously, in which Melville offers empirical evidence that counters nineteenth-century racial beliefs in hopes of inviting the reader to question their beliefs. The text, written in a predominately descriptive format, serves as a synthetic judgment of the Typee tribe that represents them positively. In turn, this invites the readers to change their accepted analytic judgments concerning race, which will now be perceived as synthetic judgments. What is significant about this Kantian application for uncovering Melville's "truth" concerning black males is that shifting the reader's analytic judgments to synthetic judgments supports Melville's goal.

Hegel's theory of the subject/object relationship, like Heidegger and Kant's theories, influences the questions raised in this thesis concerning Melville's texts. Hegel's theory has significant application when examining racial issues in Melville's works as a literary criticism of the literal object/subject relationship existing between whites and blacks in nineteenth-century America. The authority of science, which was

highlighted by the two fundamental ideas of observance and evidence, is evident in Hegel's philosophy. This particular notion of science influenced religious, political, and philosophical thought as it "promotes and encourages the activities of observing, comparing, measuring and ordering the physical characteristics of human bodies" (West 71). For Hegel, observational science may translate into his belief that the "thesis" cannot exist outside its "antithesis." Observing the interrelatedness of two "things," what something is and what something is not, simplifies Hegel's theory of object/subject relationships. Hegel says, "White is white only in opposition to black, and so on, and the Thing is a One precisely by being opposed to others" (Hegel 72). In perceiving, Hegel points out, "At first, then, I become aware of the Thing as a One and have to hold fast to it in this its true character; if in the course of perceiving it, something turns up which contradicts it, this is to be recognized as a reflection of mine" (Hegel 72).

Hegel's theory applies to Melville's works as he presents his characters through observation and description. However, this is not an unbiased description as Melville, via the narrator, cannot step outside himself; therefore, this description comes through by what Hegel terms "perception." Melville's perception is unique to the narrator, as it has manifested from Melville's experiences, exposures, preconceived notions, prejudices, beliefs, and his historical perspective. In turn, the narrator's perception directly affects his observances that lead to his descriptions. For the narrator, observing black characters begins first by noting that they are black, because they are not white.

Melville first points out the differences of his black characters' physical features from that of understood white features. As the characters develop, he continues to describe not only the physical traits, but also the personalities, beliefs, and attitudes of his black characters. This takes place in Typee more so than any of his other works, because in it he develops his basic critiques of nineteenth-century racial stereotypes of non-whites and his longing for brotherhood. Because of this emphasis on observation, character development through description, and numerous reversals and juxtapositions throughout Typee, this particular examination will spend more time examining these particular techniques with this first novel than the other three in order to highlight the significance behind Typee's formative role in developing this method of Melville's criticism on nineteenth-century racial stereotypes. Melville works within the nineteenth century's scientific idea of observing, presenting evidence, comparing, categorizing, and describing in order to present some of the black characters in a more positive light.

He does so through reversing expectations and including juxtapositions that offer potentially new attitudes. Because of Melville's perceptions, he cannot fully escape the notion that white is good and that black in opposition to white must be bad. Given his time and place, for Melville to describe the good, positive qualities of his black characters, he must do so in terms of attributing them with whiteness. Cornell West explains that mid-nineteenth-century sciences created an outline for "rationality, scientificity and objectivity" that, although effective in the pursuit of knowledge and truth, "prohibited the intelligibility and legitimacy of the idea of black equality in

beauty, culture, and intellectual capacity" (71). He then explains how such an idea would have been "deemed irrational or mad" (West 71). In turn, Melville attributes white characters with "black" traits in order to portray those characters negatively.

For the purposes of this thesis, my examination of Melville's four works *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Moby-Dick*, and *Benito Cereno*) will be done with Heidegger's theories of language, Kant's ideas of human judgment, and Hegel's notion of the subject/object relationship as heuristic influences. These three inspire the questions raised within this exploration as well as many of the preceding interpretations. The questions they raise consistently influence the types of issues and interpretations in this thesis as well as being reflected in my examination of Melville's juxtapositions and reversals: i.e., Melville's use of descriptive language for both the white and non-white characters; the emphasis on observations and perceptions that call to question a priori beliefs about whites and non-whites; the emphasis on how whites and non-whites were typically represented in terms of differences and hierarchies.

1.1.2 Biographical and Historical Perspectives

These three philosophical models can help us see that Melville's texts cannot be sufficiently examined without first understanding the historical context in which Melville wrote. A contemporary investigation would be lost without taking into consideration the time and place of not only the author, but also the intended readers, and the influence of time and place upon the text itself. Despite Melville's advanced racial thinking, he could not escape his environment completely. Therefore, it is

necessary to understand that even though Melville attempts to reverse what he considered to be racial prejudices, he could not escape all nineteenth century racial notions of blacks. As Heidegger's theory on language suggests, Melville was, after all, a product of nineteenth-century America; therefore, he was a product of the language of his time. His historical context shaped not only who Melville was but also who he was as a writer and the texts he produced.

Herman Melville was born on August 1, 1819, in New York City. His father was a successful businessman until the 1830's, when s a result of financial hardships, the family moved to Albany. In 1831 Melville's father died, leaving the family to live in poverty. Frustrated with the family's financial strife, Melville experimented with sea life and joined the crew of the St. Lawrence in 1839 on its way to Liverpool. Aboard the St. Lawrence, Melville learned of the hardships and cruelties that accompany a life at sea:

> Once Melville recovered from the ravages of seasickness, adolescent fantasies about silent, seductive women gave way to the reality of gruff men, often intoxicated, barking orders that demanded instant obedience, or uttering fowl oaths. As a greenhorn, he was the lowest of the low in a tough, hierarchical world that valued him less as an individual than as a cog in a bewildering machine. (Robertson-Lorant 74)

For Melville, the trip was a failure, and he later wrote about this tumultuous time in his textual creation, Redburn.

He attempted sea life again in 1840 when he joined the Acushnet as an ordinary whaler. Here, Melville encountered a brutal life that helped to change his perspectives on human nature as the crew on most whalers were made up of men from various nationalities who had to risk their lives on the ocean: "From a cultivated, genteel environment, Melville was suddenly plunged, unprepared, into the course, brutal life of the sea" (Edinger 10). In June of 1842, Melville and his ship companion, Toby Greene, abandoned the Acushnet in Anna Maria Bay, Nuku Hive, in the Marquesas. Here Melville came face to face for the first time with a known cannibal tribe, the Typees, an experience that invited Melville to question supposed concepts of black, white, and other. These questions, in part, inspired him to write his first book, Typee. Melville spent four weeks with the Typees, time during which he began to see nonwhites in terms of gentility, hospitality, comradeship, and most importantly, humane behavior. These terms were not typically applied to nonwhites, specifically black males, in nineteenth-century America. From his experiences with the Typees, he determined these cannibals" to be more humane than many of the white Americans occupying so-called genteel society.

After this "Eden-like" experience with the Typees, Melville was rescued by the Lucy Ann, an Australian whaler ship. Melville eventually abandoned the Lucy Ann as well, because "the whaler was badly neglected, and the failure of the crew to capture more than two whales in many long months had taken its toll in drunkenness and desertions. The men were dispirited also by the tyranny of the skipper, Captain Ventom,

and by the continual inebriation of his first mate, John German. When the crew revolted, Ventom steered toward Tahiti, where Melville and his companion, John. B. Troy, jumped ship-much as their fictional counterparts do in Omoo" (Rollyson and Paddock 100). For Melville, this experience on the Lucy Ann, which proved to be far worse than the abuses he endured aboard the Acushnet, only confirmed in him his belief that his contemporaries' racial prejudices against blacks and other non-whites were unjustified and flawed.

Melville's time at sea changed him. He no longer looked through the eyes of a white, middle-class, American male: "On the contrary, he began to reexamine his own society through the eyes of 'savages'" (Karcher 2). Interestingly, despite the ideological metamorphosis, Melville did not partake in any abolitionist, Pre-Civil War activities, or did he play a part during or after the Civil War (Garner 1). Melville instead chose to fight his battle through his writings. I speculate that, for Melville, who was neither an extremist nor an activist, joining the abolitionist movement would have limited his efforts to change nineteenth-century racial beliefs. Melville opposed extremist groups on either side of the issue, especially if any sort of violence might be involved. He wanted to undermine beliefs that helped to cause slavery and hoped to uncover a universal unity through brotherhood for all men. To achieve these goals, Melville drew upon his life experiences aboard whalers and his time living on the islands with the natives and translated those experiences into his books: most directly in *Typee*, *Omoo*, but also in *Moby-Dick*, and *Benito Cereno*.

In addition to understanding Melville's personal history as it related directly to his works, we must now examine the racial attitudes that Melville fought in his texts. Cornel West's essay "Race and Modernity" examines the origin of racism as it relates specifically to Western ideas about race, color, and slavery:

> The creative fusion of scientific investigation, Cartesian philosophy, Greek ocular metaphors and classical aesthetic and cultural ideals constitutes the essential elements of modern discourse in the West. In short, modern discourse rests upon a conception of truth and knowledge governed by an ideal value-free subject engaged in observing, comparing, ordering and measuring in order to arrive at evidence sufficient to make valid inferences, confirm speculative hypotheses, deduce error-proof conclusions and verify true representations of reality. (West 75)

This scientific approach, as mentioned earlier in the discussion of Hegel's subject/object philosophy, also served to support, promote, and justify nineteenth-century notions of race and slavery. This contemporary appreciation of classic Greek ideals in the period of the early modern West allowed for the "normative gaze," to emerge as a scientific support for natural history. This normative gaze was "an ideal from which to order and compare observations" (West 75). West goes on to establish the importance of this classical reemergence and its relationship to racism in the West:

> This ideal was drawn primarily from classical aesthetic values of beauty,

> proportion and human form and classical cultural standards of moderation, self-control and harmony. The role of classical aesthetic and cultural norms in the emergence of the idea of white supremacy as an object of modern discourse cannot be underestimated. These norms were consciously projected and promoted by many influential Enlightenment writers, artists, and scholars… (West 75)

The idea of white supremacy and its origin can be traced to these "classificatory categories and the descriptive, representational, order-imposing aims of natural history [;]" therefore, the "genealogy of racism in the modern West is inseparable from the appearance of the classificatory category of race in natural history" (West 77). This idea of color denoting race first emerged in 1684 by Françoise Bernier, a French physician, who employed the signification of color in order to classify human bodies. White supremacy strengthened its foothold in the modern West with support from such "sciences" as phrenology and physiognomy, both of which valued the classical Greek ideals of beauty: "The net result was that since black people were farthest from the Greek ideal and located in extremely hot climates, they were, by implication, inferior in beauty to Europeans" (West 79). Nineteenth-century racial beliefs were supported not only by science but by the most influential theologians and politicians of the time. From this historical perspective on racism, we can now apply a more complete understanding to the rational behind Melville's methods that attempt to unseat nineteenth-century racial attitudes through descriptions that reverse expectations and juxtapose good/bad

and black/white characters in order to achieve a unity through brotherhood.

1.2 Chronology of Texts

This examination of Melville's works begins with his first novel, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* written in 1846. For Melville, *Typee* was meant "to convey the 'unvarnished truth' about what he experienced during the four weeks (July 9 to August 9) he lived among the Typee" in the form of a travel narrative (Rollyson and Paddock 199). Within this work, Melville presents to his audience an unexpected perspective of these cannibalistic savages. Melville begins a journey that explores racism in hopes of changing audience ideals so that he may help establish a unity through brotherhood where men disregard color as an alienating force. This literary voyage eventually leads him to such pertinent works as *Omoo* (1847), *Moby-Dick* (1851), and *Benito Cereno* (1855), all of which portray similar motifs in response to nineteenth-century racial attitudes. The trajectory of the works offers gradual changes in Melville's attitudes and beliefs. The progression of these texts mimics the progression of Melville's desire to achieve this unity and the changing methods in which he relied upon to do so. Melville transitions from dark islanders in *Typee* and *Omoo* to Africans working aboard whalers in *Moby-Dick* to African slaves in *Benito Cereno*. This transition guides readers gently in a slow uncovering of what Melville perceived to be the truth about non-whites, specifically blacks, from first presenting his readers with displaced non-whites to an eventual revolt on a slave ship of Africans. In this progression of texts and concurrent transitions in characters and methods, Melville's own convictions for the promotion of

unity through brotherhood strengthens.

This thesis spends a disproportionate amount of time exploring Typee and Moby-Dick versus Omoo and Benito Cereno. Typee deserves more attention because it sets the stage for many of the issues Melville will address in his other works as well as introduces his use of juxtapositions and reversals, which he uses to explore racial and social issues. In Typee, he also initiates his use of displacement. Melville spends a great deal of time in Typee highlighting the distant characters and creating parallels between these distant characters and issues in the United States. In Moby-Dick, like in Typee, Melville extensively observes the relationships between characters, the characters themselves, and various social significances. Likewise, he spends time in both novels criticizing the global social practices of his time: the effects of colonization, Christian missionaries, social practices aboard whaling ships, negative propagandizing of non-white cultures, and practices among men that negatively emphasize social hierarchies. Moby-Dick's expansiveness also demands extra space to examine it effectively. In Omoo, Melville continues his examination and criticism of many of the same issues found in Typee; therefore, this thesis highlights one especially relevant section of the novel that positions its importance in relation to his other texts, requiring less space. The last text in this thesis also requires much less space in comparison to Typee and Moby-Dick not only because it is a much shorter work, but because it focuses on more specific issues: slavery and stereotypes about African intelligence.

CHAPTER 2

TYPEE

2.1 Melville Examines Polynesian Life

Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life is Melville's first novel published in 1846 shortly after his return from the South Pacific. He offers Typee to his audience in the vein of a travel narrative. Although this narrative actually has its origins in reality, to make this fiction appear more realistic Melville writes an account of his factual four-week stay with the Typees by creating a narrator, Tommo, who instead spends four months among the Typees. This expanded "travel narrative" provides Melville's narrator time to observe the Typees in more detail. The title, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*, indicates to the reader that the text will be a description of the narrator's observations during his time in the Marquesas. Having this facade of fact (travel narrative) as opposed to fiction (novel) is important for Melville's goal of altering nineteenth-century negative stereotypes. The travel narrative lends itself more readily to offering "facts" to the audience than if the narrative were presented purely as a work of fiction. The narrator communicates to his audience his observations by looking at the Typees through eyes similar to his audience. Because Melville is subject to his time and place, so is the narrator; therefore, Tommo gazes upon others with preconceived notions similar to beliefs of his colleagues and Melville's audience.

On the surface, Melville narrates to his audience and does not appear to make an argument but is merely relating an interesting story. However, Melville does make an argument in Typee that attempts to unseat popular nineteenth-century attitudes. Because of the subsurface argument that unfolds throughout the text, Melville must establish a connection with his audience by offering to them a narrator with whom they can understand, relate to, and ultimately trust to offer them the truth.

In *Typee*, Melville works primarily through detailed description that serves a multi-fold purpose: present to his audience juxtapositions of good/bad and nonwhite/white characters, reversals of audience expectations, and criticisms of popular nineteenth-century thought. Melville's narrator quickly introduces the thematic idea of "color" that reappears throughout the novel; as the first pages point out, the "frequent use of colors in the narrative also points the reader toward consideration of race, color, and ethnicity" (Dilger 5). In the narrator's descriptive and detailed observations, this fundamental idea of color and its relationship to culture and ethnicity provide a reoccurring semiotical place for the narrator to offer his criticisms on the negative effects of white colonialism of the non-white islanders. However, these observations do not appear as dogmatic, but instead the narrator invites the audience to draw their own conclusions about the Typees:

> There are some things related in the narrative which will be sure to appear strange, or perhaps entirely incomprehensible, to the reader; but they cannot appear more so to him than they did to the author at the time.

> He has stated such matters just as they occurred, and leaves every one to form his own opinion concerning them; trusting that his anxious desire to speak the unvarnished truth will gain for him the confidence of his readers. (34)

2.2 The Narrative in Typee

The following close-textual reading will examine the manner in which Melville relates his criticisms to his audience as well as pointing out his own personal views that he hopes his audience will adopt. Melville begins the narrative where after six months at sea searching for sperm whales and desperate to see land, Tommo and his companion, Toby, hear of the ship's plans to head for the Marquesas, they agree to desert the Dolly upon arrival because of the dire circumstances aboard their whaler:

> Our ship was now wholly given up to every species of riot and debauchery. Not the feeblest barrier was interposed between the unholy passions of the crew and their unlimited gratification. The grossest licentiousness and the most shameful inebriety prevailed, with occasional and but short-lived interruptions, through the whole period of her stay. Alas for the poor savages when exposed to the influence of these polluting examples. (50)

Heidegger claims that we use language in order to interpret and create the world around us, thereby creating others and ourselves in the process. When examined with his theoretical influence, the language Melville uses creates characters and offers insight

into these characters for the audience in order to place them within that world. In doing so, he also creates his audience, an audience that looks negatively upon such bad behavior as described in the above passage. What is most striking about Melville's language is the strength of meaning behind his choice of words: "riot," "debauchery," "unholy passions," "grossest licentiousness," and "shameful inebriety" all invite intensely negative images of this whaling crew in the mind of the reader. Melville relies upon the juxtapositions, reversals, and critiques as mentioned earlier to assist him in his creating of this world, these characters, and his audience. The above passage is one of the earliest juxtapositions Melville creates between typical nineteenth-century attitudes of good, white Christian males and what Melville challenges as the reality: sinful, bad, white males.

While it may have been accepted or even expected by the audience that an all-male whaling crew at sea would deviate somewhat from traditional principles of civilized Christian behavior and ideals, Melville describes a crew of men whose behavior is shockingly in contrast to the behavior expected of white Christian males, even at sea. Melville's descriptions lead the audience to see the crew as vile; therefore, it is understandable that Tommo and Toby wish to abandon the ship. Establishing these ideals in his audience now will help Melville later in the novel when he challenges his audience to judge the predominately white whaling crew, Christian missionaries, and white colonialists as less humane and less civilized as the native Typees. The earlier passage presents significant juxtapositions as Melville ends by naming the crew as

"polluting" and expressing regret for the "poor savages" who will surely be ill-affected by the Dolly's crew. This is Melville's first step in challenging his audience's judgment of the non-white islanders. This reversal is not the dichotomy a nineteenth-century audience would have typically accepted; however, Melville's juxtaposition introduces a belief that he will focus upon more throughout the remainder of the text: seeing so-called savage nonwhite as civilized and often more humane and more civilized than modern white men. The narrator develops this challenge by desiring to take his chances among the savages rather than remain with the crew: "Our ship had not been many days in the harbour of Nukuheva before I came to the determination of leaving her…I chose rather to risk my fortunes among the savages of the island than to endure another voyage aboard the Dolly" (Typee 55). Tommo's's statement offers a glimpse into who he is as a character,a man who recognizes and values positive human interaction, respect, and order.

Earlier in the text the narrator offers the common perception held by the crew about the islanders: "The Marquesas! What strange visions of outlandish things does the very name spirit up! Naked houris – cannibal banquets – groves of cocoanut – coral reefs – tattooed chiefs – and bamboo temples; sunny valleys planted with bread-fruittrees – carved canoes dancing on the flashing blue waters – savage woodlands uarded by horrible idols – heathenish rites and human sacrifices" (37). The narrator long with many in his audience shares these same preconceived notions about the islanders. Offering this perception helps to establish a common ground with the audience that

would serve Melville later in aiding the audience in accepting the narrator's negative perceptions of the Dolly's crew and positive perceptions of the Typees. As mentioned earlier, language serves an invaluable role in Melville's text. Here we can begin to see the potential effects of this intentional wording upon the audience, who more than likely felt affirmation for their negative beliefs of the islanders. This helps to bring a displaced narrator, as he is aboard a whaling ship in the South Pacific, closer to the audience by presenting common attitudes and beliefs.

While the islanders, even as we see them later, remain displaced characters for the audience, having a common ground established between narrator and audience helps to make the narrator's observations more dependable and valid for the audience. The audience, probably shocked at the narrator's description of the crew and his desire to take his chances among the "dark savages" rather than live amongst the white whaling crew, later may more easily accept and admire the positive qualities of the Typees be seeing them in juxtaposition to the whaler crew.

Before any further examination of Typee can be successfully attempted, it is important to note again that Melville, despite introducing radically new racial and cultural beliefs, could not fully escape his time and place in history. Therefore, entrenched nineteenth-century ideals of race, culture, and ethnicity appear occasionally in the narrator's comments. There probably exists in Melville's writings a combination of intentional language that supports his readers' current beliefs in conjunction with stereotypical thought Melville could not fully escape. It is unlikely that these

occurrences throughout Melville's works are mutually exclusive. Rather, I believe the two work interchangeably and symbiotically as well as consciously and unconsciously in order to affect Melville's racial project. Some of Tommo's "accounts of non-white races…rather stereotypically construct them as highly sexual beings. The seminal position of race in the narrative, the correlation between appearance and behavior, and the power of innately determined characteristics are all concretized before the narrative reaches the Marquesas Islands…the early epistemology represents another sort of innate property: the prejudices of the narrator Tommo" (Dilger 7). Before the escape, the narrator re-emphasizes the terrible nature of the Dolly's crew:

> Having settled the principle, then, let me apply it to the particular case in question. In numberless instances had not only the implied but the specified conditions of the articles been violated on the part of the ship in which I served. The usage on board of her was tyrannical; the sick had been inhumanly neglected; the provisions had been doled out in scanty allowance; and her cruises were unreasonably protracted. The captain was the author of these abuses; it was in vain to think that he would either remedy them or alter his conduct, which was arbitrary and violent in the extreme. His prompt reply to all complaints and remonstrances was the butt-end of a handspike, so convincingly administered as effectually to silence the aggrieved party. (55-56)

Again, Melville relies upon the strength of language in order to make real for the

audience the dire circumstances on the Dolly: “tyrannical,” “inhumanly,” and “violent.” Making certain his audience understands, accepts, and abhors these extreme conditions serves an important function later in the text when the narrator describes much more desirable and civilized conditions while living among the Typees. This juxtaposition evolves into the eventuality of attempting to reverse accepted nineteenth-century beliefs whereby dark-skinned males can be seen and accepted as civilized, humane, and disciplined people in juxtaposition to seeing the white crew as “dastardly” and “mean-spirited wretches, divided among themselves, and only united in enduring without resistance the unmitigated tyranny of the captain” (56).

Attempting to reverse the entrenched beliefs of his nineteenth-century audience could not have been a simple task for Melville. Therefore, he must have relied upon Tommo’s’s descriptions to provide perceptions as common ground and a manner in which to offer new perceptions. The language in Tommo and Toby’s conversations during their escape further establishes a connection with the audience by expressing expected fears of what they may encounter if they come across the terrible, “savage” Typees rather than the hospitable Happars, a tribe on the island believed to be “friendly” by the crewmen. Before their escape, the narrator takes time to share the common perceptions of the Typee tribe in comparison to the Happars: “On the other side of Happar, and closely adjoining it, is the magnificent valley of the dreaded Typees” (60). During their turbulent escape, Tommo shares his fears along with noting

Toby’s fears with the audience:

> Although I was convinced that the inhabitants of our bay were as arrant cannibals as any of the other tribes on the island, still I could not but feel a particular and most unqualified repugnance to the aforesaid Typees. Even before visiting the Marquesas, I had heard from men who had touched at the group on former voyages some revolting stories in connection with these savages. (61)

Typical human behavior encourages us to accept or at least consider seriously the opinions of others when confronted with judgments about people we have never met and places we have never seen. Therefore, it is natural for Tommo and Toby as well as the audience to believe what they hear concerning the Typees. This serves Melville in two ways: one, he points out general behaviors of accepting others' judgments as our own when we are not prepared with our own knowledge to counter those judgments; and two, Melville continues establishing a common ground between Tommo and his audience. Both ideas grow throughout the novel as Melville slowly begins to challenge those judgments (i.e. stereotypes), thereby hoping to change his audience's accepted beliefs about the non-white islanders.

Ending their turbulent escape, Tommo and Toby find themselves looking down upon a magnificent valley and asking themselves the name of its inhabitants, --Happar or Typee?-- a point of debate that was most necessary to resolve as they felt comforted in the idea of encountering the Happars but terrified at the prospect of falling into the hands of the Typees:

> On the other hand, the very name of the Typee struck a panic into my heart which I did not attempt to disguise. The thought of voluntarily throwing ourselves into the hands of these cruel savages seemed to me an act of mere madness; and most equally so the idea of venturing into the valley, uncertain by which of these two tribes it was inhabited. (93)

Melville continues to establish a common ground with the audience as his narrator invites them to feel the same panic in their hearts had they been in the same predicament as Tommo and Toby. Melville's language, again, creates not only Tommo and Toby for the audience, but the audience itself as it is subject to similar creation through Melville's language. Here, we have an audience that is invited to share in the narrator's fearful anticipation of the future as each believe the Typees to be terrible, savage cannibals. Confident and convinced they are looking at the Happar's valley, both injured, Tommo and Toby descend into the valley where they encounter a boy and a girl.

From this point on in the novel, the juxtapositions and reversals come far more frequently and obviously. Given this first encounter, the audience as well and Tommo and Toby, understand the two young tribe members to be frightened in the presence of the two white men. This symbol of white civilization stumbling into and over uncivilized, innocent, non-whites presents a startling and theoretical image that the narrator critiques later in the novel when he better understands the image before him.

Just as the two white, civilized men feared the unknown, these two innocent youths feared the unknown intrusion before them. In what appears like a description from the Garden of Eden, Tommo introduces us to the natives:

> They were a boy and a girl, slender and graceful, and completely naked, with the exception of a slight girdle of bark, from which depended at opposite points two of the russet leaves of the bread-fruit tree. An arm of the boy; half screened from sight by her wild tresses, was thrown about the neck of the girl, while with the other he held one of her hands in his; and thus they stood together, their heads inclined forward, catching the faint noise we made in our progress, and with one foot in advance, as if half inclined to fly from our presence. (113)

In order to complete the juxtaposition in this scene, the narrator speculates as to the thoughts of the two young islanders given their countenances:

> The frightened pair now stood still, whilst we endeavoured to make them comprehend the nature of our wants. In doing this Toby went through with a complete series of pantomimic illustrations…till I verily believe the poor creatures took us for a couple of white cannibals who were about to make a meal of them. When, however, they understood us, they showed no inclination to relieve our wants. At this juncture it began to rain violently, and we motioned them to lead us to some place of shelter. With this request they appeared willingly to comply, but nothing could

> evince more strongly the apprehension with which they regarded us, than the way in which, whilst walking before us, they kept their eyes constantly turned back to watch every movement we made, and even our very looks. (113-114)

By juxtaposing the two, injured and disheveled, white men with the two Eden-like figures, Melville exposes the narrator, and thus the audience, to a reversal of expectations. Both the narrator and the audience anticipated savages in the form of anthropomorphic evil; however, they are met by an epitomization of innocence; "There he is then, in Typee, among the dreaded cannibal savages. And they are gentle and generous with him, and he is truly in a sort of Eden" (Lawrence 134-35).

In keeping with this reversal of expectations, Toby is convinced by the natives' kindness that they must be in the Happar's valley; however, he and Tommo soon learn they are in fact with the Typees when Toby makes public his abhorrence of the Typees and his adoration of the Happars. Upon understanding this, the Typees respond with "savage outcries" against their enemies, the Happars. At this point, the level of vague comfort Tommo and Toby felt in believing they were in the Happar valley flees them. Their inward thoughts now turn to fear, as they believe the Typees to be a tribe of savage cannibals. When the tribe's apparent leader calms down from the initial meeting with the white men, he introduces himself as "Mehevi." In the exchange of names, the Typees are unable to pronounce Tommo and thus name him "Tommo." For Tommo, "An exchange of names is equivalent to a ratification of good will and amity among

these simple people; and as we were aware of this fact, we were delighted that it had taken place on the present occasion" (117). From this point forward, we see a change in Tommo and his perceptions, while Toby stagnates in his beliefs about the Typee tribe, refusing to recognize and give consideration to their apparent goodwill.

The first of many reversals of expectations comes as Tommo and Toby are "provided with fresh mats to lie upon, [and] covered with several folds of tappa" as the islanders "threw themselves down beside us, and after a little desultory conversation were soon sound asleep" (121). After knowing they were among the Typees, Tommo and Toby expected the worst reception; however, they were greeted with kindness and curiosity. The next morning, Tommo converses with the audience by questioning his own assumptions: " Was it possible that, after all our vicissitudes, we were really in the terrible valley of Typee, and at the mercy of its inmates, a fierce and unrelenting tribe of savages?" (122). If we accept the notion that language creates the world around us, others in it, and ourselves, then for Melville, Tommo's's language invites Melville's audience to challenge their nineteenth-century stereotypes. However, Melville cannot allow himself to create an unrealistic narrator who would immediately reverse all negative assumption based upon one positive meeting. Therefore, Tommo must hold on to some of those doubts while he allows himself the open-mindedness to question his assumptions:

> Typee or Happar? I shuddered when I reflected that there was no longer any room for doubt; and that, beyond all hope of escape, we were now

> placed in those very circumstances from the bare thought of which I had recoiled with such abhorrence but a few days before. What might not be our fearful destiny? To be sure, as yet we had been treated with no violence; nay, had been even kindly and hospitably entertained. But what dependence could be placed upon the fickle passions which sway the bossom of a savage? His inconsistency and treachery are proverbial. (122)

The gradual unfolding of this "travel narrative" reveals the Typees to be a hospitable tribe. One of the men, "Kory-Kory," becomes Tommo's companion as he apparently is assigned the task of watching over Tommo. The remainder of the novel focuses more heavily upon descriptions of scenes far more so than relaying accounts of events, unlike what we will see in Moby-Dick with Ishmael and Queequeg. Tommo takes us first through a detailed description of his attendant, "Kory-Kory," who many Melville critics believe to be an early draft of Queequeg:

> As his character will be gradually unfolded in the course of my narrative, I shall for the present content myself with delineating his personal appearance. Kory-Kory, though the most devoted and best natured serving-man in the world, was, alas! a hideous object to look upon. He was some twenty-five years of age, and about six feet in height, robust and well made, and of the most extra-ordinary aspect. (130)

Tommo continues in his narration by describing Kory-Kory's odd tattoos and peculiar

head shaving. Melville's language creates and intimidating, even frightful-looking man whose character he describes as being the "best natured." This description challenges Tommo along with the audience to question judgments based upon appearances only. Clearly, Kory-Kory appears to be a "savage;" however, his personality is quite the opposite. Juxtapose this description with those of the whaling crew earlier. Melville makes an early claim in his argument: looks do not always dictate a person's character of Heideggarian Being. Often, there is a reversal of our expectations; therefore, time must be given to the observation of the whole person and judgment reserved for a conclusion based upon behavior more than appearance.

To effectively examine Melville's juxtapositions of "whiteness" and non-whiteness and the related reversals, then the meaning of "whiteness," and thus non-whiteness, as it applied to nineteenth-century America must be determined. In "Cultural and Racial Hierarchy in Antebellum America," Greg Shell offers insight as to the status of whites and non-whites of Melville's time. Shell mentions "pseudoscientific racism" that existed in order to "scientifically" justify racism and white superiority. Based upon the single notion of color, white superiority arose carrying with it the belief that whites were inherently superior to all non-whites. Given the "natural science" of Melville's time, making judgments based upon observation led to determining one's character based upon outward appearances, especially when it came to black males. This science" determined that "the white man was superior to all other races of man, and that other races were inferior species" (Shell 1). Following this line of thinking resulted in the

general acceptance of non-whites, and specifically black males, as sub-human creatures. Shell reports the following observations of James Hunt, a nineteenth-century anthropologist:

> 1…there is as good reason for classifying the Negro as a distinct species from the European, as there is for making the ass a distinct species from the zebra: and if, in classification, we take intelligence into consideration, there is a far greater difference between the Negro and the European than the gorilla and the chimpanzee… 3. That the Negro is inferior Intellectually to the European. 4. That the Negro becomes more humanized when in his natural subordination to the European than under any other circumstances. 5. That the Negro race can only be humanized and civilized by Europeans. (1)

Nineteenth-century Americans and Europeans regarded blacks, and subsequently most non-whites, as lacking the morality in order to be considered civilized.

Again Cornel West's essay "Race and Modernity" points out the importance of "observation and evidence" in science during Melville's time. Melville, obviously subject to his time and place in history, functions within this scientific notion of natural history, guided by observations and categorizing differences, whereby observation/natural history was an acceptable methodology for uncovering "truth." Melville works within the "scientific" method of his time and doing so offers familiarity to his audience, as it was the accepted and respected method for unveiling truth in

nineteenth-century America. This element of respect and acceptability serves Melville well, as his "truth" disputes nineteenth-century "truths" about non-whites. This notion of natural history as supported by observations and categorizing differences serves to support the emergence of an institutionalized form of white supremacy, which Melville attempts to unseat. Cornel West's works make the correlation between nineteenth-century "science" and its support of white supremacy clear. West indicates that such categorizing distinguished blacks from whites and that the genealogy of racism has clear origins in the "classificatory category of race in natural history" (77). As a result, natural history incorporated "the category of race denoting primarily skin color," and as with most categorizations, a hierarchy ensued whereby white supremacy was fundamentally supported by a "science." This categorizing gave white supremacy its first "scientific" foundation and later expanded into other realms of "science:" phrenology and physiognomy. Science's new foothold as a method for uncovering truth also had at its origin the return to classic aesthetics; therefore, in comparing the white Europeans to the dark Africans, one conclusion remained constant: dark was inherently inferior to white.

Understanding nineteenth-century notions about whiteness and its symbiotic relationship with Christianity helps guide us in better understanding the significance of Melville's juxtapositions and reversals of white and non-white as well as Melville's reliance upon observation as his methodological approach. Obviously, Melville could not escape all negative stereotypes concerning non-whites, as he was a product of his

time and place. Therefore, one attribute generally applied to non-whites finds a place among his descriptions of the Typees: laziness. However, he does make the following exception that presents an important but sublte reversal to his audience:

> To tell the truth, Kory-Kory's mother was the only industrious person in all the valley of Typee…she seemed to work from some irresistible impulse; her limbs continually swaying to and fro, as if there were some indefatigable engine concealed within her body, which kept her in perpetual motion. (133)

This character stands apart from the rest of the easy-going tribe. Her character offers the audience an opportunity to see that this particular trait, while not common in the tribe, exists and can therefore be considered a positive, attributable characteristic that helps to unseat negative racial stereotypes. Clearly, Melville does not make the claim that one character or even one tribe of peoples can substantiate a complete reversal of all negative stereotypes concerning all non-whites. However, I do propose that for Melville, the Typees collectively, as well as particular characters, such as Mehevi, Kory-Kory, and Kory-Kory's mother, can challenge the audience's negative perceptions gradually adding new perceptions on one-by-one, and leading up to an entire tribe of people can present the audience with an opportunity to open their minds to the possibility that maybe not all non-whites are deserving of their lowly status given them. In turn, this opens the door to allow Melville's audience to reconsider the possibility that some non-whites should not be treated as inferior persons just because they are not

white. This early step significantly contributes to Melville's overall desire to reverse negative nineteenth-century notions about whiteness and its relative superiority.

Melville's narrator continues his description of Kory-Kory's mother by noting another important characteristic: "she had the kindliest heart in the world" (133). So as not to remove himself too far from the audience, the narrator points out a few of the males who epitomize nineteenth-century expectations of non-whites: "Besides the individuals I have mentioned, there belonged to the household three young men, dissipated, good-for-nothing, roistering blades of savages, who were either employed in prosecuting love affairs with the maidens of the tribe, or grew boozy on 'arva' and tobacco in the company of congenial spirits, the scapegraces of the valley" (133). Melville was subject to his time and place in history. At the same time, he could not afford to lose his audience's trust by attempting to present an almost perfect tribe of dark islanders that in no way substantiated any negative stereotypes given them. Nor was Melville under the illusion that all non-whites are inherently better persons. He believes there is the potential for good and bad in us all and that no one race is inherently superior to another. Therefore, these negative characters provide an element of balance, reality, and a commentary on potentiality of being to the narrative. This thesis focuses on Melville's treatments of the white and non-white males, though Melville does spend a significant amount of time observing and describing the women in the tribe, as they fit the stereotype of the exotic and innocent island female. With the exception of Kory-Kory's mother, the women are generally described as beautiful,

nymph-like creatures who arouse men's desires, through not only their beauty and sensuality but also their innocence. One woman stands out in particular for Tommo:

> From the rest of these, however, I must except the beauteous nymph Fayaway, who was my particular favourite. Her free pliant figure was the very perfection of female grace and beauty. Her complexion was a rich mantling olive, and when watching the glow upon her cheeks I could almost swear that beneath the transparent medium there lurked the blushes of a faint vermilion. The face of this girl was a rounded oval, and each feature perfectly formed as the heart or imagination of man could desire. Her full lips, when parted with a smile, disclosed teeth of dazzling whiteness… (133)

This particular description echoes the classic aesthetic revered in Melville's time. Also note the travel narrative's diction of description that gives a feel of objectivity to the audience. Outside of the color of her skin and hair, Tommo attributes no other nonwhite traits to Fayaway reinforcing the notion of the stereotypical "exotic beauty." Significant here too is Melville's use of language, "perfection of female grace and beauty " and "perfectly formed" features, as it would have affected his audience. Even though the narrator describes Fayaway as an exotic beauty, her character reverses the audience expectations as she falls into the contemporary category of white notions of beauty, as, according to Tommo, she surpasses the very ideal of white beauty. In order to help the audience remove that barrier of judgment, Melville describes the Typee women in

comparison to white women as a point of reference and commonality by pointing out shared traits: desire to accessorize the self, ornate clothing, gossiping, and an air of innocence about them that escapes men.

Melville spends a great deal of time describing the beauty of the people, the setting, and their kindnesses to each other and him. In the midst of these lovely descriptions, the narrator presents Melville's thesis to the audience after Toby, still fearful of the Typees and not convinced they mean him no harm, attempts a perilous escape:

> We were fairly puzzled. But despite the apprehensions I could not dispel, the horrible character imputed to these Typees appeared to be wholly undeserved. "Why, they are cannibals!" said Toby on one occasion when I eulogized the tribe. "Granted." I replied, "but a more humane, gentlemanly and amiable set of epicures do not probably exist in the Pacific." (148)

Though the narrator does not discount completely the "savage" nature of the Typees, he cannot deny his observations and their subsequent conclusions, as he does not want to the audience to forget or deny them. The Typees are a kind and humane people. In comparison to the Dolly's crew, the Typees behavior makes the "savage" islanders a more desirable type of people.

After Toby's terrible encounter with Happars where he nearly dies, Kory-Kory attempts to communicate to Tommo and Toby the terrible, cannibalistic nature of the

Happars. This irony functions within the text to bring to the surface and challenge the audience's preconceived notions. In doing so, the audience experiences, along with the narrator, what it feels like to come to terms with stereotypes about others as they recognize that perhaps they have wrongly judged the Typees. Also, by inverting the original stereotypes of the Happars and the Typees, the belief that those whom we initially accept and believe to be good may in fact be the ones to fear, and those we believe we should fear may in turn be the ones who extend the greatest courtesies. Melville's subsurface argument emphasizes the need to reserve judgment of others until we have conclusive evidence for ourselves as to the nature of someone's character and not to rely exclusively upon the opinions of others.

Melville balances, whether intentionally or unintentionally, between progressive and common nineteenth-century thought. That is, he sees non-whites as deserving of social equality while at the same time remaining a product of his specific time and place, therefore being unable to escape attributing certain negative stereotypes towards non-whites, particularly the males. Melville's narrator waffles between accepting his own observations of the Typees, which determine from his own observations they are indeed kind, hospitable, and respectable persons and the notion that his companion and himself may yet "be sacrificed by these ferocious islanders" (149).

In allowing more time to pass, which provides Tommo more opportunity to observe the Typees, Melville, through his narrator, begins to criticize colonization and so-called white civilization as it compares to the life innocent and tranquil life on the

island. As Tommo recovers more and more from his injuries incurred during the escape from the Dolly, he wonders around the valley more frequently, observing the Typees's daily activities, responsibilities, and interactions with one another: "I was fain to confess that, despite the disadvantages of his condition, the Polynesian savage, surrounded by all the luxurious provisions of nature, enjoyed an infinitely happier, though certainly a less intellectual existence than the self-complacent European" (179). The narrator makes a few pointed comments that are worthy of further examination. One, throughout *Typee*, Tommo continues to refer to the islanders as savages and cannibals despite his general conclusion that they are in fact kind, generous, happy, loving, and innocent people. What he points out in the above quote may be the key to his continued use of the term "savage." Tommo makes reference to their lacking an intellectual existence. While he generally attributes this supposed negative trait as a positive, as they so not suffer the corruption that generally follows a society proclaimed as intellectual, civilized, and desiring wealth (three traits that generally exist symbiotically and often lead to violence), "savage" connotatively remains a negative term that invokes a feeling not so much of its usage for naming a primitive, uncivilized group, but more so as a term that elicits an element of fear and apprehension. Two, the narrator juxtaposes the Typees and the Europeans, suggesting that life as a Typee may be more desirous. He furthers this criticism by pointing out the changes done to the Hawaiians at the hands of civilization: "what has he to desire at the hands of Civilization?…Let the once smiling and populous Hawaiian islands, with their now

diseased, starving, and dying natives, answer the question" (179).

In the following passage, Melville continues this early criticism of white civilization and offers the shocking conclusion that perhaps civilization, despite some advantages, may not necessarily be superior to the primitive, savage life of most nonwhites:

> In a primitive state of society, the enjoyments of life, though few and simple, are spread over a great extent, and are unalloyed; but Civilization, for every advantage she imparts, holds a hundred evils in reserve; -the heart-burning, the jealousies, the social rivalries, the family dissensions, and the thousand self-inflicted discomforts of refined life, which make up in units the swelling aggregate of human misery, are unknown among these unsophisticated people. (180)

However, despite this apparent admonishment for civilization and praise of simple, savage life, Melville again wavers between his progressive thinking in terms of equality and unity and his inability to escape his time and place. Immediately following the above passage, he makes the following observation:

> But it will be urged that these shocking unprincipled wretches are cannibals. Very true; and a rather bad trait in their character must be allowed. But they are such only when they seek to gratify the passion of revenge upon their enemies; and I ask whether the mere eating of human flesh so very far exceeds in barbarity that custom which only a few years

> earlier was practiced in enlightened England; a convicted traitor, perhaps a man found guilty of honesty, patriotism, and suchlike heinous crimes, had his head lopped off with a huge axe, his bowels dragged out and thrown into the fire; while his body, carved into four quarters, was with his head exposed upon pikes, and permitted to rot and fester among the public haunts of me! (180)

While it at first appears that Melville contradicts himself and cannot decide how he views the Typees in comparison to "civilization," he presents both sides of the Typees and civilization. He offers the positive traits of each and the downside of each. Melville demonstrates to his audience that the Typees, despite their cannibalistic crimes, are not uniquely cruel. Therefore, Melville concludes that one is not necessarily worse than the other. Therefore, he presents an element of equality when it comes to punishing one's enemy between the Typees and the Europeans. Then, Melville follows this passage with yet another that delves deeper into his own progressive thought, as he, through Tommo, offers the most pointed and conclusive criticism in the text:

> The fiend-like skill we display in the invention of all manner of death-dealing engines, the vindictiveness with which we carry on our wars, and the misery and desolation that follow in their train, are enough themselves to distinguish the white civilized man as the most ferocious animal on the face of the earth. His remorseless cruelty is seen in many of the institutions of our own favoured land. (180)

This one bold, shocking statement stands out among the remainder of the novel as the most conclusive critique that he builds the others upon. Melville challenges his audience to reflect upon themselves and examine society and civilization not from eyes that are desensitized by centuries of so-called civilization, but to look through eyes that judge not only others, but are capable of self-judgment and condemnation. Melville not only points out civilization, but more importantly, white civilized men as the culprits from which the most heinous crimes derive.

Melville addresses the idea of countering accepted, so-called scientific facts later in the novel among his many observations: "Now, all I can say is, that in all my excursions through the valley of Typee, I never saw any of these alleged enormities…The fact is, that there is a vast deal of unintentional humbuggery in some of the accounts we have from scientific men concerning the religious institutions of Polynesia" (235). Although not distinguishing itself as shocking as his prior statement, Tommo does attack this notion of accepting opinions as facts. Once seen as what they are, opinions, then they can more readily be changed.

In keeping with this process of thought, Melville, through Tommo, continues to criticize the ill effects of white, Christian colonization, and offers the Sandwich Islands as an additional example to his Hawaii critique. He carefully formulates his harsh criticisms in such a manner as to not turn his audience against him and at the same time insuring his point is made:

> In justice to the missionaries, however, I will willingly admit, that

> whatever evils may have resulted from their collective mismanagement of the business of this mission, and from the want of vital piety evinced by some of their number, still the present deplorable condition of the Sandwich Islands is by no means wholly chargeable against them….In a word, here, as in every case where civilization has in any way been introduced among those whom we call savages, she has scattered her vices, and withheld her blessings. (270)

Melville does not blame Christianity itself or the missionaries' intentions. This sort of attach might have cost him his audience. Instead, Melville blames civilization and all the evils it festers as a result of colonization. This idea, however, would not be too foreign for his audience to accept, as Christian mythology blames not itself for the evil in the world, but allowing evil to accompany men who greedily devour others, metaphorically speaking, in order to seek personal progress and financial growth for themselves. This is the driving motivation behind colonization. Melville, although he does create this exact metaphor, does present colonization as a metaphoric form of cannibalism; whereby, a dominant culture ingests a weaker, vulnerable culture and leaves a defecated form of that culture to remain forever changed.

Following the above passage, Melville offers to his audience room for doubt, not only about Tommo's's observations and conclusions, but the opportunity to doubt those who have reported falsely against the Typees:

> As wise a man as Shakespeare has said, that the bearer of evil tidings

> hath but a losing office; and so I suppose will it prove with me in communicating to the trusting friends of the Hawaiian Mission what has been disclosed in various portions of this narrative. I am persuaded, however, that as these disclosures will by their very nature attract attention, so they will lead to something which will not be without ultimate benefit to the cause of Christianity in the Sandwich Islands. I have but one thing more to add in connection with this subject – those things which I have stated as facts will remain facts, in spite of whatever bigoted or incredulous may say or write against them. My reflections, however, on those facts may not be free from error. If such be the case, I claim no further indulgences than should be conceded to every man whose object is to do good. (270)

This passage conveys Tommo's and by implication Melville's desire to dispel the unfounded myths that portray the Typees as violent, fearful savages. Melville's complicated methodologies all serve his main goal: to unseat negative nineteenth-century notions about non-whites in order to promote a unity through brotherhood. He employs specific examples to juxtapose ill-fated attempts of white men who colonize and unite with one another while excluding non-white males as compared to the islanders who work together and welcome strangers, such as Tommo and Toby. In chapter twenty-seven, Melville lays out his observations of the Typees' "social condition and general character" in juxtaposition to white civilization, so that the

audience may begin to reach their own conclusions:

> During the time I lived among the Typees, no one was ever put upon his trial for any offence against the public. To all appearance there was no courts of law or equity. There was no municipal police for the purpose of apprehending vagrants and disorderly characters. In short, there was no legal provisions whatever for the well-being and conservation of society, the enlightened end of civilized legislation. And yet everything went on in the valley with harmony and smoothness unparalleled, I will venture to assert, in the most select, refined, and pious associations of mortals in Christendom. How are we to explain this enigma? These islanders were heathens! Savages! Ay, cannibals! And how came they without the aid of established law to exhibit, in so eminent degree, that social order which is the greatest blessing and highest pride of social state…It must have been by an [inherent principle of honesty] and charity towards each other. They seemed to be governed by that sort of tacit common-sense law which…has its precepts graven on every breast. The grand principles of virtue and honour, however they may be distorted by arbitrary codes, are the same all the world over. (271)

Melville, although showing some of the superior nature of the Typees, in no way suggests that all non-whites are superior to whites. In fact, it is this very dichotomy he attacks. Melville, I suspect, hopes his audience will walk away from Typee believing

that the dichotomy itself does not have to exist that we as humans, white and non-white, have the potential to achieve unity. Melville continually repeats this theme throughout the narrative in describing the Typees and in juxtaposing the white and non-white characters.

Melville again makes a criticism on white notions of civilization this time leading to an introduction of his desire to achieve unity through brotherhood:

> Civilization does not engross all the virtues of humanity: she has not even her full share of them. They flourish in greater abundance and attain greater strength among many barbarous people. The hospitality of the wild Arab, the courage of the North American Indian, and the faithful friendship of the Polynesian nations, far surpasses anything of a similar kind among the polished communities of Europe. If truth and justice, and the better principles of our nature, cannot exist unless enforced by the statute-book, how are we to account for the social condition of the Typees? So pure and upright were they in all the relations of life, that entering their valley, as I did, under the most erroneous impressions of their character, I was soon led to exclaim in amazement: "Are these the ferocious savages, the blood-thirsty cannibals of whom I have heard such frightful tales! They deal more kindly with each other, and are more humane than many who study essays on virtue and benevolence, and who repeat every night that beautiful prayer breathed first by the lips of

> the divine and gentle Jesus." I will frankly declare that after passing a few weeks in this valley of the Marquesas, I formed a higher estimate of human nature than I had ever before entertained. (274)

Melville's prelapsarian descriptions of the Typees express his admiration for their having the very characteristics white Christians proudly proclaim but more often than not fail to display with any continuity or sincerity. Through Tommo, Melville declares the Typees have 'unanimity of feeling they displayed on every occasion" (274). This is the first real claim Melville makes for unity through brotherhood and the need to eliminate stereotypes regarding the Typees and other non-whites in order to achieve that unity. He continues this comment by noting the way in which "they showed this spirit of unanimity in every action of fellowship. I will give an instance of the fraternal feeling" (275). Melville next describes a situation that required the employment of all the men in the tribe, whereby they worked "united, but easy, and even indolent, labours of all, the entire work was completed before sunset" (275). Observing this unanimous employment encouraged the notion that a unity through brotherhood is not only possible but desirable both for its productiveness and for the strength, fellowship, and progress it can produce.

Melville continues in this methodology whereby he offers descriptions, reversals, juxtapositions, and criticisms, pointing out the Typees' desire to accept Tommo as one of their own, not excluding him from their celebrations, customs, and traditions, but including him instead. They do not attempt to change Tommo or to

negate his whiteness. They embrace him and desire to add to his being symbols of his inclusion into their culture by wanting to tattoo him. This tattooing is their symbolic gesture of unity. Melville dedicates page after page to continuing this thought process. However, if he had left things in this manner, what need would Tommo have to want to leave? If he never desired to leave, then those who needed to hear his observations would never hear them, which have the potential to upheave these nineteenth-century negative stereotypes. Therefore, the Typees must somehow make themselves undesirable without contradicting all of the positive observations made by Tommo throughout the novel. In doing so, Melville creates a scenario that the audience would have accepted as probable and positive, yet at the same time is undesirable enough for Tommo to wish to leave the Typees. Melville's nineteenth-century audience probably would have found appalling this act of tattooing, but not so much so as to reverse all progress Melville makes in changing their thoughts about the Typees. The Typees' overwhelming and unwavering desire to "mark" Tommo as one of their own drove Tommo to desire escape. For Melville, this was a delicate balance to maintain, as he had to find a way, methodologically, to create change in the audience, without losing their trust, and still find a way for Tommo to desire escape from the Typees in order to share his new knowledge with others. Tommo needed to desire an escape but maintain all respect and admiration he acquired for the Typees. Tommo cannot fully escape who he is (a white American male), yet at the same time he can no longer view the Typees with Western eyes; therefore, he is now challenged to view people based upon displays of

character and not necessarily immediate appearances disregarding color, class, race, or culture. Melville offers his audience a Tommo, who, as our writer puts it, now "denies the racist truths which have guided him up to that point [his extensive encounter with the Typees], and shows that the question [racist labeling of good and bad] should not be read as a choice between opposed alternatives, but as a radical challenge to an absolutist system of though" (Dilger 11).

Melville constructs a narrator, who "primarily represents [an] ideological crisis to (or in) himself," in hopes that his audience will encounter the same crises by the conclusion of the novel (Goudie). The act of reading creates shared experiences between narrator and audience, which Melville depends upon in order to bring about his desire for a deconstruction of nineteenth-century stereotypical and racist beliefs as he hopes his audience's "shared experiences" throughout the novel will result in altering their current racial beliefs.

Melville's *Typee*, under the guise of a travel narrative, attempts to unseat stereotypical (generally incorrect and unfounded) nineteenth-century notions of nonwhites through his criticisms of the negative effects of colonialism in the South Seas. This travel narrative links Melville institutionally to the "administration of imperialism…[in his attempt] to present the world [specifically the South Sea Islanders] to the readers at home" (Ivison 116). Tommo, as narrator and travel writer, "acted as what Pratt labels the 'seeing-man,' classifying, assigning value, interpreting, exoticizing, and normalizing those cultures with which he comes into contact" in order

to present another culture, race, or ethnicity, to an imperialistic nation, in this case the North Americans and Western Europeans (Ivison 116). This act of travel writing, an act of imperialization in and of itself, guarantees a certain amount of power to the travel writer, as he is part of imperialization; therefore, his observations are more readily trusted and accepted by the skeptical readers in the imperialistic nation. In the case of *Typee*, Melville insures himself a better chance of successfully altering his readers' beliefs than if he were to write a "fictional" account of the Typees or attempt to present the Typees's points of view absent the "Western seeing-man's eye." Given Melville's extensive attempt to unseat nineteenth-century beliefs through Typee, it is natural to be curious about his success. While it is not possible to know how the average reader embraced or rejected Melville's first novel, we can examine the critical comments that followed its popularity: "Out of fifteen American magazine reviews examined (and this certainly exhausts the list of major periodicals in the United States which took cognizance of Melville's literary debut), only three were doubtful of the authenticity of Typee" (Anderson 2-3). Melville's harshest critic, first mate Peck, launched his attach after the release of Omoo and concluded that Melville was a "missionary-hater, whose own career in the South Seas disqualified him as a critic of their shortcomings. His [Melville's] evidence was discredited by his autobiographical confessions, his obvious prejudice, and the unreasonableness of his statements" (Anderson 4). If only twenty percent of the critics rejected Melville's criticisms in Typee and Omoo, then it is possible that more than half of Melville's audience believed his writing and in this

belief were open to potential change. From this perspective, I believe we can say that although Melville did not achieve the overwhelming change in nineteenth-century belief he desired, there must have been at least some who stopped to question their own negative, stereotypical notions about non-whites. Of course, there were many other variables that invited a positive audience response: a good adventure story, the exotic and exciting topic, and general interest in travel literature.

CHAPTER 3

OMOO

3.1 From Typee to Omoo

Omoo, published in 1847, is the sequel to Typee and picks up immediately with Tommo's rescue. The two novels are ideologically interrelated, although their methodologies are somewhat different. While Typee relies upon the narrator's extensive interactions and observations of the Typee tribe, Omoo does not offer the same intense observations of the Tahitians, but rather spends more time on the degradation of the whaling crew, their treatment of one another, and observations about the negative effects of colonialism. Whereas the Typee tribe translates to the reader as an "Eden-like" existence not yet tainted by "civilization," the Tahitians in *Omoo* exemplify the potential harm of white civilization. The nineteenth-century critic Peck labeled Melville a "missionary-hater" because of Melville's harsh criticisms of the negative impact the missionaries had on the Tahitians in Omoo.

Omoo, in comparison to the dense content in Melville's other works, appears to be a lighter text. Methodologically, this may serve Melville's purpose, as he believes the missionary influence in the South Seas negatively impacted the islanders. When closely examined, the content in Omoo is no less serious and important to Melville's overall goal than any of his other works. On the surface, Omoo "holds a peculiar place

as the one novel completely simple and profane: not harboring 'the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God,' but nevertheless (or therefore) a welcome relief for the scholar toiling over Melville's usual inordinate complexity and intellectuality" (Samson 496). This would be true, if one did not stop to examine the "text within the context the book itself suggests: in the novel Melville refers to a large number of other books, primarily narratives written by South Seas missionaries" (Samson 497). This particular approach serves a multifold purpose: 1) to rely upon credible and reliable sources for support; 2) to allow what is being criticized to be its own criticism; and 3) to provide the author an outlet within the text to deal with internal conflicts. John Samson's "Profaning the Sacred: Melville's Omoo and Missionary Narratives" offers insight into the depths of Omoo: "one must recognize as well the extent to which Melville made use of the intellectual content and generic forms of these largely Calvinist narratives. Only then can one realize that Omoo's peculiarity and its humor arise from deep, complex issues typical of Melville at his finest" (Samson 497). Samson examines in detail Melville's attack on the Calvinistic missionaries in Tahiti:

> From youth Melville has grappled with Calvinism, as T. Walter Herbert, Jr., has argued. In Omoo his comment upon the Calvinism of the missionaries is particularly vehement: 'Tahiti as It Is' viciously attacks the missionaries' hollow faith, political maneuverings, and destruction of the natives. Outraged not only by these abuses but by religious press back home, which had urged him to expunge offensive passages from

Typee, Melville strikes out with a vengeance in his second novel. (497)

Given that this particular context within the text relates exclusively to Melville's persisting goal, I will focus on this section of Omoo in order to best point out the interrelatedness of these missionary texts to Melville's desire to unseat negative nineteenth-century notions of non-whites (in this case, South Sea Islanders).

Melville sets his chapter entitled "Tahiti As It Is" apart from the rest of the novel in order to make his most poignant remarks concerning colonialism and negative stereotypes of non-whites. It is his attempt to offer the "truth" about the missionaries' presence in the South Seas: "As in the last few chapters, several matters connected with the general condition of the natives have been incidentally touched upon, it may be well not to leave so important a subject in a state calculated to convey erroneous impressions. Let us bestow upon it, therefore, something more than a mere cursory glance" (171).

In much the same manner as the preface to Typee, here Melville introduces his criticisms not as criticisms, but as "unvarnished truth" from observation without bias. As he did in Typee, Melville presents facts to his audience and allows them to arrive at their own conclusions. Rhetorically, he better ensures a desired result, as people are more apt to believe what they feel they have concluded on their own.

Melville first presents the missionaries' accomplishments: elimination of idolatry, recognition of the island's nationality, and open and safe commerce with other nations. Then he goes on to relay the "truth" to his audience:

> In all cases, they [the islanders] have striven hard to mitigate the evils resulting from the commerce with the whites in general. Such attempts, however, have been rather injudicious, and often ineffectual: in truth, a barrier almost insurmountable is presented in the dispositions of the people themselves…We are merely considering general results, as made apparent in the moral and religious condition of the island at large. Upon a subject like this, however, it would be altogether too assuming for a single individual to decide; and so, in place of my own random observations, which may be found elsewhere [in the novel], I will here present those of several known authors, made under various circumstances, at different periods, and down to a comparative late date. A few very brief extracts will enable the reader to mark for himself what progressive improvement, if any, has taken place. (173)

At this point, Melville's narrator steps aside and allows others' observations to have a voice within his text. He offers the words of the "Right Reverend M. Russell…[who] acknowledges, moreover, that they [the islanders] are such as 'cannot fail to have great weight with the public' " (174). So as not to appear dogmatic or alone in his observations, Melville offers others' opinions to his audience:

> After alluding to the manifold evils entailed upon the natives by foreigners, and their singularly inert condition; and after somewhat too severely denouncing the undeniable errors of the mission, Kotzebue, the

Russian navigator, says, “A religion like this, which forbids every innocent [my emphasis] pleasure, and cramps or annihilates every mental power, is a libel on the divine founder of Christianity. It is true that the religion of the missionaries has, with a great deal of evil, effected some good. It has restrained the vices of theft and incontinence; but it has given birth to ignorance, hypocrisy, and a hatred of all other modes of faith, which was once foreign to the open and benevolent character of the Tahitian.” Captain Beechy says that, while at Tahiti, he saw scenes “which must have convinced the great sceptic of the thoroughly immoral condition of the people, and which would force him to conclude, as Turnbull [another author] did, many years previous, that their intercourse with the Europeans had tended to debase, rather than exalt their condition.” About the year 1834, Daniel Wheeler, an honest-hearted Quaker, prompted by motives of the purest philanthropy, visited, in a vessel of his own, most of the missionary settlements in the South Seas. He remained some time at Tahiti; receiving the hospitalities of the missionaries there, and, from time to time, exhorting the natives. After bewailing their social condition, he frankly says of their religious state, “Certainly, appearances are unpromising; and however unwilling to adopt such a conclusion, there is a reason to apprehend that Christian principle is a great rarity.” (175)

While all of the comments listed above strike hard to the reader the negative impact of the missionaries in Tahiti, the last stands out. What is most striking is the irony that because of the missionaries' direct and overwhelming Christian influence, Christian principles are noticeably lacking in Tahiti. Melville's comment, "facts are more eloquent than words," drives home to his audience what he hopes to be the proverbial nail in the coffin that settles in the reader's mind that the Christian missionaries have in fact done more harm than good in Tahiti. If so, then who is to say that what is believed at "home" to be successful colonialism is in fact erroneous reports that mislead us into believing we are doing "the right thing" for those we colonize? In fact, these Christian efforts bring about the name Christian but destroy the principles that distinguish it from pagan beliefs. In other words, Wheeler's observation that "there is a reason to apprehend that Christian principle is a great rarity" suggests that the islanders, though ignorant of the terminology and origin of Christian principles, innately embraced those very principles, despite their ignorance of "Christianity."

Melville then moves from his harsh criticism of "Christian/Calvinistic" influence on the islanders' religious behavior to the social impact from their presence:

> It has been said that the only way to civilize a people is to form in them habits of industry. Judged by this principle, the Tahitians are less civilized now than formerly…Instead of acquiring new occupations, old ones have been discontinued. (177)

Melville follows this statement with a brief comparison between the Tahiti and the

Marquesas, where civilization had not yet tainted the islanders:

> To me so recently from a primitive valley of the Marquesas, the aspect of most of the dwellings of the poorer Tahitians, and their general habits, seemed anything but tidy; nor could I avoid a comparison, immeasurably to the disadvantage of these partially civilized islanders. In Tahiti, the people have nothing to do2; and idleness, everywhere, is the parent of vice. "There is scarcely anything," says the good old Quaker Wheeler, "so striking, or pitiable, as their aimless, nerveless mode of spending life." Attempts have repeatedly been made to rouse them from their sluggishness; but in vain. (178)

Melville attacks imperialism in this section of Omoo. Though he spread such criticisms throughout the novel, this chapter clearly delineates his disapproval of the effects of colonialism and imperialism. This chapter led to negative reactions by some of Melville's critics after its publication and subsequent popularity. Some praised it while others, such as Peck, "called Omoo 'venemous, and, indeed, venereous,' and accused Melville of seeking to 'excite unchaste desires' in his readers" (Robertson-Lorant 157).

Again, Melville's language is intent upon pointing out the negatives aspects colonialism and imperialism share, as both are counterproductive to his ideal social make-up where unity through brotherhood prevails despite racial, social, cultural, and religious differences. What others read as direct attacks by Melville on the missionaries, religion, and civilization, are in fact attacks on colonial and imperialistic ideals,

whereby one social group that is generally defined culturally and racially as white overpowers and abases another group that is also generally defined culturally and racially as non-white, which seems to define them as inherently inferior. This particular criticism, more so than one specific religion or its missionaries, reappears through Melville's Omoo, as well as his other works. Melville desired to remove racist ideas about the hierarchy existing between white and non-white in order to bring to fruition his belief that a socially equal fraternity would strengthen humanity and improve the general human condition.

Melville felt strongly for the need to establish social egalitarianism. His own conscience drives him to attack the "evils" done through colonialism and its destruction of the once innocent, healthy, and unified islanders:

> About the year 1777, Captain Cook estimated the population of Tahiti at about two hundred thousand. By a regular census, taken some four or five years ago, it was found to be only nine thousand. This amazing decrease not only shows the malignancy of the evils necessary to produce it; but, from the fact, the inference unavoidably follows that all the wars, child murders, and other depopulating causes, alleged to have existed in former times, were nothing in comparison to them. These evils, of course, are solely of foreign origin3. To say nothing of the effects of drunkenness, the occasional inroads of the small-pox, and other things which might be mentioned, it is sufficient to allude to a

> virulent disease which now taints the blood of at least two-thirds of the common people of the island; and, in some form or other, is transmitted from father to son. Their first horror and consternation at the earlier ravages of this scourge were pitiable in the extreme. The very name bestowed upon it is a combination of all that is horrid and unmentionable to a civilized being. (179)

The evils Melville speaks of are the negative effects that white civilization has had on the islanders. This reversal of expectations stands at the foreground of this novel as an attempt to change traditional nineteenth-century thoughts concerning non-whites, which considers white to be inherently superior to non-white. Therefore, this depiction of white tainting non-white appeared shocking and incited some negative criticism from Melville's early readers, yet he remains convinced from his experiences and his strong belief that successful humanity begins with a socially equal fraternity, specifically, that must come about for this positive change to occur.

Why then does Melville not put forth to us examples of this unity through brotherhood, whereby race, class, and culture do not abase a man? I suggest that Melville felt compelled in his early writing to appeal to his audience by writing within a setting that they would more readily accept before he could make that leap. Also, Melville needed the time to develop fully his own thoughts concerning his ideological unification before he could present it to others in novel form, as he does more so in *Moby-Dick* and *Benito Cereno*.

Melville offers a strong conclusion for this chapter as he challenges his audience not to change their minds considering the "truths" he has given them:

> In view of these things, who can remain blind to the fact that, so far as mere temporal felicity is concerned, the Tahitians are far worse off now, than formerly; and although their circumstances, upon the whole, are bettered by the presence of the missionaries, the benefits conferred by the latter become utterly insignificant when confronted with the vast preponderance of evil brought by other means. Their prospects are hopeless. (Omoo 180)

Melville temporarily relieves the missionaries of the direct blame somewhat, yet continues to attribute the evils done to the Tahitians to "civilization":

> Years ago brought to a stand, where all that is corrupt in barbarism and civilization unite, to the exclusion of the virtues of either state; like other uncivilized beings, brought into contact with Europeans, they must here remain stationary until utterly extinct. The islanders themselves are mournfully watching their doom. (180)

Melville toys intermittently with notions of reversals and juxtapositions in order to guide his audience through a world generally known only to his audience through travel writings. While many of these writings propagandize for the purpose of generating support for further colonial efforts, Melville writes for a very different reason. He attempts to point out the best of the Tahitian culture that existed before their subjugation

to European influence and colonialization, in addition to presenting to his audience negative effects of Europeans on the islanders. Melville's purpose is not to attack white civilization per se, but to attack the negative ramifications "white civilization" thrusts upon others, whereby he feels an unfair and unsuitable hierarchy establishes subjugation from one culture to another. Melville, being subject to such suppressive states aboard the whaling ships, empathizes with the islanders and desires their autonomy and pride be restored. For him, civilization as it pertains to such colonialization, weakens and destroys a people, as the state of subjugation itself is the destructor. For this reason, Melville desires a unified state of existence, where men come together in a brotherhood for the betterment of humanity itself. In doing so, he must first guide his audience away from their negative nineteenth-century notions of non-whites and their supposition that non-white is inherently inferior to white, so that they may begin to accept this idea of unity through brotherhood for all men despite race or culture. In *Moby-Dick* Melville finds the perfect outlet to exemplify his desired state for man.

CHAPTER 4

MOBY-DICK

4.1 Historical Contexts

The historical contexts that Melville wrote Moby-Dick in require a brief examination. Melville's most famous novel, Moby-Dick, employs various allusions, symbols, characters, and metaphors throughout in order to unseat the nineteenth-century's negative beliefs about non-white males. As with his other works, his message functions through juxtapositions and reversals in order to undermine negative assumptions. Melville's time at sea changed him. He no longer looked through the eyes of a white, middle-class, American male, "On the contrary, he began to reexamine his own society through the eyes of 'savages' " (Karcher 2).

Though his family supported ethnic separatism and despite his strong ideological differences from his family, Melville did not partake in common pre-Civil War activities, nor did he play a part during or after the Civil War. The efforts we see come from his writings, Moby-Dick being one of the most influential.

Melville's writings exemplify his direct commentary on so-called "savages" and "white men," where stereotypical roles are reversed; i.e., often the "savages" are more humane, gentle, and kind, whereas the "white men" are often cruel, ignorant, and barbaric in their attitudes and actions. Critics such as Willard Thorp viewed Melville's

writings as "'unique among his contemporaries in his freedom from zeal and prejudice [against non-whites],' [and] Milton Stern sees him as colorblind" when it comes to the races of men in that he does not create hierarchies based upon race (Grejda 8). Instead, Melville in *Typee* and *Omoo* reverses hierarchies through juxtapositions based upon race that he explores to a greater extent in *Moby-Dick*.

Before writing *Typee* and *Omoo*, Melville returned to New York City. After their publication, he met and married Elizabeth Shaw in 1847. At this time, he embarked on a new educational endeavor and began reading Shakespeare, Dante, Montaigne, Browne, Coleridge, and Rabelais (Barbour 6). The United States underwent significant historical changes when Melville began writing Moby-Dick:

> By the time he began Moby-Dick, America had settled its dispute with Great Britain over Oregon, had annexed Texas, and had engaged in a war with Mexico that extended the boundaries of the Union to the Pacific. Celebration, however, was short, since the lands ceded to the United States by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) had the potential of upsetting the delicate balance between "slave" and "free" states temporarily secured by the Missouri Compromise of 1820-21. Thus, the Union found itself confronting the specter of nullification because the southerners were fearful of David Wilmot's 1846 proviso calling for the prohibition of slavery in the lands acquired from Mexico. A period of calm, however, ensued after Henry Clay's "Compromise of 1850." This

> abolished the slave trade in the District of Columbia; admitted California to the Union as a free state; divided the rest of the Mexican cession into two territories (New Mexico and Utah) that would decide for themselves whether to apply for membership into the Union as free or slave states; and appeased southern slave owners by devising a fugitive slave law, which, together with the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, was vigorously enforced by judges no less eminent than Melville's father-in-law, Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court. (Duban 82)

Ishmael, Melville's narrator for Moby-Dick, depicts his account approximately between 1850 and 1851, which echoes some of these political issues. For example, some critics discover parallels existing between the Pequod's hunt for the White Whale and America's westward endeavors, Ahab's monomania and the United States's expansionist ideology, and Ahab's defiance of "God's Law Supreme" and John C. Calhoun's desire to extend slavery into the new territories (Duban 83).

4.1.1 Whiteness

Many critics explore the significance of whiteness in Moby-Dick focusing predominately on the whale's whiteness. In keeping with my particular thesis, which examines ideas of racism and Melville's desire to eliminate nineteenth-century racist ideologies, it is helpful to see how Moby-Dick explores "whiteness" outside this racial context before looking at its racial significance. Janez Stanonik begins a study of the

whale's whiteness in 1962 by giving *Moby-Dick* an historical link to Mocha Dick, a "whitish" whale known to destroy whaling boats. Stanonik examines white animals both in myth, religion, and nature: "In mythology the colour [color] white is the symbolic colour [color] of solar deities" (108). Critics often view Moby-Dick as either a God or God's tool of justice. On the other hand, whiteness is often read differently: "Very frequently white animals are believed to be harbingers of illness or death" (Stanonik 109). From this reading, some critics claim that the very whiteness of Moby-Dick means death. In fact, this idea of death and whiteness extends to the ivory on the Pequod and the white foam on the sea as elements that foreshadow death. White, therefore, carries both good and bad connotations in terms of deity, death, and illness; in any instance, whiteness is known to conjure powerful reactions by the observer whatever its mode of existence may be.

Looking at whiteness from a different perspective in the novel, John Bernstein initiates his exploration via its typical associations with "purity and innocence." Bernstein's investigation does, nevertheless, point out one of Melville's racial treatments of whiteness: "in Moby-Dick, whiteness is associated with terror and death. It should be pointed out, however, that Melville is far too subtle a thinker to deal with issues in absolute terms: hence, black does not come to symbolize absolute good nor white absolute evil" (85). He furthers this argument by addressing Ishmael's narrative concerning whiteness in chapter forty-two of Moby-Dick ;"It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me" (199). Bernstein acknowledges Ishmael's

recognition of whiteness as traditionally coupled with joy, royalty, nobility, and innocence, but calls attention to Ishmael's point that white can mean more: "Whiteness implies joy but produces terror" (98). According to Ishmael, "there lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more of panic to the soul than that redness which affrights in blood" (200).

In addition to whiteness symbolizing terror and death in Moby-Dick, Edward Edinger further explores Stanonik's point that whiteness symbolizes deity: "A definite effort is made to assimilate the god-images of many of the world's mythologies to Moby-Dick," for example, "Moby-Dick is called a 'Job's Whale' (chapter 41), referring to Leviathan in the book of Job" (77). Jean-Paul Sartre offers his ideas of whiteness symbolizing terror by labeling it "a leitmotiv of demoniacal horror" (94). Sartre explains Melville's ideological colorblindness as a position at the basis of human existence where black and white are the same. Paul Brodtkorb, Jr. carries this notion of whiteness a step further: "Nature herself assumes the power of whiteness to intensify dread," and "there seems to be something no less than ontological about whiteness that it loosens it from the contingent power of ordinary feelings" (116). Briefly examining the significance "whiteness" carries throughout the novel outside a racial context situates this thesis in a place to examine it strictly from a racial standpoint without ignoring the various meanings "whiteness" offers in Moby-Dick.

4.1.2 Race

With these various approaches of "whiteness" in mind, in terms of race, it appears to be dealt with, comparatively, the least by critics. To create a contextual launching point for the racist terminology of this particular exploration, certain definitions and etymologies will be put forth. This look at race terminologies is significant as it highlights the fact that Melville was linguistically limited. The point in history in which he was writing did not have the language available to label specifically such modern notions of racism, social inequality, and racial stereotyping. For Melville, only the word race was at his disposal: "race," an English derivative of the French word "raza," first appears in 1512 to define, "a group of persons, animals, or plants, connected by common descent or origin" (OED). A subsequent definition of race, and one Melville would have been aware of, comes from its use in Milton's Paradise Lost in 667: "a tribe, nation, or people, regarded as of common stock" (OED). The definition most commonly used today originates at Melville's time from Prichard's Natural History of Man in 1842, "a group of several tribes or peoples, regarded as forming a distinct ethnical [my italics] stock" (OED). Melville uses the term race in a similar way as it is used today. However, there are other terms critics apply to Melville's work that were not yet in existence at the time he wrote Moby-Dick.

Although the words were not of Melville's time and he did not have them at his disposal, their meanings are evident in his works nonetheless. For example, "racial," which appears shortly after Moby-Dick in 1862, "belonging to, or characteristic of race"

(OED). “Racialism” appears in 1907, “belief in the superiority of a particular race leading to prejudice and antagonism towards people of other races” (OED). “Racialist” arrives ten years later in 1917, “a partisan of racialism, an advocate of a racial theory” (OED). The term “racist” is first seen in 1932 in Trotsky’s History of Russian Revolution; and finally, “racism” appears in 1936 by L. Dennis’s Coming American Fascism, “the theory that distinctive human characteristics and abilities are determined by race” (OED).

Melville incorporates another term of interest, which leads this discussion to a slight digression, but will be examined in detail for Benito Cereno: “slave.” Ishmael introduces this term when he first begins to see race differently, “Who ain’t a slave? Tell me that” (6). Its origin dates back to 1200 in its Old German form, “slaue: one who is the property of, and entirely subject to, another person, whether by capture, purchase, or birth; a servant completely divested of freedom and personal rights” (OED). This term was in existence six hundred years before “race” appears in its contemporary usage; ironically, in antebellum America, “race,” for the first time was the decisive factor in determining who was a “slave” and who was a free man. Melville makes a deconstruction of racism in Moby-Dick his commentary on slavery and racism in America.

4.2 From Typee and Omoo to Moby-Dick

Melville's Moby-Dick readdresses a topic of race previously explored in Typee and Omoo. He wrote Typee and Omoo after his explorations in the Pacific where his knowledge of sea-life and islanders reflect in his writing, as Ishmael summarizes later in Moby-Dick: "a whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard" (119). Bette Weidman succinctly encapsulates his progression as a writer from Typee and Omoo through to Moby-Dick: "Melville saw first and read later, and his books are the record of his integration of these two ways of knowing" (85). Whereas Moby-Dick is a narrative, as Typee and Omoo are, it is not a direct autobiographical retelling of his own personal adventures as Typee and Omoo echo. Typee sets the stage for Melville to open his discussion of so-called "savages." This narrative begins a telling of human behavior and counter-stereotypes: "it also contains the embryos of ideas about man and universe, man and man that would trouble Melville all his life" (Browne 11).

In other words, Melville initiates in Typee what he will resolve later in Moby-Dick, his discovery that non-whites are not morally inferior to whites; and whites do not have a stable, scientific (Kantian) foundation to support their supremacist ideals, as will be demonstrated in chapter thirty-two of Moby-Dick, "Cetology." Both Typee and moo are anti-colonialist texts, which is not necessarily true for Moby-Dick. What Moby-Dick does demonstrate is a deconstruction of racist ideology itself as applied to all races of men.

As with the many new terms concerning race, the term "deconstruction" was not

a part of Melville's vocabulary; however, it is very much relevant to what Melville does with race in Moby-Dick: "Deconstruction does not consist in moving from one concept to another, but in reversing [my italics] and displacing [my italics] a conceptual order as well as the nonconceptual order with which it is articulated" (Derrida 21). Melville fulfills Derrida's definition in advance by reversing the idea of white being better than non-white through many of his non-white characters that exhibit a higher morality than the white characters. He eliminates the hierarchy of white being superior to non-white and temporarily creates a new hierarchy of non-white being superior to white.

However, this new hierarchy does not remain a constant, because, following Derrida, in order for deconstruction to work that reversal must then be displaced; hence, not all of Melville's non-white characters are examples of high morality just as not all of the white characters are examples of deplorable human behavior. Thus, Melville successfully portrays mankind from a "colorblind" perspective, showing to the reader that race provides a poor determinant of a man's integrity and worth. Consequently, Melville exemplifies deconstructionist theory into play in order to find a commonality among mankind.

Melville remains subject to his time and place in history. The science of his time was a "natural history" that relied upon observations and categorization. Melville uses his "scientific" chapter "Cetology" to undercut racial categorizing and places this part of his writing within the scientific concepts and discourses of his time period making it a familiar framework for his audience. Cornel West's investigation of race clearly

defines the white supremacists' ideological foundations and their link to science:

> The intellectual legitimacy of the idea of white supremacy, though grounded in what we now consider marginal disciplines (especially in its second stage), was pervasive. This legitimacy can be illustrated by the extent to which racism permeated the writings of the major figures of the Enlightenment. It is important to note that the idea of white supremacy not only was accepted by these figures, but, more important, it was accepted by them without their having to put forward their own arguments to justify it. Montesquieu and Voltaire of the French Enlightenment, Hume and Jefferson of the Scotch and American Enlightenment, and Kant of the German Enlightenment not merely held racist views; they also uncritically-during this age of criticism-believed that the authority for these views rested in the domain of the naturalists, anthropologists, physiognomists and phrenologists. (82)

West's historical documentation continues with citations from various works by Montesquieu, Voltaire, Hume, Jefferson, and Kant, expressing white supremacist ideals. West comments on Hume, whose "racism was notorious; it served as a major source of proslavery arguments and anti-black education propaganda. In his [Hume's] famous footnote to his essay 'Of National Characters,' he stated, 'I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to whites' " (83). West then examines Jefferson, who,

"arrived at mildly similar conclusions in his Notes on Virginia. Regarding the intellectual capacities of black people, he wrote: 'Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me, that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior' " (West 83). These ideas carried over to Melville's time and were publicly supported and accepted, especially by those hegemonic institutions that favored slavery. It is important to keep in mind what was happening historically in the United States at this time; the "Compromise of 1850" and the struggle between "free" and "slave" states is mounting. Therefore, the "slave" states grappled to find a legitimate basis for the institution and proliferation of slavery.

Another "scientific" method used as justification for enslaving specifically blacks comes from Paul Gilmore, who delves into pro-slavery's "scientific" historical basis: "Craniometry, as promoted by Samuel George Morton, was based on the idea that the interior volume of one's skull corresponded to one's intelligence. Morton used the measurements of skulls from ancient and contemporary skeletons to 'prove' the continuation of racial stocks and the superiority of Caucasians" (Gilmore 115).

Gilmore goes on to explain that Morton's efforts led him to be "one of the chief theorists for the emerging American school of ethnology, the chief proponents of polygenism and strict, biologically understood racial distinctions in the antebellum period" (115). These are only among a few of the "pseudo-scientific" foundations pro-slavery states depended upon to justify their actions. Not surprisingly, the financial benefits of slavery for the slave owners are rarely, if ever at all, listed among the

legitimate "reasons" for upholding the institution of slavery.

By examining the reasons they fought to maintain slavery, we find another modern, yet applicable term, "pseudo-scientific racism, the belief that science supported the idea that whites were superior to those of other races" (Shell 1). In the 1960's Moby-Dick was read for the first time as a direct commentary and attack on the "Compromise of 1850" and the Fugitive Slave Law Act [legally enforced the return of escaped slaves found in the North back to their owners in the South. Joseph Andriano follows Karcher, Morrison, and others in supporting Moby-Dick as an openly anti-racist text: "Ishmael's discourse is often calculated to undercut the myth [my italics] of white supremacy" (143). This is the very idea Melville attacks in "Cetology." Andriano points out that critics prior to 1996 failed to link Melville's anti-racist theme in *Moby-Dick* "to the cetological natural history Melville (with Ishmael's commentary) offers in the book" (143). This delayed realization may be attributed to the fact that, as with many other places in his works, Melville was subject to his historical context. However, this fact does not take away from Melville's clear intentions to unseat nineteenth-century racist ideas.

In fact, "Cetology" serves as one of Melville's most clear attacks on racism and one of his most obvious deconstructionist moments in the novel. He destabilizes the supposed hierarchy of man over animal [Ahab as superior to Moby-Dick, as in the end the whale is the victor] and then analogously subverts the "scientifically" based notions of white as superior to non-white: "Not only does Melville deconstruct the Ladder of

Being, overturning the Scale of Nature, he also reveals (while rejecting nineteenth-century positivism, as Spanos has most recently shown) an implicit acceptance of the worldview and some of the tenets of evolutionary biology" (Andriano 145).

In a display of subtle irony, Melville attempts to provide a scientific classification of whales, much like the scientists of his time endeavored to create a scientific classification of non-whites, both of which are inaccurate, as Ishmael well knows: "I promise nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete must for that very reason infallibly be faulty" (143). Here, Melville, through Ishmael's narrative, alludes to contemporary scientists declaring to have done the very thing he argues cannot be done. He continues this seemingly scientific account by citing Linnaeus, who anatomically determines whales to be a separate species from fish based upon their common internal characteristics with mammals. However, in keeping with his intended irony, Ishmael sardonically dismisses this proof when he consults two of his messmates [my italics] who are of the "united opinion that the reasons set forth were altogether insufficient" (143). Despite his concurrent opinion with his messmates, Ishmael bases his belief that the whale is in fact a fish on the authority of Jonah's story from the Bible. He does not dispute Linnaeus's anatomic findings of the whale's internal structure; he brings the whales external traits to the argument.

Melville links this obvious irony to his real criticism, beginning his argument for classifying the whale as a fish: "Next: how shall we define the whale, by his obvious externals, so as conspicuously to label him for all time to come" (144). Melville's point

becomes obvious: scientists began their distinction of non-whites based upon their obvious external differences; however, when that was challenged as a valid point of discrimination by abolitionists, the scientists turned to the non-whites' internal traits to force their point and "prove" their "scientific" opinions, hence the Mortons, Jeffersons, and Humes.

Melville again relies upon semantic reversals, as he provides a "true" scientific statement by Linnaeus confirming whales are mammals and not fish, and reverses this first notion by determining that the whale's classification must be established by its outside, not its inside. Then, he goes on to displace Linnaeus and his messmates' findings altogether by relying upon the Bible as the authority that can determine the whale's classification, taking the entire argument outside science. Melville successfully inverts the hierarchy of science's authority and accuracy, and then displaces the whole notion.

Much like Melville's chapter on cetology places him in the "scientific" context of his time, the Pequod functions contextually as a microcosm of Melville's America and its possible fate, disintegration: "Once the Pequod sets sail, white supremacy, the rights of property, bourgeois morality, and Christianity are tossed overboard in short order" (Dumain 2). The Pequod represents America analogously by its demographic make-up: "In the most obvious and literal sense, the material of Moby-Dick is drawn directly from nineteenth-century American society" (Smith 27). Ahab, the captain, an older, white, Quaker, monomaniacal male who when placed in charge of others sets out

on his own mission takes advantage of his position and authority in order to promote his own agenda. Some critics compare Ahab to John C. Calhoun from South Carolina, (an "American statesman and political philosopher who from 1811 until his death served in the federal government successively as a congressman, secretary of war, vice-president, senator, secretary of state, and again as senator") who openly and willingly defied morality in an aggressive attempt to defeat the Compromise of 1850, which would conserve slavery in the South and branch out into the new states (Wiltse 1 and Duban 96).

The crew's ethnicity aboard the Pequod reflects the working class, laborers, and slaves in American society. There are white men, like Ishmael, "the Polynesian Queequeg, the Negro Daggoo, the American Indian Tashtego – and the Oriental Fedallah" (Grejda 85). Pip, the young tambourine player from Alabama, and Fleece, the old, black cook, represent the American slaves. In addition to race, each character represents specific characteristics that Melville sees as reflecting humanity. Queequeg represents kindness, sharing, and brotherly love in his friendship with Ishmael, which "illustrate[s] a compatible relationship between men of different colors" (Grejda 100). Tashtego, the American Indian, is physically superior to the other white men on the Pequod and "shows a grim, humorous contempt for the cowardly white" (Grejda 100). Daggoo, the African, is also an imposing figure, very dark and extremely large. He "retained all of his [barbaric] virtues, and erect as a giraffe, moved about the decks in all the pomp of six feet five in his socks. There was a corporeal humility in looking at him;

and a white man standing before him seemed a white flag come to beg truce of a fortress" (128). These brief character sketches assist in analyzing Melville's attempt to reverse the established hierarchy and unseating nineteenth-century beliefs about nonwhites, slavery, and racism.

If the Pequod serves as an allegorical treatment of America, then Melville must have some idea in mind of what will happen to America if there are no reversals in America's ideological belief that white is inherently superior to all non-whites: America is destined to destroy itself because of its violating humanity or find a salvation in order to survive. "In Moby-Dick, Melville envisages several possible dénouements to the American crisis over slavery, along with various answers to the question of whether individuals (and nations) help to weave their own destiny into the warp of necessity or are entirely caught in the threads of Fate's loom" (Karcher 63). Melville offers one such possible rebellion in "The Town-Ho's Story" via Steelkilt. However, as Melville makes clear in Typee and Omoo, he prefers pacifism "as a means by which to further rebellion" over violence (Bernstein 25). Violence is not the answer Melville seeks as saving America. He also alludes to the slave revolts in America, of which he was not in favor.

If there is a clear racial problem in America, as Melville obviously feels there is, then what is the answer if it is not rebellion against what or who is wrong? D.H. Lawrence labels the Pequod "ship of the American soul" (149). Consequently, Melville, through the narration of Ishmael, suggests that America is damned, just as the Pequod is

damned:

> Doom! Doom! Doom! Something seems to whisper it in the very dark trees of America. Doom! Doom of what? Doom of our white day. We are doomed, doomed. And the doom is in America. The doom of our white day. Melville knew. He knew his race was doomed. His white soul, doomed. His great white epoch, doomed. Himself, doomed. The idealist, doomed. The Spirit, doomed…What then is Moby Dick? He is the deepest blood-being of the white race; he is our deepest blood-nature. And he is hunted, hunted, hunted by the maniacal fanaticism of our white mental consciousness. We want to hunt him down. To subject him to our will. And in this maniacal conscious hunt of ourselves we get dark races and pale to help us, red, yellow, and black, east and west, Quaker and fire-worshipper, we get them all to help us in this ghastly maniacal hunt which is our doom and our suicide. (Lawrence 160)

The "whiteness" imagery in this section relates to Sartre and Brodtkorb's criticisms of whiteness symbolizing destruction.

Despite Melville's efforts to reverse racial stereotypes, Fedallah, perhaps more than any character, comes closest to being a "pure" racist stereotype. His character is a prime example of Melville not being able to escape nineteenth-century prejudices. Though Melville reverses America's accepted hierarchy, white over non-white, by creating such noble non-white characters as Queequeg, Tashtego, and Daggoo, all of

who exhibit morals and physical traits superior to whites, Melville cannot completely step outside his time and place: "Fedallah is not a 'man.' Unlike the other harpooners who, by virtue of their manly appearance, their genuinely human traits, or both, emerge as man. Fedallah is the 'devil'" (Grejda 102-3). Additionally, Fedallah serves as Ahab's "evil genius" (Gleim 135). Fedallah, "Ahab's dark double, is the incarnation of some primeval darkness, Queequeg, the bosom friend of Ishmael, is the embodiment of a prelapsarian goodness" (McSweeney 80). Melville attempts to unseat the notion that skin color is a determinant of superiority, especially since he promotes unity not superiority. For Melville, a person's outside does not determine their inside, and a person's internal make-up, their integrity and honor, are what should determine how they are to be received by others. However, with certain characters, such as Fedallah, Fleese, Dagoo, and Pip, Melville is unable to completely escape his own nineteenth-century racial prejudices. Therefore, these characters fall prey to the very stereotypical notions Melville attempts to unseat. Though Melville was certainly a man whose ideas were far ahead of his time, he was still subject to his time and place in history.

Chapter sixty-four, "Stubb's Supper," gives another example of Melville attempting to unseat racist ideologies. After Stubb and the crew successfully kill a whale, he wakes the old cook, Fleece, and orders a whale steak be prepared for him:

> About midnight that steak was cut and cooked; and lighted by two lanterns of sperm oil, Stubb stoutly stood up to his spermaceti supper at the capstan-head, as if that capstan were a sideboard. Nor was Stubb the

> only banqueter on whale's flesh that night. Mingling their mumblings with his own mastications, thousands on thousands of sharks, swarming round the dead leviathan, smackingly feasted on its fatness. (262)

Melville sets the stage for an essential scene in the novel in which he will critique racism in terms of one of its fundamental ideals, "savagism versus civilization," by comparing Stubb's eating of the whale flesh to that of the sharks'. This recurrent theme appears in this instance as comedic scene. Melville employs humor through the context of a pseudo Negro-minstrel. Stubb's dinner is disturbed by the noise of the sharks' eating, so he calls upon the old, crippled, black Fleece. Stubb requests Fleece to deliver a sermon to the sharks regarding eating etiquette, as the sharks are devouring the whale's flesh too loudly. The absurdity of such a request as well as the carrying out of the request allows the opportunities for comedy and criticizing racist ideologies:

> "Fellow critters: I'se ordered here to say dat you must stop dat dam noise dare. You hear? Stop dat dam smackin' ob de lip! Massa Stubb say dat you can fill your dam bellies up to the hatchings, but by Gor! You must stop dat dam racket!" (264).

There are two important points to be made concerning this sermon. One, Fleece's exaggerated vernacular reflects that of the slaves in America, reinforcing Fleece as the American slave's counterpart aboard the Pequod. However, there is more that can be extrapolated from this sermon than his vernacular. This is one of the places in the novel where Melville's voice is clearly heard through one of his characters. Interestingly,

Melville chose the "ignorant," black cook to be his voice box: "For the fact is that the black pseudo-dialect of Fleece's sermon is a deliberate mask. All one has to do is rewrite the sermon in 'straight' English to see that we are in actuality dealing with someone other than a sleepy ship's cook" (Zoellner 88).

When translated, an important message becomes very clear: Beloved fellow-animals in itself "reinforces his [Melville's] theme that one race is no more or less bestial than the other. Humanity itself connects all races with the same potentials for good/bad, right/wrong, civility/incivility, and humanity/inhumanity. Melville juxtaposes these two characters in dialogue and context: white/black, superior/inferior, strong/weak, and intelligent/unintelligent:

> "Cook," here interposed Stubb, accompanying the word with a sudden slap on the shoulder, "Cook! Why, damn your eyes, you mustn't swear that way when you're preaching. That's no way to convert sinners, Cook!" "Who dat? Den preach to him yourself," [Fleece] Sullenly turning to go. "No, Cook; go on, go on." "Well den, Belubed fellow critters:" "Right!" exclaimed Stubb, approvingly, "coax 'em to it; try that," and Fleece continued. "Do you is all sharks, and by nature wery woracious, yet I zay to you, fellow critters, dat dat woraciousness-'top dat dam slappin' ob de tail! How you tink to hear, 'spose you keep up such a dam slappin' and bitin' dare?" "Cook," cried Stubb, collaring him, "I won't have that swearing. Talk to 'em gentlemanly." (264)

Fleece's vocabulary is not just that of a mere ignorant black man. Melville uses language, exaggerated black vernacular, for reasons far beyond entertainment and humor: "The tip-off is the word voracious, masked as woracious. Every other character in Moby-Dick speaks according to his station and background" (Zoellner 88). The cook's dialect is humorous on the surface; in fact many nineteenth-century readers and even early twentieth-century readers simply saw this as comic interlude like that of the Negro Minstrels of Melville's time. However, further exploration and translation prove Melville's deeper purpose to be "the subject of his message is a theme crucial to Melville's text, 'savagism' versus 'civilization'" (Phillips 3). Coupled with the reversals in the sermon, Melville also finds the perfect mask behind which he can express his unpopular opinion: white does not always connote civilized and black does not always connote ignorant savage. Through Fleece, "Melville is able to cloak ideas that might be deemed unacceptable coming from a narrator closer to his own persona, such as Ishmael" (Phillips 3).

The second major point requiring attention to this chapter is that as with many other instances in his writings, Melville remains somewhat subject to his time and place; Fleece's language reflects this historical influence. Despite some of the nineteenth-century racist ideologies Melville could not entirely escape, their influence does not detract from the significance behind Fleece's language and the impact the "sermon" has on this particular theme (savagism versus civilization) in Moby-Dick. Though Fleece's language is at the same time both stereotypical of nineteenth-century

blacks and a mask from which Melville speaks, it is the significance of the sermon itself that demands examination.

Fleece continues his sermon to the sharks: "Your woraciousness, fellow critters, I don't blame ye so much for; dat is nature, and can't be helped; but to gobern dat wicked nature, dat is de pint" (264). Again, when translated from this exaggerated black vernacular into Standard English, the minstrely humor disappears and a very serious criticism emerges: Your voraciousness, fellow animals, I do not blame you for. That is nature and cannot be helped. But to govern that wicked nature, that is the point. Through Fleece, Melville appears to claim that not only animals but humans as well, by nature, are, at least in part, gluttonous. He attributes this to a part of nature that cannot be helped. He then says that to govern our gluttony is the point. In other words, we all contain an element of savagery in us, as Stubb, like the sharks, "smacked" upon the whale's flesh. At the same time, we all contain an element of civilization within us through our ability to self-govern: Stubb/sharks, Stubb/Fleece, white/black, Christian/non-Christian.

Later in his sermon, Fleece tells the sharks that if they will govern the shark within themselves, they can be angels; because, "all angel is not'ing more dan de shark well goberned" (264). This too can be translated to say that a Christian is nothing more than a non-Christian well governed. By "governed," I speculate Melville intends for his audience to understand that he places the responsibility of dictating to themselves generally accepted principles, morals, behaviors, and values of humanity. This intention

transcends his notions of brotherhood beyond the dictum of Christianity and shows the applicability and possibility of unification via brotherhood.

Captain Ahab's character, arguably one of the most significant characters in Moby-Dick, also provides Melville with a canvas upon which to paint yet another relationship portrait. Like Ishmael and Queequeg, Ahab, a white male, enters into a significant relationship with a non-white male, Pip, the young black cabin boy. This relationship, however, differs greatly from that of Ishmael and Queequeg: "Literary critics writing in the 1930's saw Melville's Ahab as a powerful symbol. He was variously perceived as the personification of 'a man of forceful character driven by his somber nature and his bleak heritage, bent on his own destruction and dragging his immediate world down with him" (Schultz 5). Ahab represents man's will/Ego as well as humanity's internal strife as a result of division of the self in terms of what we should do versus what we do.

Ahab is at the same time scientific and metaphysical. He relies upon calculations to track whales while at the same time consumed by his monomaniacal plight to kill Moby-Dick. For Ahab, "a mind body dualism emerges" (Dumain 5). He recognizes his own duality and admits, "all my means are sane, my motive and my object mad" (175). Ahab interferes little with the crew before spotting Moby-Dick; he "descends to sentimentally befriending submissive Pip as an antidote to his total isolation. Pip becomes his spiritual pipeline to the world" (Dumain 5).

Pip, the cabin boy, is another significant black character aboard the Pequod in

Moby-Dick. He at first appears to be the "happy-go-lucky, tambourine-playing black boy of the stereotype;" however, "he is soon given another, more serious and more individualized dimension" (Simpson 30). Pip's significance to the novel only becomes obvious towards the end. Though Pip is yet another example of Melville being subject to his time and place in history, Melville, it appears, creates Pip in order to humanize Ahab: "Pip's prayer [to the Big White God] is to be seen as congruent with the later episode, in which the fact of his race is also emphasized" (30). Pip's ethnicity, being a young, black, American boy, appears to have significance for his character beyond the Lear-Fool relationship he has with Ahab, otherwise, a white cabin boy would have sufficed for this character. Pip seems to be a character in which Melville makes direct criticisms of American slavery.

In the chapter, "Castaway," Pip, having to replace an oarsman, leaps in fear out of the small boat when the whale bumps the vessel from below. While in the water, Pip becomes entangled with the rope and the whale forcing the crew to chose between either losing the whale and saving Pip by cutting the rope or losing Pip and securing their profits from the whale capture:

Tashtego stood in the bows. He was full of the fire of the hunt. He hated Pip for a poltroon. Snatching the boat knife from its sheath, he suspended its sharp edge over the line, and turning towards Stubb, exclaimed interrogatively, "Cut?" Meantime Pip's blue, choked face plainly looked, Do, for God's sake! All passed in a flash. In less than half a minute, this entire thing happened. "Damn him, cut!" roared Stubb; and so the

whale was lost and Pip was saved. (359-60) Immediately on board, the crew swears at Pip all at once until, “Stubb then in a plain, business-like, but still half-humorous manner, cursed Pip officially; and that done unofficially gave him some wholesome advice” ending his speech by informing the young Pip that, “ We can’t afford to lose whales by the likes of you; a whale would sell for thirty times what you would, Pip, in Alabama” (360). With this final comment, Melville criticizes the practice common of nineteenth-century where white Americans did in fact attach a proprietary dollar value to the lives of blacks as a result of slavery.

Later, despite his first experience, Pip fearfully jumps again. Unfortunately, this time Pip is not entangled in the rope and is left adrift in the sea. Stubb, confident another of the three boats would be sure to rescue Pip, gave chase to a whale. However, neither of the other two boats spotted Pip who was left floating alone in the open sea. After a while, the ship itself spotted the poor cabin boy and pulls him ashore. Pip, however, is never to be the same again:

> And Stubb’s boat was now so far away, and he and all his crew so intent upon his fish, that Pip’s ringed horizon began to expand around him miserably. By the merest chance the ship itself at last rescued him; but from that hour the little Negro went about the deck an idiot; such, at least, they said he was. The sea had jeeringly kept his finite body up, but drowned the infinite of his soul. (361)

This experience thrusts Pip from the happy-go-lucky, tambourine-playing boy into his

significant “Fool-to-Lear” role with Ahab:

> Not drowned entirely, though. Rather carried down alive to wondrous depths, where strange shapes of the unwarped primal world glided to and fro before his passive eyes; and the miser merman, Wisdom, revealed his hoarded heaps; and among the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities, Pip saw the multitudinous, God-omnipresent, coral insects, that out of the firmament of waters heaved the colossal orbs. He saw God’s foot upon the treadle of the loom, and spoke it; and therefore his shipmates called him mad. (361)

Pip’s experience transforms him into the “Shakespearean Fool,” who, in a veil of madness, observes and reveals wisdom and truth, both of which seems to escape many other characters: “So man’s insanity is Heaven’s sense; and wandering from all mortal reason, man comes at last to the celestial thought, which, to reason, is absurd and frantic; and weal or woe, feels then compromised, indifferent as his God” (361).

Sometime later, Ahab determines the crew should “heave the log” during which Pip lands in the water yet again:

> Pip jumped from the whaleboat. Pip’s missing. Let’s see now if ye haven’t fished him up here, fisherman. It drags hard; I guess he’s holding on. Jerk him. Tahiti! Jerk him off; we haul in no cowards here. Ho! There’s his arm just breaking water. A hatchet! A hatchet! Cut if off – we haul in no cowards here. Captain Ahab! Sir, sir! Here’s Pip, trying to

get on board again. (446)

This time Ahab eventually interferes:

> "Peace, thou crazy loon," cried the Manxman, seizing him [Pip] by the arm. "Away from the quarterdeck!" "The greater idiot ever scolds the lesser," muttered Ahab, advancing. "Hands off from that holiness! Where sayest thou Pip was, boy?" "Astern there, sir, aster! Lo, lo!" (446).

Ahab's words foretell what his relationship with Pip will become. Ahab says, "There can be no hearts above the snow line. Oh, ye frozen heavens! Lookdown here. Ye did beget this luckless child, and have abandoned him, ye while Ahab lives. Thou touchest my inmost center, boy; thou art tied to me by cords woven of my heartstrings. Come, let's down" (447). Upon this rescue, Ahab and Pip verbally and symbolically bind themselves to one another, much like Ishmael and Queequeg. The difference here, though, is not so much the obvious marital-like bond of brotherhood that Ishmael and Queequeg swore to one another but a bond of life-necessity and emotional interdependence. There are clear similarities between Ahab and Pip's commitment to one another and Ishmael and Queequeg's, the sentiment is part of marital vows: binding of one life to another.

Pip replies to Ahab's gesture by taking his hand and vowing himself bonded to Ahab: " What's this? Here's velvet sharkskin," intently gazing at Ahab's hand, and feeling it. "Ah, now, had poor Pip but felt so kind a thing as this, perhaps he had ne'er

been lost! This seems to me, sir, as a manrope; something that weak souls may hold by. Oh, sir, let old Perth now come and rivet these two hands together; the black one with the white, for I will not let this go" (447). Pip's words point towards the same necessary element of a bond/connection that forms brotherhood, like that found in Ishmael and Queequeg's relationship. The manrope symbolizes their tying themselves to one another. Ahab, in turn, seals/consummates their pact to one another:

> Oh, boy, nor will I thee, unless I should thereby drag thee to worse horrors than are here. Come, then, to my cabin. Lo! Ye believers in gods all goodness, and in man all ill, lo you! See the omniscient gods oblivious of suffering man; and man, though idiotic, and knowing not what he does, yet full of the sweet things of love and gratitude. Come! I feel prouder leading thee by thy black hand, than though I grasped an Emperor's! (447)

From this point on, Pip remains beside Ahab. Their relationship represents the possibility that opposites may overcome differences and establish a unity through brotherhood.

Ahab and Pip are opposite in every way. Their oppositeness relates directly to Melville's criticism of nineteenth-century racial stereotypes and his desire to overcome these racist ideas: Ahab is Captain of the Pequod while Pip is a mere cabin boy; Ahab is an older white male while Pip is a young black boy from Alabama; Ahab is in charge of a whaling ship and its entire crew while Pip plays the tambourine; Ahab appears strong

in will while Pip appears weak. Ahab and Pip have far more to overcome in their brotherhood than Ishmael and Queequeg. I speculate that their relationship serves Melville's purpose in so much as he wanted his audience to witness other possibilities of brotherhood besides Ishmael and Queequeg, especially one that can overcome "special" circumstances. Like Ishmael and Queequeg, Ahab and Pip oddly compliment one another.

Unlike the relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg, however, Ahab and Pip represent a case of opportunities for brotherhood missed. As the relationship between Ahab and Pip progresses, Ahab begins to recognize the humanizing effect Pip has on him. Ahab sees his relationship with Pip as an interference with his focused desire to kill Moby-Dick. So as not to allow himself distracted from his murderous hunt, he separates himself from Pip. In this act of separation, Ahab places individualism above that of his relationship with Pip, therefore missing an opportunity for brotherhood to be fulfilled. It is possible, then, to speculate that had Ahab embraced this fraternity with Pip he might have abandoned his monomaniacal hunt for the white whale and lived, sparing the lives of the crew aboard the Pequod as well as his own life. However, Ahab chose to abandon his blossoming brotherhood with Pip leaving the two as representing a case of brotherhood unfulfilled.

Contemporary critics often explore the possible homosexual relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg. The sexual or non-sexual aspects of their relationship do not concern this particular exploration of Moby-Dick, but various aspects of their

friendship do. In fact, Melville metaphorically compares their relationship to a marriage, which in the Christian faith, as Melville is aware, symbolically signifies the Holy Trinity, viewed by his predominately Christian audience as a perfect relationship. Melville does not concern himself with producing "a Pacific island version of the interracial buddy narrative" seen in other travel narratives of his time (Sanborn 230).

Melville does, however, "maintain our awareness of the conditions that Ishmael and Queequeg are trying, never entirely successfully, to escape" (Sanborn 230). Melville does not allow this friendship to remain an abstract idea. Instead, he highlights the notions of autonomy and love that are possible, even necessary, in real-life friendships/brotherhoods "by stressing the reasonableness of friendship and the uncanniness of love, and by conceiving of a relationship that is an unpredictable compound of these elements; Melville points us toward a world in which human relationships neither emerge from nor justify the existing social order" (Sanborn 231).

For the end result of Ishmael and Queequeg's relationship to be a successful example of unity through brotherhood, it must transcend racial, cultural, social, and national identities. In the mid-nineteenth century, much like today, "American race relations took place in a global economic context" (Sanborn 239). Whaling ships provided Melville the international context in which to play out this notion of interracial relations that occur as a result of global, economic need as "the dynamics of race emerged not only from the labor-focused relations between whites and blacks in the South and the land-focused relations between whites and American Indians in the West

but also from the trade-focused relations between the whites and the people of the 'global south,' both abroad and at home" (Sanborn 239). Because Queequeg's character does not come from a specific (or actual) country, Melville can play with various non-white characteristics and allow Queequeg to serve as a pacific island "Everyman;" whereas if he "had been from New Zealand – or anywhere else in the actual world, for that matter – it would have been much more difficult to extricate him from the web of globalization and modernity" (Sanborn 242). For this reason, Queequeg's precise race, culture, social status as royalty in his native country, and nationality remain ambiguous or underemphasized allowing for Melville to explore the unlimited possibilities interracial friendships may provide in uniting men through a universal brotherhood.

It is also important to note that as Queequeg is a harpooner aboard the Pequod, he has nothing to do directly with Ahab. However, it appears that Melville places Queequeg in direct opposition to Ahab. Despite his ambiguous background, "Queequeg is assumed without question to represent subjugated American blacks and to make Moby-Dick a work dedicated to the abolition of slavery" (Shaw 80). The significant relationship between Queequeg and Ishmael as well as Queequeg's juxtaposition to Ahab begins to unfold with Ishmael's initial encounter with Queequeg.

For Ishmael, his "encounter with the 'savage' is an un-writing [and thus a type of reversal] of American history" (Martin 195). Therefore, he "must begin to read in a new way, to see beyond the characterizations of the Indian as savage, as scalper" (Martin 200). In other words, Ishmael must first reverse and then displace his

preconceived notions about Queequeg, cannibals, Islanders, and eventually all nonwhites, resulting in a reversal of racial notions. Melville accomplishes this major undertaking by carrying the reader through Ishmael's thought process concerning his relationship with Queequeg. Ishmael sees Queequeg first as "a terrible bed-fellow." Melville's nineteenth-century readers would not be surprised by Ishmael's initial reaction to Queequeg. In fact, it would have been expected. He did not intend to shock or disgust his readers; therefore, Melville gently guides his readers through Ishmael's ideological deconstruction of Queequeg: "Ishmael is forced to compare himself to Queequeg and for the first time in the novel becomes aware of himself through others' eyes" (Fieldsend 1). One way in which Melville accomplishes this is by Ishmael's stream-of-consciousness. After their first night together, Ishmael watches Queequeg perform his morning toiletry duties:

> Thinks I, Queequeg, under the circumstances, this is a very civilized overture; but, the truth is, these savages have an innate sense of delicacy, say what you will; it is marvelous how essentially polite they are. I pay this particular compliment to Queequeg, because he treated me with so much civility and consideration, while I was guilty of great rudeness; staring at him from the bed, and watching all his toilette motions; for the time my curiosity getting the better of my breeding. Nevertheless, a man like Queequeg you don't see every day, he and his ways were well worth unusual regarding. (44-46)

Ishmael's thoughts illustrate the first step reversing accepted hierarchies: Ishmael, despite his "breeding" does not conduct himself as civilly as Queequeg, the "savage cannibal." Queequeg, in turn, becomes characteristically superior to Ishmael, "and the symbolism of whiteness is subject to a major reversal" (Dumain 1). It is necessary here to point out that despite Queequeg's royal status in his native country, Melville's audience would have considered him a savage. Therefore, his native status did not naturally place him socially superior to Ishmael or any of the other shipmen he would meet aboard the Pequod.

This reversing process occurs repeatedly between Ishmael and Queequeg as their relationship progresses. Ishmael notes more and more that Queequeg is superior to white men in mannerisms, interpersonal conduct, and even in his religious practices: "Although heathen, savage, strange and alien, Queequeg comes to represent for Ishmael an inclusive, rejuvenating alternative to the divisiveness of Ahab" (Fieldsend 1).

Melville's depictions of his non-white characters stand out from other narratives as he based his characters directly upon his personal experiences: "Two formative experiences gave Herman Melville a distinctive perspective on the issues of slavery and race that dominated his age" (Karcher 1). As a sailor on the Acushnet, Melville was "exposed to some of the nineteenth century's most oppressive working conditions-conditions that put Melville on a footing with men of all races, most of them from the bottom of society, and that taught him what is was like to be a slave" (Karcher 1). His second, of course, occurred with the Typees, kind and noble "savages." In addition to

his own personal experiences, Melville found direct inspiration for Queequeg and his relationship with Ishmael from George Lillie Craik's book, The New Zealanders. Melville borrows "the atmosphere of romance that suffices the relationship between Te Pehi Kupe and Reynolds" as it appears between Queequeg and Ishmael (Sanborn 228). This idea of an intimate (not sexual) relationship between a non-white and white male transcends the interactions described in Typee and Omoo, setting Moby-Dick apart from his other works. The element of displacement of location and character pervades his first two novels, whereas Melville begins Moby-Dick and introduces his characters in a very accessible setting for his audience. Previously, Melville "represented Pacific Island men as attractive but out of reach, natives to the places where he was a stranger and strangers to the places where he was a native. In The New Zealanders, Melville discovered an image of interracial male friendship that transcended or suspended those oppositions" (Sanborn 228).

In his portrayal of Queequeg and Ishmael's friendship, "Melville went father than he ever would again in dramatizing what Robert Martin has called the 'radical democratic potential' of the interracial male couple" (Sanborn 228). Despite a delineation of Queequeg's specific ethnicity, he does clearly represent the non-white male, as he embodies characteristics of various non-white cultures. The relationship between Queequeg and Ishmael functions as an example of a potential interracial fraternity:

> Unlike Craik, who wants the relationship between Reynolds and Te Pehi

> Kupe to indicate the prospect of colonial union between England and New Zealand, Melville wants the relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg to suggest the value of distance and formal equality in global and interpersonal relations. Out of a desire to safeguard whatever distance there is between the imperial powers and the rest of the world, Melville metaphorically expands that distance to an astronomical extent, thereby making the unity of his bosom companions not the outcome of an open-ended experience but a matter of theoretical assertion. (Sanborn 231)

From this relationship, Melville offers an example to his audience of the potential future where such a unity is possible. The idea of reversing character stereotypes and this romantic notion of an interracial male friendship combine to create the admirable and complex non-white characters, like Queequeg, and the reprehensible white characters, like Stubb, and the unexpected friendships, Queequeg and Ishmael and Ahab and Pip, resulting in a launching place to share his new ideologies regarding race and brotherhood.

Upon examination, Queequeg is a complex and an admirable character. Through Queequeg, Melville points us toward a fraternity founded upon unbiased possibilities. The two instances in the novel where he functions as a rescuer, Queequeg does not question the rescued party's worth, as happens with Pip, but acts selflessly; he was "racially unbiased. He was probably not biased against whites, or he would not

have had such a close relationship with Ishmael" (Shell 2). I speculate he would not have been prejudiced against others because of differences in race, social status, physical ability, or religion, given his varied friendships aboard the Pequod: Ishmael, Tashtego, Dagoo, etc. Melville appears to write Queequeg as morally superior to his shipmates: friendly, affectionate, accepting of others, brave, selfless, and humble. As a result, Queequeg has an eye-opening effect on Ishmael. Melville carries us through the relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg from their initial meeting to Queequeg's death. In this journey, Melville regularly shows their progression towards an ideal brotherhood.

Ishmael first appears in the novel as a "romantically misanthropic, angst-ridden young adventurer, taking to the sea to control his 'spleen'" (Fieldsend 2). Ishmael's first impressions of Queequeg begin with his conversation at the Spouter Inn with the innkeeper's descriptions: "the harpooner is a dark-complexioned chap. He never eats dumplings, he don't –he eats nothing but steaks, and likes 'em rare" (33). Our first insight to Ishmael's thoughts about his future bedfellow expresses his uneasiness: "I could not help it, but I began to feel suspicious of this 'dark-complexioned' harpooner" (33). As Ishmael and the innkeeper's discussion continues, his suspicions increase until his curiosity is finally satisfied upon seeing Queequeg for the first time: "I was all eagerness to see his face, but he kept it averted for some time while employed in unlacing the bag's mouth" (38). When Queequeg turns around, all of Ishmael's fears about the harpooner are confirmed, "good heavens! What a sight! Such a face! It was of

a dark, purplish, yellow color, here and there struck over with large, blackish-looking squares. Yes, it's just as I thought, he's a terrible bedfellow" (38). Upon watching him undress and ready himself for bed, Ishmael concludes: "It was now quite plain that he must be some abominable savage or other shipped aboard of a whaleman in the South Seas, and so landed in this Christian country" (39). Melville's unique sense of irony will gradually unveil Queequeg as a character quite the opposite of Ishmael's initial impressions.

Nonetheless, here as elsewhere, Melville works within hierarchical notions concerning race and class. For his methods to be believable, over generalizing and stereotyping must be challenged. To do so, specific generalizations and stereotypes must be placed next to their counterparts. For these reversals to be effective and not dissuade Melville's readers from accepting his perspective on the non-whites, all of the non-white characters could not be superior to all of the white characters. This would simply establish yet another hierarchy and/or create doubt and disbelief in his audience, thus risking failure in his attempt to alter nineteenth-century beliefs about non-whites. Unfortunately, Melville's racist portrait of Fedallah and certain positive and negative stereotypes as with Pip, Fleece and Dagoo show once again that Melville was a man of his time and place. Despite some of the nineteenth-century racist notions Melville could not entirely escape, a non-white character, such as Fedallah, amidst the crew, serves to displace the racial hierarchy. Other characters, such as Pip and Starbuck, also subvert this hierarchy. Therefore, Melville successfully reverses accepted values and then

establishes those values as unstable bases for racism. From this, Melville does not establish new stereotypes or new hierarchies, but attempts to eliminate them altogether as insufficient and counterproductive. He does so more successfully with Ishmael and Queequeg's relationship than any other. After Ishmael and Queequeg's first encounter and confrontation, an exemplary friendship forms.

Ishmael, appalled by Queequeg's appearance, presents his grievances to the innkeeper, who mediates the situation and assures Ishmael he is safe: "'Good night, Landlord,' said I [Ishmael], 'you may go.' I turned in, and never slept better in my life" (41). The morning begins a new relationship for two mates: "Upon waking next morning about daylight, I found Queequeg's arm thrown over me in the most loving and affectionate manner. You had almost thought I had been his wife…and it was only by the sense of weight and pressure that I could tell that Queequeg was hugging me. My sensations were strange" (42).

Melville then takes his audience through the marriage language and symbols that begin Ishmael's change of mindset: "For though I tried to move his arm-unlock his bridegroom clasp-yet, sleeping as he was, he still hugged me tightly, as though naught but death should part us twain" (43). After arousing Queequeg from his sleep, Ishmael observes his morning ritual, cited earlier in the section. In his observations, he takes note of the "cannibal's" civility, kindness, and politeness.

At breakfast, Ishmael observes Queequeg's independent nature, as he does not succumb to any social pressure regarding his place at the head of the eating table,

having his harpoon with him, or his odd meal. Afterwards, they go their separate ways before returning later that day to the Spouter Inn. Ishmael returns from the chapel and hearing Father Mapple's sermon to find Queequeg alone, worshipping a "Negro idol:"

> With much interest I sat watching him. Savage though he was, and hideously marred about the face-at least to my taste-his countenance yet had a something in it which was by no means disagreeable. You cannot hide the soul. Through all his unearthly tattooings, I thought I saw the traces of a simple, honest heart; and in his large, deep eyes, fiery black and bold, there seemed tokens of a spirit that would dare a thousand devils. And besides all this, there was a certain lofty bearing about the Pagan, which even his uncouthness could not altogether maim…It may seem ridiculous, but it [Queequeg's shaven head] reminded me of General Washington's head…Queequeg was George Washington cannibalistically developed. (63)

Melville's language uncovers Ishmael's early transformation as he begins to see Queequeg and not just the outward appearance of Queequeg.

So as not to disrupt Queequeg's ritual, Ishmael observes him in silence when he begins to recognize changed feelings within himself:

> I felt a melting in me. No more my splintered heart and maddened hand were turned against the wolfish world. This soothing savage had redeemed it. There he sat, his very indifference speaking a nature in

> which there lurked no civilized hypocrisies and bland deceits. Wild he was; a very sight of sights to see; yet I began to feel myself mysteriously drawn towards him…I'll try a pagan friend, thought I, since Christian kindness has proved but hollow courtesy. (64)

Ishmael initiates their relationship by making a friendly gesture towards Queequeg. Following this, Ishmael confirms to Queequeg that they will again be bedfellows for the night. Queequeg expresses his happiness with the news and shares his pipe to return the friendly gesture first extended to him.

After dinner, the two return to their room to talk and share the pipe again. At this point, Ishmael begins to question his decision to befriend the cannibal Queequeg when invited to partake in a pagan ritual: "I was a good Christian; born and bread in the bosom of the infallible Presbyterian Church. How then could I unite with this wild idolator in worshipping his piece of wood? But what is worship? thought I. Do you suppose now, Ishmael, that the magnanimous God of heaven and earth-pagans and all included-can possibly be jealous of an insignificant bit of black wood?" (65). Ishmael continues to ponder and concludes that to worship is to do the will of God and God's will is "to do to my fellowman what I would have my fellowman do to me" (65). From this conclusion, he decides that to be a good Christian he must share in the idolatry with his fellowman.

At this point, Melville reintroduces matrimonial language and imagery as the two prepare for bed: "we undressed and went to bed, at peace with our own consciences

and all the world. But we did not go to sleep without some little chat" (65). I speculate that Ishmael refers not only to the peace they feel about their "religious" exchange, but the peace they feel in terms of their presences with one another, their new friendship, and their differences. This significant marital imagery continues as Ishmael explains to us his feelings of being in bed again with Queequeg: "How it is I know not; but there is no place like a bed for confidential disclosures between friends. Man and wife, they say, there open the very bottom of their souls to each other; and some old couples often lie and chat over old times till nearly morning. Thus, then, in our hearts' honeymoon, lay I and Queequeg – a cosy, loving pair" (65). In twenty-four hours, Ishmael's ideas about the cannibal transform from suspicion and curiosity of the unknown to shock, fear, disgust, intrigue, admiration, Christian fellowship, comfort, and now love. Ishmael's remarkable transformation does not end here but begins here.

The following day, Ishmael finds himself in the marriage suite's bed of the Spouter Inn feeling more connected to Queequeg than the night before: "We had lain thus in bed, chatting and napping at short intervals, and Queequeg now and then affectionately throwing his brown tattooed legs over mine, and then drawing them back; so entirely sociable and free and easy were we" (66). While some critics make arguments for the homosexual aspects of this union, I find instead the ability to argue for the homosocial possibilities that Melville desires in his idea of brotherhood. There are no sexual references or innuendoes in any of the "marriage" scenes between Ishmael and Queequeg. What we see instead are the implications of marriage: comfort, love,

affection, pleasure, and security being translated into an ideal union between two men as brotherhood. Considering who Melville was, the audience he was writing to (nineteenth-century, American, white males), his historical context, and the clear goals he had in mind, this focus on homosocial possibilities seems evident. There is a distinct absence of sexuality and a clear presence of what Melville deems constitutive of brotherhood.

Melville uses the "bedroom" scene in chapter eleven as an opportunity to express his beliefs through the progression of Ishmael's revelations. The previous night, Queequeg's smoking his pipe in the bed appalled Ishmael. However, this night he feels differently about the same act and shares with us his reasons: "though I had felt such a strong repugnance to his smoking in the bed the night before, yet see how elastic our stiff prejudices grow when love once comes to bend them. For now I liked nothing better than to have Queequeg smoking by me, even in bed, because he seemed to be full of such serene household joy then" (67). Melville's words here, perhaps more than anywhere else in the novel, may be the most indicative of his overall intent: "see how elastic our stiff prejudices grow when love once comes to bend them." Melville, I believe, wants his audience to experience this mindset transformation along with Ishmael in order to discover the possibilities of a brotherhood made of love, affection, and kindness absent of racial stereotypes and prejudices.

From this point, Queequeg briefly shares his biography with Ishmael before going to bed. This is their last night at the Spouter Inn before they embark towards

Nantucket and the Pequod. The next morning, Melville again reintroduces matrimonial imagery when the pair check out of the inn: " I [Ishmael] settled my own and comrade's bill; using, however, my comrade's money" (69). Queequeg's money pays for Ishmael's bill as well as his own in a display of Queequeg's generous nature. While Ishmael pays, "The grinning landlord, as well as the boarders, seemed amazingly tickled at the sudden friendship which had sprung up between me and Queequeg especially as Peter Coffin's cock-an-bull stories about him had previously so much alarmed me concerning the very person whom I now companied with" (69). The significance of this brief mention, I believe, reveals Melville's intentions towards a brotherhood that on the surface seems an impossible match, yet is possible and can be well received by others. The grins Melville mentions have no malicious connotations but a lighthearted, accepting feel to them. Melville begins here to show how a brotherhood such as Ishmael and Queequeg's is possible.

Throughout the remainder of Moby-Dick, Melville revisits Ishmael and Queequeg's relationship in order to show its progression. Before boarding the Pequod, Ishmael witnesses Queequeg's Ramadan ritual where he fasts and squats in one position without moving. Ishmael expresses great concern for his mate's well being but cannot stir Queequeg out of his state. Upon completion of Ramadan, Queequeg touches his forehead to Ishmael's, as he often does to express his love, affection, and commitment, in order to return his being from its worshipping state to that of being with Ishmael. At this point, Ishmael tries to persuade Queequeg to recognize what he sees as the

ridiculousness of fasting and "prolonged ham-squatting" as unhealthy, but is unsuccessful. This again is another scene whereby Melville points his audience towards the possibility of a brotherhood where differences are tolerated and affection, love, and commitment prevail despite any religious, cultural, or social differences. In order for such a brotherhood to exist, prejudices must not be allowed to interfere. What stands out the most from this particular exchange is how differences can be noticed and discussed but then tolerated. Though Ishmael sees no validity in Queequeg's religious endeavors, this fundamental difference in beliefs does not weaken their friendship. Melville points out how from tolerance comes acceptance. The relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg continues to grow and develop as Ishmael witnesses Queequeg's superior character in juxtaposition to others: "Melville's description of the relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg provides an exuberantly comical, iconoclastic vision of brotherly love and cross-cultural harmony" (Robertson-Lorant 278). While Melville attacks various prejudicial notions in their friendship's journey, I hypothesize that Melville desires the potentiality of their brotherhood to stand out the most as he communicates to his audience that such a fraternity is possible. Within the progression of this relationship, Melville strikes down nineteenth-century racial stereotypes, social and cultural prejudices, and general ideas about masculinity that may attempt to prevent such a universal brotherhood. Ishmael undergoes an ideological transformation where he embraces these fraternal possibilities without prejudice. As he floats alone on Queequeg's coffin/canoe, the sole survivor of the Pequod, he bears the responsibility of

sharing with others what he learned from this experience aboard the Pequod, with the crew, and especially the lessons he learned from Queequeg. From this pagan cannibal, Ishmael uncovers his own true "Christian" potentials for fellowship and the importance of brotherhood.

In chapter ninety-four, "A Squeeze of the Hand," Melville suggests a transcending brotherhood. Like Ishmael and Queequeg's relationship, many critics explore the homosexual possibilities in this chapter; however, this thesis is not concerned with the homosexual possibilities but with the homosocial ones as they may result in brotherhood. In this scene, "Melville daringly transforms a description of whalemen 'squeezing case' into a vision of men working not in competition with one another, but in cooperative homosocial bliss" (Robertson-Lorant 285). I hypothesize that Melville uses this imagery to expand and bring focus to the potential existence of such heterogeneous relationships. In working together, unified and not competitively, Ishmael enjoys his labor and shares in the tranquility of his setting. Melville, through Ishmael's stream-of-consciousness, shares this possibility with his audience:

> Squeeze! Squeeze! Squeeze! All the morning long; I squeezed that sperm till I myself almost melted into it; I squeezed that sperm till a strange sort of insanity came over me; and I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-laborers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for the gentle globules. Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually squeezing their hands, and

> looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as much as to say – Oh! My dear fellow beings, why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill humor or envy! Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness. (362-63)

Here, perhaps more than anywhere else in the novel, Melville, through Ishmael, throws down the gauntlet challenging his audience to overcome social inequalities and racial stereotyping in order to come together and unify through brotherhood. Melville names the characteristics he feels are essential to such a union: "affectionate," "friendly," and "loving." This scene romanticizes the idea of male bonding in such a way that it transcends any homosexual notions and taps into a far more permanent and important (to Melville) aspect of male potential: brotherhood. Melville "envisioned the egalitarian social order as a noncompetitive, nonhierarchical fraternity of men who were shipmates and brothers" (Robertson-Lorant 285). We see this "fraternity" between Ishmael and Queequeg and the missed opportunity between Ahab and Pip. At this point, Melville takes the potential-brotherhood-turned-reality of two relationships and demonstrates their universal possibilities. Melville's descriptive scene "deconstructs bourgeois ideas of masculinity and dissolves gender boundaries, as Ishmael and his shipmates squeeze sperm until it turns into the milk of human kindness" (Robertson-Lorant 286). This, I hypothesize, is Melville's ultimate goal: unseating nineteenth-century racist ideas in order to create a universal brotherhood.

At this revelation, Ishmael appears to turn his thoughts towards Queequeg and their union:

> Would that I could keep squeezing that sperm forever! For now, since by many prolonged, repeated experiences, I have perceived that in all cases man must eventually lower, or at least shift his conceit of attainable felicity; not placing it anywhere in the intellect or the fancy; but in a wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fireside, the country; now that I have perceived all this, I am ready to squeeze case eternally. In thoughts of the visions of the night, I saw long rows of angels in paradise, each with his hands in a jar of spermaceti. (363)

This metaphoric marriage emphasizes further Melville's pointed comparison of the love/friendship/union between Ishmael and Queequeg as an ideal brotherhood. This notion of "fraternal love joins seamlessly with a vision of domesticity as Ishmael kneads the 'gentle globules' of sperm into the stuff of cozy wedded life" (Robertson Lorant 286). This scene appears to consummate Ishmael and Queequeg's relationship as the ideal unification of brotherhood by transcending their relationship beyond the nineteenth-century boundaries of male-friendship. The metaphoric marriage and "squeezing of the hands" scene emphasize the possibilities of universal brotherhood by eliminating hierarchies, establishing social egalitarianism, and highlighting such notions as love, kindness, cooperation instead of competition, and affection necessary to establish such a universal fraternity. To do this, Melville must uncover the universal

humanism he sees in men of various backgrounds.

One of Melville's primary goals is to uncover a humanism that he sees as a foundation for unity through brotherhood. Melville believes the Pequod, symbolically representing America, can be spared a self-destructive end only if it finds commonality and brotherhood among men of all races and social status: "Melville's faith in and respect for man--and above all his belief in the interconnectedness of all men, high as well as low, black as well as white" reveals itself among the crew (Grejda 112). Melville believes the continuation of slavery in America will result in the country's demise, because slavery violates the very essence of humanity, "As Ishmael has learned, men cannot escape the 'dangerous liabilities,' however unjust, of being bound together, so that like the Pequod's shipwreck, an apocalyptic shipwreck over slavery would engulf all Americans-guilty or innocent, white or black, southern or northern" (Karcher 89).

The relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg details what Melville sees as a perfect union of men from different races and social status. This is how men across the world should receive one another, absent of prejudices based upon appearances and reconceived notions about other cultures: "Ishmael is normal, unpossessed humanity" (Sewall 50). This is one reason Ishmael survives to tell his tale and warn others: "Nothing has changed of the eternal, divine processes of the world; but all that man has been here has collapsed, vanished in an apocalyptic holocaust, leaving only one mind to remember and carry the tale to us" (Slotkin 26). Symbolically, Ishmael survives as he

represents the possibility of change in fundamental beliefs concerning race, culture, and hierarchies, and only through such a change in thought can America avoid self-destruction, as institutionalized slavery as it existed in nineteenth-century America was a violent attack on humanity. When humanity is violated, grave and dire consequences are unavoidable. Ishmael makes this fundamental shift in his beliefs and lives to share his new knowledge with others.

CHAPTER 5

BENITO CERENO

5.1 The Slave Ship

Melville's Benito Cereno (1855) takes up the anti-racist argument he makes in Moby-Dick, but for the first time he focuses specifically on Africans bound for America and deals exclusively with the notion of slavery. The text is a retelling of chapter eighteen from Captain Amasa Delano's autobiography, Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres (1817). He adopts Delano's actual encounters aboard the Perseverance with a ship named the Tryal, captained by Don Benito Cereno. Melville changes the names of the ships and some of the individual characters, as well as inventing a number of details, "that heighten the ambiguity of the slave rebellion aboard ship. Melville also borrowed outright one of the documents pertinent to the ensuing legal case against the rebels, which Delano appended to his chapter" (Rollyson and Paddock 13).

Melville's works generally incorporate a unifying theme of brotherhood, either explicitly as in Moby-Dick or subliminally as in Benito Cereno, which focuses on slavery and African slaves in America. What links these seemingly polarized works (Typee, Omoo, Moby-Dick, and Benito Cereno) is an element of foundational support for his belief in brotherhood: "The human desire for freedom is something Melville

always understood and admired in men" (Schifman 319). As Melville attacks imperialism and colonialism, he simultaneously promotes freedom for all men despite race, culture, or class. Without this notion of freedom, there could be no potential for unity of all men through brotherhood. To unify, there must be an element of equality, for Melville that element is freedom; therefore, it is the institution of slavery and its ill effects on humanity that Melville attacks in Benito Cereno.

To accomplish this task using a volatile situation such as a slave revolt, Melville continues his methodology of reversals and juxtapositions; however, this time they do not relate to notions of good and bad in the stereotypical vein of white = good and nonwhite = bad. Melville instead attacks accepted nineteenth-century notions of inherent characteristics: white = intelligent master and non-white = ignorant slave. Melville, while still working within the white/non-white framework, attempts to persuade his audience that traits such as intelligence, stupidity, compliance, deviance, defiance, strength, weakness, goodness, evilness, etc. are not ethnically, culturally, or racially predetermined but are elements of unification, as all men have these capabilities:

> Melville takes pains to picture the natural black as not unswervingly disposed towards gentleness. And he shows, further, that blacks-or at any rate some of them, as exemplified by Babo- are not 'too stupid' to conceive and effect an evil design…Perhaps Melville raised the distinction between brain and body to indicate that, though the law

> recognizes the slave as body only, as a mindless chattel, simple expediency, if nothing else, may give force to a certain plotting power. (Welsh 557)

What at first may appear, from a twenty-first-century lens analyzing a nineteenth-century text to be a stereotypical account of violent, barbaric blacks, is actually a well-formulated attempt to convince a nineteenth-century audience that blacks, and other non-whites, are capable of intellectual thought. It is important to keep in mind that Melville could not entirely escape nineteenth-century notions of race, and he was influenced by the "natural history" of his time, discussed earlier in this thesis. In order to understand more fully what Melville does in Benito Cereno with slavery and race, keep in mind the previous discussions introduced in the "Whiteness," "Race," and "Science and Cetology" sections of this thesis, where, evidence of nineteenth-century thought is outlined and defined as believing blacks (and non-whites in general) are inherently inferior and incapable of complex thought.

It is evident from examining Melville's previous works that his general focus revolves around the notion of brotherhood by unseating negative nineteenth-century beliefs about non-whites. Melville maintains his focus on brotherhood in Benito Cereno, though not as transparently as in Typee, Omoo, and Moby-Dick. Here, Melville attacks slavery. Given Melville's belief system and desire to better humanity, slavery exists as the greatest hindrance to his ideal of humanity and brotherhood. Slavery violates the very possibility of creating a brotherhood. Methodologically, Melville

remains true to himself. Again, he works through reversing expectations, as he endows the black slaves with characteristics a nineteenth-century audience would not have readily believed to be possible for blacks: intelligence, the ability to scheme, and the ability to come together in an organized revolt. In doing this, Melville attempts to reverse the racist beliefs that nineteenth-century "natural history" established: Africans were ignorant, subhuman, and lacked the ability to think at a level above animals. I speculate that Melville must have been aware of the unique qualities surrounding slavery in America:

> Alexis de Tocqueville argued in 1838 that while Europeans had brought the "evil" of slavery to the New World, a good many Americans continued to support what seemed to him to be an inherently unviable social system. In the 1830's and 1840's, European colonies began to focus on abolishing slavery, while economic considerations encouraged continued enslavement of African-Americans in the United States. (Colatrella 242)

Slavery itself is nothing new, as it has existed the world over at one point in time in history. What makes slavery in the United States unique is the fact that for the first time in history one's skin color predetermined one's status as a slave or a free man. For Melville, who developed an affection for non-whites, this is a deeper violation of humanity and an assault on his desire for brotherhood, as the enslaved are determined as such because of nothing other than the color of their skin, which can in no way indicate

one's mental or physical capacities. For these reasons, Melville uses Benito Cereno as a launching place to attack nineteenth-century ideas that specifically support slavery:

> In Benito Cereno, Melville fashions a most novel strategy to treat American illusions about African slavery. Providing a mode of perception that disputes the prevailing antebellum notion of innate Black docility, Melville juxtaposes to the American captain's distorted view of the slave as obsequious and contented, an assemblage of submerged conflicting images connoting African domination. Paramount among these subtler images is the symbol of the dark satyr: enigmatic, foreboding, this figure is the key to their meaning and embodies the actual nature and identity of Melville's bondsmen. (Horsley-Meacham 43)

Melville methodologically attacks the notion of racial assumptions by reversing audience expectations. What at first appears to be a rescue of a weather-torn and illness-stricken ship eventually is revealed as a ship overtaken by a slave revolt.

Melville gradually unveils truths to his audience:

> Surmising, at last, that it might be a ship in distress, Captain Delano ordered his whale-boat to be dropped, and, much the wary opposition of his mate, prepared to board her, and, at least, pilot her in…Upon gaining a less remote view, the ship, when made signally visible on the verge of the leaden-hued swells, with the shreds of fog here and there raggedly

> furring her, appeared like a white-washed monastery after a thunderstorm, seen perched upon some dun cliff among the Pyrenees. But it was no purely fanciful resemblance which now, for a moment, almost led Captain Delano to think that nothing less than ship-load of monks was before him…Upon a still nigher approach, this appearance as modified, and the true character of the vessel was plain – a Spanish merchantman of the first class; carrying Negro slaves, amongst other valuable freight, from one colonial port to another. (58)

Once on board, this notion of revealing and unveiling continues from the perspective of the American, Delano:

> Climbing the side, the visitor [Delano] was at once surrounded by a clamorous throng of whites and blacks, but the latter outnumbering the former more than could have been expected, negro transportation-ship as the stranger in port was. But, in one language, and as with one voice, all poured out a common tale of suffering; in which the negresses, of whom there were not a few, exceeded the others in their dolorous vehemence. The scurvy, together with a fever, had swept off a great part of their number, more especially the Spaniards. (60)

Captain Delano goes on to claim, "The ship seems unreal" (61). The Captain's first impression gradually changes from his initial perception of natural despair aboard the ship to the eventual realization that a slave revolt took place on board. However, it is

not until the near end of the novella that the truth is revealed when Babo, dagger in hand, goes after Cereno. After consideration, Delano comes to the conclusion that Babo and the rest of the ship had been masking themselves as a distressed slave ship, when in fact the slaves, through revolt, gained total control of the ship and "enslaved" their former masters:

> What the "blunt thinking" American sees aboard the Spanish slaver are essentially benign racial stereotypes – faithful dimwitted slaves peculiarly endowed with a Christian-like desire to serve their White masters. In Delano's sentimental view, Babo, head of the slave revolt, attends Cereno "with that affectionate zeal which transmutes into something filial or fraternal acts in themselves but menial." Even as Babo, armed with the dagger, leaps toward Delano's boat, the Yankee seaman can only surmise that the African is motivated buy his "desperate fidelity to befriend his master to the last." The rebel Francisco is equally slavish: "His manner, if not bespeaking much dignity of self-respect," Delano observes, "yet evidenced his extreme desire to please; which is…at once Christian and Chesterfieldian." Delano is unable to penetrate the rebels' façade, despite indications that the "slaves" occupy the seat of power, because the "continual smiles and bows" and other features of the mutineers' disguise are entirely consonant with his notion of African personality. When instances of Black "malevolence" intrude upon the

> New Englander's consciousness, he invariably transmutes these impressions, harmonizing them with his own innocuous stereotypic definitions. (Horsley-Meacham 43)

This notion of being trapped in a racially stereotyped mindset - to the point of being blind to what is before you - speaks to Melville's audience, as more than likely a great number are guilty themselves. This mental trap, per se, justifies slavery and allows for obvious inconsistencies with the "pseudo-scientific" ideals that support and promote it. However, Melville points out the dangers in not seeing reality for reality and not attributing real humanism to Blacks. Humanity, unfortunately, is not the same as humanness. Humanity encompasses the good aspects of people as well as the bad. It is this attribute of humanity that Melville bestows upon the black slaves on board and that supporters of slavery deny. Though violent and deadly slave revolts were a general fear, Melville highlights the African's ability to organize and carryout well-thought-out plans and not just their ability to be violent. Even after directly facing Babo's attempt on Cereno's life, Delano delays acceptance of the possibility that Babo was the aggressor in this case, and not the victim:

> Impaired by his fixed racial concepts, Delano dismisses all possibility of conspiracy on the grounds that the Africans "were too stupid." He is reassured because in his view the African, whose docility arose "from the unaspiring contentment of a limited mind" had always been under the heel of the European. Melville, however, suggests through his obscure

> symbolism that the American captain's inability to discern the truth about the African-his racial myopia-is largely a factor of his nearsighted view of the past. (Horsley-Meacham 44)

Melville's previous works point out the ill effects of imperial colonialism upon nonwhites.

However, he does not provide a scenario of a potential rebellion until Benito Cereno. If Melville can successfully determine blacks and other non-whites are human by unveiling the truth and destabilizing racial stereotypes, then he can address their natural desire for freedom. In doing so, he can further his desire to establish a unity through brotherhood that ignores racial and social implications.

Babo's character may be misinterpreted as the African's propensity for violence that is assumed by much of Melville's nineteenth-century audience. Babo is often read as a negative character who epitomizes the worst of the African male. In "The Creature of His Own Tasteful Hands," William Bartley claims:

> Perhaps the most powerfully persistent but almost certainly mistaken view of Babo's role in the story is that he is an entirely positive image of a revolutionary conspirator, an African Spartacus, who heroically instigates and leads a ruthlessly violent but just rebellion. The conclusion traditionally drawn from this judgment is that Melville, in a strong abolitionist posture, endorses slave insurrection. (447)

The historical background given previously on Melville proves Bartley's claim that a

positive insurrectionist reading is incorrect. Melville did not support violence, whether it be from master to slave or even from slave to master in the hopes of attaining freedom. For Melville, violence from man to man is another violation of humanity and is counterproductive to his ultimate goal: brotherhood. Therefore, Melville balances his black and white characters in Benito Cereno, as they embody both good and bad characteristics, which is a true representation of humanity, as people are not perfect but are comprised of both inclinations for good and bad. There are no perfect heroes in this particular novella. Instead, Melville presents his audience with possibilities through the vein of reversals: white has the potential for ignorance, black the potential for intelligence, white the potential for enslavement, black the potential to enslave, white the potential for blinded sight (inability to see beyond stereotypes), and black that clearly breaks stereotypical molds.

Bartley continues his point:

> Furthermore, according to this view, he [Melville] satirically vilifies the racist complacencies of American whites, of whom Delano, a New Englander, is representative, along with the judicial process that brutally supports civil order as an absolute value. In the process, the two points of view – Delano's and that implied in the forensic statement of fact – undergo a sustained ironic subversion which emphasizes their respectively prepossessing and systematic blindnesses. Nevertheless, while affirming the tale's satirical and antislavery thrust, an equally

> persistent tradition of resistance to this view of Babo has expressed concern over the profoundly violent character of Babo's conduct of the rebellion and, more particularly, his disturbing relationship with Benito Cereno. (447-448)

This comment points out the potential for reading Babo not necessarily as an anti-hero, but certainly not as a hero either. Bartley sees the flaws in Babo, but fails to ascribe them as human nature. Instead, Bartley's argument is that Babo's character fails in some ways to fulfill the greatness many Melville critics extend to him as the leader of the slave revolt and the bearer of freedom. However, this idealistic rubric for heroism falls short of Melville's goal. If he intends to point out humanity and its potential for unity through brotherhood, then a heroic character, minus human flaws, would be counterproductive, as Melville in his previous works has already through juxtapositions and reversals established that white does not inherently denote good and non-white does not inherently denote bad. If he were to setup a black hero in the traditional literary sense, he would risk establishing a new hierarchy that would never be accepted by a nineteenth-century audience, and would simply replace one fallible hierarchy with another one threatening his idea of unity through brotherhood.

While it is not appropriate to bestow upon Babo traditional heroic traits, we cannot allow his character's significance to escape us. Though he is not a hero in the traditional literary sense, he is a character that demands a nineteenth-century audience's attention:

> For most whites [in the nineteenth century], both American and European, blacks were a class apart, viewed as little more than cattle or other agricultural property. When considered as human by more liberal thinkers, their mental and emotional capacities were almost universally undervalued…Melville present[s] in…Benito Cereno blacks who are superior to most of their white neighbors in intelligence, cunning, patience, and fortitude. These black characters-the eponymous…Babo in Melville's fiction- are slaves who make effectual use of whites' tendency to underestimate their abilities in order to take diabolical advantage of situations for vengeful purposes. (Cloy 241).

As examples of "intelligence, cunning, patience, and fortitude," the blacks in Benito Cereno represent an extreme reversal not yet seen in Melville's works. Melville's previous novels offer a glimpse of the "Christian" nature found in many non-whites through their prelapsarian innocence, their desire for community and comradeship, or their overwhelming potential for humanness. It is in Benito Cereno that Melville invites is audience to complete their judgments concerning non-whites by attributing them with humanity in the form of advanced thinking skills and even the potential for ferocity. Even though Melville opposes the notion of violence and murder in order to bring about a political and social change, he relies upon this extreme act of rebellion to prove that non-whites are indeed as human as any whites. In summing up Melville's reversals and juxtapositions, his audience can see that non-whites have the same potential for good as

they do for evil, though we do not see the good emphasized here.

This brings the world's male population to an even plane as all have the same potentials. In offering this conclusive thought, Melville invites his audience to accept non-whites as humans, therefore inviting his audience to deny at least some of the "natural history" that substantiates slavery allowing his audience to move towards his idea of brotherhood that would serve to strengthen humanity.

"Cogito, ergo sum." If Melville's audience buys into the notion that the ability to formulate sophisticated thought determines one's existence as man, then the slave revolt confirms the black Africans are indeed human, not chattel. At the conclusion of Benito Cereno, Melville's narrator comments:

> As 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. Seeing all was over, he uttered no sound, and could not be forced to. His aspect seemed to say: since I [Babo] cannot do deeds, I will not speak words. Put in irons in the hold, with the rest, he was carried to Lima. During the passage Don Benito did not visit him. Nor then, nor at any time after, would he look at him. Before the tribunal he refused. When pressed by the judges, he fainted. On the testimony of the sailors alone rested the legal identity of Babo. And yet the Spaniard would, upon occasion, verbally refer to the Negro, as has been shown; but look on

> him he would not, or could not. Some months after, dragged to the gibbet at the tail of a mule, the black met his voiceless end. The body was burned to ashes; but for many days, the head, that hive of subtlety, fixed on a pole on the Plaza, met, unabashed, the gaze of the whites…where, three months after being dismissed by the court, Benito Cereno, borne on the bier, did, indeed, follow his leader. (163-164)

Clearly, an argument could successfully be made that Babo's character does nothing but reinforce negative nineteenth-century racial stereotypes of blacks and their savagery. I believe that for this reason Melville risks over emphasizing Babo's intellect in order to make a point of his humanity. Throughout Benito Cereno, Melville continually refers to the mental prowess of the slaves and notes the "white" disbelief of the black slave's ability to think effectively. For the slaves, it is not merely their brawn that sets them free but their brain as well.

Melville understood his endeavor and recognized the risks he was taking in writing Benito Cereno as he did. He was aware of the difficulty in unseating such steadfast racial notions in order to bring about a colorblind brotherhood. Much like many of his characters, a duality existed in Melville: realism and idealism. From his own duality he realized a duality that also exists in human nature as potential for good and bad, kindness and ferocity, intelligence and savagery, acceptance and intolerance, separatism and unity. Idealistically, Melville hoped for an end of racial separatism and a newfound social egalitarianism. However, he was a realist and knew the unlikelihood of

this particular notion of brotherhood. However, again, Melville did not allow his realistic nature to dissolve his idealism. Despite the struggles and potential disappointments, Melville carried out his endeavors in his writings hoping that through somewhat realistic portrayals of fraternity through reversals and juxtapositions that he could someday help to establish somewhat of a brotherhood.

5.2 Heidegger, Kant, and Hegel

Though direct references to Heidegger, Kant, and Hegel are not made, their theories provide a heuristic influence for this examination of Melville's works in such a way as to fully appreciate the weight of Melville's texts in terms of his pointing out nineteenth-century racial stereotypes and his desire to unseat those racist notions in order to promote brotherhood. Heidegger claims the ability to think elevates man to a transcendent-like state. If thinking makes man – man, then evidence as given from Melville's works must extend to his nineteenth-century audience the potential for accepting non-whites as humans. Once this first, crucial, theoretical step is taken in Typee, Melville invites his audience to juggle with the notion of establishing a unity through brotherhood that disregards class, race, and culture, but instead celebrates the potentiality for good in all men. From this idea, Melville believes the evils committed by imperialistic colonialism and slavery can someday be reckoned with and a state of equality among men will exist that promotes his desire for brotherhood.

Melville makes specific language choices as is evident in this examination of four of his texts. The particular imagery, word choices in his descriptions, and the

specific connotations he relies upon all point his audience towards one direction: eliminating social and racial separatism in favor of a universal brotherhood. Heidegger says languages creates us as we create language, one another, and the world; therefore, it is possible to make the theoretical leap that Melville through his language created new beliefs and attitudes in at least some portion of his audience. Clearly, Melville's effectiveness in transforming attitudes goes far beyond the nineteenth-century. During the Civil Rights era in America, one hundred years after Melville published Moby-Dick, there was renewed critical interest in Melville's push for brotherhood by overcoming racial separatism and unseating racial stereotypes. Melville's language contains an appeal to many cultures as well as a sense of timelessness in its theme. Notions of freedom and equality are in themselves timeless and relevant to all people. Heidegger, I believe, would support Melville's use of language as a means of creating possibilities in people that may not have been seen before encountering Melville's words.

Kant's ideas of human judgment influence the questions raised in this thesis. Melville's historical context supported a science of "natural history" that relies upon observations and classifications. Melville, in all four works, attacks this very notion as being flawed at the same time as being relevant. For Melville, this flaw happens when people upon a few observations then propose to make analytic judgments that connote a priori knowledge. Melville proves that making such judgments in terms of race, culture, and class are in fact not a priori knowledge and therefore cannot be used to condemn entire races, cultures, or classes. What of Kant's theory does prove useful in examining

Melville's works is the idea of synthetic judgment where extensive proof is necessary. Melville does this in all four works. From exhaustive observations of nonwhites and whites, Melville points his audience towards the possibility of accepting social egalitarianism in order to establish a universal brotherhood.

Hegel's theories of the subject/object relationship also heuristically affect this thesis in pointing out how Melville works extensively through juxtapositions and reversals. In doing so, Melville places accepted beliefs next to potential beliefs. He places good characters next to "bad" ones, sane to insane, strong to weak, unprejudiced to judgmental, black to white, and so on. He begins from a place of binary oppositions and ends showing his audience the duality of humanity. In Hegel's subject/object relationship, we are able to define what one is in comparison to what one is not. Melville ideologically believes that men are not all good or all bad; therefore, it is possible to define one's self in terms of direct opposition to another character.

However, Melville makes clear that these "definitions" are fluid and not finite. As man is multi-dimensional, his characterization in terms of who he is in juxtaposition to will fluctuate. Ahab next to Moby-Dick appears insane, inhumane, and determined for revenge. However, Ahab next to Pip highlights the humanity that is within Ahab.

Having Heidegger, Kant, and Hegel serve as inspiration for questions from which to examine Melville's Typee, Omoo, Moby-Dick, and Benito Cereno, I draw my conclusions from Melville's language that creates the texts. Heidegger, Kant, and Hegel's theories lend themselves to a close-textual reading whereby the author's words

remain the focus. Each of the three rely upon theories of language, making for the investigation of Melville's words significant to his desire to unseat negative nineteenth-century racial stereotypes and to replace them with homosocial possibilities supporting his idea of brotherhood.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Following in her parents' footsteps, April Leigh Kinkead began her education at one of the oldest colleges in Texas, Weatherford College, where she earned her Associate Degree in Liberal Arts. From there, she followed her mother's path and enrolled at the University of Texas at Arlington where she found inspiration from one of the university's longest standing professors, Dr Emory Estes. Here she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with a minor in Spanish. While doing so, April also attended the School of Education to attain her Texas Teaching Certification. While teaching at one Arlington's lower-income high schools, she was determined to pursue a graduate degree with hopes of one day attaining a Master's Degree.

While attending her first graduate courses, she again was inspired by another professor at UTA, Dr. Luanne Frank. Dr. Estes was April's inspiration to take her English education beyond her BA; it was Dr. Frank who introduced her to the world of philosophy. Each of these professors played a major role in shaping her future education.

Having always been involved in the Black Community, April took her guidance from these two professors and shaped her path towards issues that concerned the Black Community through the world of literature and philosophy.

She plans to continue her studies at the University of Texas at Arlington in pursuit of her PhD in English Rhetoric and Composition Studies where she will continue to direct her focus towards exploring the Black Community in hopes of bringing about positive change concerning racial issues.