CALDERA DICK
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In Melville’s letter of June 27, 1850, to his English publisher Richard Bentley, he describes his new book as “a romance of adventure founded upon certain wild legends in the Southern Sperm Whale Fisheries...” One of these “wild legends” has been identified and generally accepted by a variety of scholars as J. N. Reynolds’ story, “Mocha Dick, of the Pacific,” which appeared in the Knickerbocker Magazine of May 1839, and which Melville might have been reminded of as late as 1849. But Melville is referring to more than one legend, and this suggests that he also had other legends in mind when writing Moby-Dick—those he undoubtedly heard from fellow seamen during his time at sea.

Of interest in this regard is the legend of Caldera Dick. Unlike the Mocha Dick story or another generally accepted source, Owen Chase’s account of the sinking of the Essex—which focus primarily on the encounters between the whales and their hunters—the legend of Caldera Dick also includes a description of the Nantucket captain who finally succeeds in outwitting this notorious whale. If Melville had heard this story, he might have made use of elements from it and synthesized them with what he knew of Mocha Dick and the Essex when creating the legend, behavior, and story of his own whale. Additionally, Melville might have taken the descriptions of the Nantucket captain and his plans for conquering Caldera Dick and incorporated them into the character of Ahab and into the epilogue of the novel.

According to the legend, Caldera Dick was “a monstrous old bull sperm whale [that] was bigger, tougher, meaner—and smarter—than any other whale that ever lived” (p. 262). He ranged anywhere from his usual haunt off the coast of Chile to the Japan Sea, and “you might hear of ships running afeet of him almost anywhere that boats were lowered for whales” (p. 263). His behavior was as predictable as it was destructive: After lying quietly in wait until his hunters were upon him, he would suddenly attack the boats with his flukes in an attempt to destroy them and the men aboard. If this ploy did not work, he would dive beneath the boats, rise through the water at great speed directly under them, and upset them. Finally, to be sure that he had achieved his goal, he would swim through the wreckage, systematically destroying any bits of it that he could detect.

Caldera Dick managed to escape capture until he was outwitted by a Nantucket captain. “This old fellow had been bested by the great whale more than once, and it preyed upon his mind. He couldn’t sleep at night, but lay in his bunk, brooding andfiguring” (p. 265). Eventually, borrowing from what he knew of the Eskimo tradition of whaling, the captain devised a plan and ordered the cooper to construct an unsinkable and indestructible oval cask.

When the captain and his men lowered for Caldera Dick, who floated quietly in his habitual manner, a harpoon was quickly darted into him. Attached to the harpoon was a long line which was tied securely to the cask. Assuming that the line was fastened to a boat, the whale engaged in his usual behavior, only to discover that he was attached to a cask which he could neither grind to splinters in his jaws nor destroy with his flukes. After fighting the cask—and becoming more and more entangled in the line—he became exhausted and was killed at last by the captain and his men.

An examination of the content of the legend reveals the relationship among Caldera Dick, Mocha Dick, and Moby Dick: The three whales earned their legendary reputations because of their immense size, because their behavior was destructive and apparently pre-mediated, and because they seemed unvanquishable. However, Caldera Dick’s appearance in various different, often distant, places is something that he alone shares with Moby Dick, and part of the horror of both whales lies in this seemingly supernatural occurrence.

Of particular interest is the parallel between the Nan-
tucket captain and Ahab, Melville's Nantucket captain. Both men have had a previous encounter with the particular whale that each seeks to destroy. Further, Ahab’s moodiness, restless nights, nightmares, and eventual sleeplessness could be seen as a distorted, exaggerated mirror image of the Nantucket captain's brooding insomnia. And, when Ahab wields the harpoon which Peck completes, the result is a specially crafted object which he, like the Nantucket captain, believes will assure the destruction of the whale which torments him. However, while the cask does help the Nantucket captain and his crew kill Caldera Dick, the harpoon does not bring Ahab the same success in his attempt to conquer Moby Dick.

This unsinkable, indestructible cask seems to turn up in the epilogue of *Moby-Dick* in the form of Queequeg's coffin, which had, earlier in the novel, been fitted out to replace the sunken life buoy. It is this coffin which eddies up from the depths and keeps Ishmael afloat until he is rescued by the *Rachel.* It is significant that, in addition to its buoyancy, the coffin also seems to be indestructible; it is the only object that survives the wreck of the *Pequod.* Perhaps Melville got the idea for an object that cannot be destroyed by even the most devastating of whales from the legend of Caldera Dick.

The legend of Caldera Dick was narrated by Benjamin D. Doane, who heard the story from his grandfather, Captain Benjamin Doane, a former harpoonier. Preceding the younger Doane's narrative is an excerpt from his grandfather's unpublished memoirs which reads, "On the sixth day of May (1846), we again made the coast of Chile, about Caldera, the mention of which, to old whalemen, would suggest the story of Caldera Dick: It was long before my time that he flourished and fell. His career covered the whole history of the whale fisheries in the South Seas from early Colonial times, and succeeding generations of whalers tried in vain to capture him" (p. 262).

This passage is interesting because Melville sailed on the *Acushnet* in 1841; since Captain Doane claims that the legend of Caldera Dick had been alive for some time, it is possible that Melville did hear a version of it while at sea. In fact, according to Captain Doane's grandson, "It was my grandfather's later belief that the stories of Caldera Dick, as told in the forecasts of whaling ships, were the basis of Herman Melville's great novel, *Moby Dick*—published in 1851" (p. 266).

As provocative as this statement is, the younger Doane is skeptical and has his own opinion about Melville's sources. He states that there were three Dicks—Mocha, Caldera, and Galera—and adds that "it seems likely that Melville heard the stories about all three Dicks, for he was whaling in those
parts in the year 1841. And I suspect that he turned them all to whatever purpose suited his imaginative mind. The probable inspiration for Moby Dick, however, was the sinking of the whaleship Essex . . . ” (p. 310). Although Doane does not recall that his grandfather described a white whale, he adds that the "name was always Dick. . . . And if Caldera Dick was taken . . . he was supplanted by Mocha Dick or by Galera Dick, for whalmen kept the story alive and current” (p. 310). Perhaps the perpetuation and diffusion of these stories among whalmen is what Melville had in mind when, as part of the legend he develops around Moby Dick, he describes a whale that is “not only ubiquitous, but immortal (for immortality is but ubiquity in time). . . ”

Finally, though it can only be surmised that Melville heard the legend of Caldera Dick, Captain Doane and his grandson believed that he did. And, whether Melville in fact incorporated aspects of this legend into Moby-Dick can also only be surmised. From another perspective, it is possible that when either Captain Doane or his grandson retold the story, he might have used his own knowledge of Melville’s novel by elaborating upon or adding the very aspects of the legend discussed here. This seems just as likely given the nature and evolution of legends. Nevertheless, whether in writing Moby-Dick Melville used information from this particular legend, or whether either or both of the Doanes borrowed information from Melville’s book to enhance a legend that he had once heard, there does seem to be a compelling connection between the legend of Caldera Dick and Moby-Dick.

Melville Bibliography 1846-1897:
A Sheaf of Uncollected Excerpts, Notices, and Reviews
Gary Scharnhorst
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Continued from Number 74

   “The popularity of Mr. Melville is not likely to suffer by this present volume, which unfolds the life on a man-of-war by one competent to judge, and capable of describing what he has seen. The author, it appears, in 1843, shipped as an ordinary seaman on board of an U.S. Frigate, then lying in a harbor of the Pacific. After being on her for more than a year, he returned to the United States, on the arrival of the Frigate in an American Port. Describing such a career the book cannot but attract attention. The hierarchy of a man-of-war, the relative positions of the various classes of officers and men are explained and the thousand and one peculiarities of the sea and seaman made interesting. Mr. Melville exhibits in this book a graphic power of sketching character and has made a most readable book, which we are very sure will be as popular as Typee, though its themes are so very different.”

   Excerpt of Chapter 33 from White-Jacket.

68. “A Flogging at Sea,” Saturday Evening Post, 6 April 1850, p. 4.
   Reprints Chapter 33 from White-Jacket.

   “This book is, we think, much superior to its predecessors. In many respects it reminds us of Dana’s Three [sic] Years before the Mast. It has the same air of simplicity and truthfulness,—the same minuteness of detail.” Moreover, Melville’s work “gives apparently a true picture of what our naval system is. It does not seem to have been by any means [his] main object to lay bare the abuses of irresponsible power which exist on board our naval ships; but he says enough to make his readers feel that nowhere, save on the slave plantation, are they more rife. We thank him in the name of humanity, for thus boldly, and yet in no mere partisan or fanatical spirit, exposing them.” This “earnest, though very funny, preacher from the main-top” has borne “faithful testimony in favor of peace principles. . . . We wish a copy of this book could be in the hands of every one of our national legislators.”
   “Like all Mr. Melville’s works there is a remarkable air of veri-similitude about this narrative.” The author “has the art of giving life-like interest to his characters, without apparent effort or exaggeration. He comes the nearest to De Foe of any of our later authors.”

   “This purports to be the record of the writer’s personal experiences on board a man-of-war. He has no doubt, in writing his book, made large drafts upon his imagination, while yet a general air of truthfulness certainly pervades it. It is the product of an uncommonly bright and active mind.”

   “Each of Mr. Melville’s chapters is a perfect tableau, and hereafter the ship’s whole company, from the commodore downwards, will seem to us like old acquaintances.” Melville’s description of the rounding of Cape Horn surpasses a similar chapter in Dana’s “Two Years Before the Mast.” Melville’s work will also “do much to reform” abuses in the navy. “We commend it to the attention of those in power, confident they will be glad, for once, to have the truth told them from the forecastle, in a perfectly good-humored way, and without the least spirit of prejudice or complaint.”

   Excerpt from Chapter 33 of White-Jacket which “well illustrates the degrading effects of the practice of flogging.”

   The critic has “had time to peruse” the work in detail since noticing it briefly three weeks earlier. “The principal object of the author, we should judge, is to awaken the public mind on the subject of the present navy regulations, to which the most decided exceptions are taken throughout; and which he stigmatizes in the main, as tyrannical and cruel.” In particular, Melville objects to “the frequent use of the ‘cat.’” Though Congress has failed thus far to abolish its use, “we have no hesitation in declaring our opinion that its total abolition was far better than to allow it to remain as it is.” In all, the work “abounds with information which a landsman knows comparatively little about; and it is not a bad book to put in the hands of boys, many of whom conceive the idea of going to sea young. The evils of a life on a man-of-war are treated plainly.”

   Excerpt of Chapter 33 from White-Jacket.

   Excerpts a “thrilling adventure” from Chapter 92.

77. Review of Typee, Christian Advocate and Journal, 30 May 1850, p. 87.
   “This book has had a great run. It is a lively narrative, with a good deal of the marvellous about it; so much so indeed that many have doubted whether it be not a fiction altogether.”

   Excerpts the “elaborate article” on “Mosses from an Old Manse” which appeared pseudonymously in the Literary World.

79. “Fame,” Boston Transcript, 27 November 1850, 1:5.
   Melville is known around Pittsfield as “the fellow that bought Dr. Brewster’s farm.”

80. New York Evening Post, 18 June 1851, 2:3.
   Melville, “the author of several popular romances of travel,” has a new work in press.

81. “Literary Intelligence,” Christian Register, 5 July 1851, p. 103.
   Melville, “the author of Typee and other Romances of Travel,” has a new work in press.

   “A new work is to appear from the pen of Herman Melville early in the season. The title is not yet given.”

   Publication announcement of The Whale reprinted from the Literary World (1851.B14).

   Publication announcement of The Whale reprinted from the Literary World (1851.B14).

85. “Literary,” Boston Transcript, 18 November 1851, 2:3.
   Melville’s The Whale “has fared ill with the London literary journals.” The criticisms in the London Athenaeum (1851.B17), “heavy as they are,—find support in the reviewer’s quotations.”

   “The appearance of this work has been awaited with much interest. The author of Typee, ‘Omoo,’ &c., has taken a high rank among the authors of the day, and his works have attained considerable popularity.” The present work “is a singular mixture of fact and fiction.—The supernatural is interwoven with the mat-
ter-of-fact delineations of life on board a whale ship. The reader will sometimes be puzzled to separate fiction from probability, so skilfully has the author blended the common incidents of a whaler's life with the creations of his own fancy. In many respects Moby-Dick is the best of the works of the author, as it certainly is the most instructive. We predict for it, with confidence, an extended popularity." Excerpts of Chapters 34, 60, and 61.


88. "Literary Notices," review of Moby-Dick, National Era, 20 November 1851, p. 187. Melville has never written anything so delightful as Typee and Omoo, but we still look with interest for the issues of his pen. White-Jacket "was a capital book, good to read, and good for use." Moby-Dick introduces us to the hard, eventful life of a whaler, and, so far as we have read, is a volume of great interest.

89. "Book Notices," review of Moby-Dick, Boston Olive Branch, 22 November 1851, p. 3. This "intensely interesting" romance contains a "wild and exciting description of a whaler's life." Melville is "said to be fully equal to Maryaft [sic]." Because it is published by the Harpers, it "ought to be unexceptionally moral."

90. "New Publications," review of Moby-Dick, Saturday Evening Post, 22 November 1851, p. 2. This new and thick volume from the author of Typee and Omoo "requires more attention "than we are, at this moment, able to give it. Peeping into it, here and there, we see much that looks as if it leads where one would like to follow; but swim on, Moby-Dick, for the present, untouched by critical lance or harpoon."

91. "Notices of New Publications," review of Moby-Dick, Christian Inquirer, 22 November 1851, 3:2. We shall read a few chapters, and see very well that we shall not be easy until we have gone through the whole. There is a vivid, dashing style of narrative and characterization, that takes one along by force; and we predict for this book more readers than any one of its predecessors had. It may be occasionally a little rough for delicate hands, yet it will not be a stranger to parlor tables; whilst every sailor that can read will delight in its adventurous pages. We could wish a little less rambling in the story, and a little more reverence in the spirit of the book.


94. "Literary Notices," review of Moby-Dick, Zion's Herald and Wesleyan Journal, 26 November 1851, pp. 190-91. The romance "relates to marine life as connected with whaling, and abounds in the well known qualities of the author. . . . We take exception to some of [Melville's] moral views, but acknowledge his attractive talents. Few books are more readable than his."


98. "Literary Notices," review of Moby-Dick, Providence Journal, 29 November 1851, 1:5. Twenty-five years ago, two or three such books as Typee and Omoo would have been enough for a man's reputation. . . . No one has equalled [Melville] in the romance of the Pacific. He invests savage life with charms such as were never found in it before, and his description of the ocean and of the ship have a fascination that binds the reader to his pages. We have read Typee more than once, we have forgiven Mardi, and we shall turn with the assurance of new enjoyment to Moby-Dick."


Prints Melville’s entire letter to Rufus Griswold, dated 19 December 1852, declining the invitation to attend the memorial dinner for James Fenimore Cooper and commenting upon his memories of Cooper’s fiction.


Mark Seaworth by W. H. G. Kingston “is a story for youth, after the manner of Typee and Omoo.”


One of the best paid American authors, “Melville [sic] has bought a farm at Stockbridge.”


Some parts of this romance appear “to be poetry run mad.” Yet for all its “bewilderment, the book is, we expect, intensely interesting.”


“The critics are somewhat severe upon Herman Melville’s last work, ‘Pierre, or The Ambiguities. . . . It was a perilous adventure for the author of ‘Typee’ to forsake the sea.” Cites review in the Boston Post (1852.B40).


Reprints comment in Eliza Cook’s Journal (1852.B35).


Melville has “entered a different field of romance, and a sufficiently mystic one, too.” Pierre’s rhapsodies “will satisfy the most ultramarine young lady that has ever sighed” for a lover. Melville seems inspired by Goethe in these “ambiguous pages.” Pierre and Lucy “cast Faust and Margaret completely in the shade.” “With all its transcendentalism, there is much earnest and original thought in this book, and Melville treads a higher walk than in any of the previous creations of his fancy. But the book is too fierce, too unhealthy. It reminds one too much of the intense, anatomical style peculiar to Edgar A. Poe; the taking up of veins and arteries, lying bare of muscles and tendons.”


Biographical sketch reprinted from Redfield’s The Men of the Time (1852.B1).


Travel essay about the Berkshire Hills, with particular reference to the home of Melville, “the author of Typee, and Omoo.”


“The latest and most melancholy instance” of an American romance written in unsuccessful imitation of Hawthorne “is Mr. Herman Melville’s ‘Pierre, or the Ambiguities.’ That the author of ‘Typee’ should also be the author of ‘Pierre,’ is indeed a marvel. That he should forsake the company of hearty, flesh-and-blood sailors, for the society of such an improbable monstrosity as Pierre, is most melancholy evidence of a false taste—and his want of success in his new character is not less glaring than his want of discrimination in forsaking the old.”


“The reader will vainly look, in this new novel, for either the freshness or the naturalness of ‘Typee.’ Mr. Melville appears to be the victim of his reputation, for, in trying to sustain, and if possible, increase it, he strains after effect, and becomes affected, obscure, and sometimes almost absurd. In addition, the plot is eminently improbable.” As it stands, Pierre “reads like a novel, written by a man who was half crazy.”


The London Athenæum (1852.B77) has “savagely” reviewed Pierre.


Pierre has been printed in London, “but it meets with little favor.” It is “unsparingly condemned” by most British reviewers.


Excerpts Boston Atlas for 3 January 1853, above.


Birth announcement of son Malcolm. “Herman Melville, author of ‘Omoo and Typee,’ ‘Pierre, or the Ambiguities,’ &c., has just issued a new work, which will doubtless be considered more original than any of his former ones.”


“Herman Melville has gone to New York to superintend the issue of a new work.”

[N.B.: This item reinforces the possibility, originating in Melville’s letter to Harper & Brothers dated 24 November 1853, that he had been “prevented” in the spring from publishing a work, presumably his “Agatha” romance.]
   "It is whispered" that Melville is the author of Israel Potter in Putnam's, "but if the report be well-founded, then indeed has the author effected a sudden and a great improvement in his style, which in this tale is manly, direct and clear." The serial "is told quite as if DeFoe" had written it. Cited without date as item 1854.B16.

   Reprints the tale from Putnam's for August 1854.

   "Among the good things in this number, we note the continuation of 'Israel Potter,' by Herman Melville."

   "'Israel Potter,' said to be from the pen of the author of 'Oomoo' [sic], and kindred South Sea exotics, is continued in this number, and promises a high accumulation of future interest."

   Melville resides among "a brace of literary characters" in Lenox.

   Notices the October installment of "Israel Potter."

   "Melville's tale, Israel Potter, is continued" in the November issue of Putnam's. "This is a decided improvement upon its author's more recent productions, and deserves the high commendations it is receiving."

   "This stirring tale... has been reprinted by Putnam, from the Monthly. It should be, for the author of 'Typee' has done nothing better."

   The best of these tales are "Benito Cereno" and "The Encantadas." The work as a whole is a decided improvement "on the ridiculous and ambiguous 'Pierre.' But there is something the matter with Melville. Everything, or nearly everything, we have had from his pen since 'Typee' and 'Omoo,' has shown great deterioration."

   Melville, "The well-known author of works of fiction, embarked last week from New-York in the steamer Glasgow, for Glasgow."

   Melville's genius "is generally admitted by the critics and by a large portion of the reading public." There is "something to admire, or at least to wonder at, that the masquerade of an adventurer in various disguises, during a single trip on a Mississippi steamer, should suffice for the entire story." The book is readable, but "it scarcely justifies the author's reputation."

   "... a quietly humorous book, conveying some good lessons in a quaint, strange style."

   "The Confidence Man travels through the Mississippi Valley, and meets with various adventures, grave and gay. It is a rattling comic criticism upon the follies and fancies of the age, done in 'Typee' and 'Omoo' dialect. Of course it will be read, laughed over, and quoted, as all Melville's books are in the dilettante line. We could only wish that a writer of such genius and power might strike a deeper vein than any he has hitherto worked."

   Melville is listed among "the most noted literary persons now living in the United States."

   "H. Melville, the author of 'Typee' and 'Omoo,' has sailed from Boston with plans to circumnavigate the globe."

   Can any American writer "produce any sea novels equal to those of Cooper and Herman Melville?"

   Melville has inscribed an autograph book to be sold to raise money for the U. S. Sanitary Commission.

   Melville, "a voluminous and much read writer of other days," treats "many of the chief military affairs" of the Civil War, but his poems "have but little enthusiasm about them." Evidently "his heart was on both sides..."
of the conflict.” The verses “possess some real poetical merit, but in thought, they are only of the most superficial kind.”

136. “Personal,” Round Table, 8 September 1866, p. 93. Melville “must be ranked among the American poets hereafter, we suppose, on account of his recent volume, Battle Pieces and Aspects of the War. It is many years since he has published anything, his last work, if we remember rightly, being a collection of tales which originally appeared in Putnam’s Monthly, and were collected under the title of Israel Potter [sic].”


139. “New Publications,” review of Clarel, New-York Evangelist, 6 July 1876, p. 8. “... a pilgrimage in verse, presenting pictures of various localities, interweaving a thread of story with references to past and present events in Jewish story.”


141. “Nathaniel Hawthorne,” Spectator, 22 November 1884, p. 1546. Melville’s letters to Hawthorne, reprinted in Julian Hawthorne’s Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, “are not unfrequently harum-scarum letters, which tells us hardly anything of Hawthorne, except that his friends were not afraid to write rattling nonsense to him.”


143. Moncure D. Conway, Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne (New York: Scribner and Welford, 1890), p. 133. Melville is listed among the “notable figures” with whom Hawthorne was acquainted during his residence in Lenox.

144. “Lenox,” New York Times, 29 June 1890, 10:5. While a resident of Lenox at mid-century, Hawthorne “was frequently visited by his most intimate friend in the Berkshires, Herman Melville [sic], who wrote thrilling tales of the South Seas, Typee and Omoo.” They “spent much time in wandering about through the woods and fields about Stockbridge Bowl. There are men now living in Lenox who remember seeing these two literary men on their rambles, like Wordsworth and Coleridge about the lakes of Grasmere.

145. “Gossip of Books and Authors,” Current Literature, 11 (November 1892), 369. “To Melville must always be accorded the honor of a pioneer’s work in the field of South Seas travel literature. Unfortunately, he died “hardly more than a year” earlier “with little of the glamour of his early popularity about him. For a generation almost Melville has been out of people’s thoughts. He produced little of any literary value in recent years, but spent his declining days in the closest seclusion.”

146. “Herman Melville,” review of Typee, Omoo, White-Jacket, and Moby-Dick, National Observer, 13 May 1893, pp. 655-56. “Herman Melville deserved a better edition than this.” Though Moby-Dick “contains some of Melville’s most superfluous scribbling,” it “also his best romance.” Moby Dick “is not a mere whale, nor is it clear that he is really the Enemy in whale form.” The stream of romance gathers force as it goes till it sweeps exaggerations, misplaced reminiscences, digressions, and what not, irresistibly away with it.”


148. F. B. Sanborn, “Significance of the Hawthorne and Melville Correspondence,” Springfield Republican, 10 November 1894, 8:2. “The strange metaphysical turn which came over Melville after his first great success as a novelist” is evident in his letters to Hawthorne published in the November Century.

149. David Potter, “Herman Melville,” Nassau Literary Magazine, 51 (January 1896), 343-48. A commentary on Typee, Omoo, and Mardi. “Let him who would know the delights of a sea-swung paradise, or would join in the revels of nature’s children, turn to Herman Melville, and in his joyous company roam the fairy islands and inhale the dreamy languor of the South Pacific.”

From a list of art books, we purchased a five-volume set of Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects: translated from the Italian of Giorgio Vasari with notes and illustrations chiefly selected from various commentators. By Mrs. Jonahan Foster, London: Henry G. Bohn, 1850, 1855, 1851, 1851, 1852. After we unwrapped the books, we were surprised to find Herman Melville’s penciled signature in all five volumes. Under “II Melville” in the first volume are “1 March 1862” and, underneath that, “N.Y.” Penciled on the fly-leaf in the same volume is an 80-word prose poem on greatness.

After reading about Melville’s handwriting and comparing what we had to published samples, we were fairly certain that what we had was authentic. The text contains 60 pages of penciled notations, generally either vertical lines or checks in the margin mark off passages. Some underlining, an x as an asterisk, and a brief written comment are also present. This annotating style is consistent with that noted by Carole Moses in her article on Melville’s Spenser (MStx, 68 [1986], 5-10) and with that shown in Jay Leyda’s The Melville Log.

The Melville Log provides further evidence that Melville was indeed the annotator. In a July 1986 journal entry while aboard the clipper ship Meteor, Melville remembers reading in Lives of the Painters that Pennino was a joker at all religion (II, 621). In the newly found volumes, relevant passages concerning Pennino have been marked. Melville would have been referring to his reading of the Lives he had borrowed from Evert Duyckinck in 1859 (Scaits, No. 534). However, it seems quite probable that after purchasing his own copy in 1862, he still would have marked those passages.

Of course, we still hoped to get an objective, expert opinion. Our friend Dennis Berthold from Texas A&M University suggested showing our volumes to Mrs. Ruth T. Degenhardt at the Berkshire Athenaeum. Soon after, we were off to Pittsfield where Mrs. Degenhardt and Mr. Robert G. Newman, another Melville expert, suggested by Mrs. Degenhardt, verified Melville’s handwriting. We also showed them the rather odd triple overlapping checks used twice as notational marks in these volumes. Mrs. Degenhardt kindly looked through another book once owned by Melville and found the same marking. Vertical lines and checks are common notational devices; an odd triple check would be much more indicative of a particular person. Whatever remote lingering doubts we might have had about the authenticity of the annotations disappeared instantly.

For their help in authenticating Melville’s Vasari, we thank Professor Dennis Berthold, Mrs. Ruth T. Degenhardt, and Mr. Robert G. Newman.

For information about purchasing the books, write to the Whitburns at Pride and Prejudice Books, 11 North Hill Rd., Ballston Lake, NY 12019, or phone (518) 877-5310. 
Melville's "Shock of Recognition"
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Melville's memorable phrase, "the shock of recognition," from "Hawthorne and his Mosses," represents, according to Edmund Wilson, "the moments when genius becomes aware of its kin." Other critics see in these words as act of communion. The study of his probable sources, however, suggests an additional reading.

In "Mosses" Melville compares Hawthorne to Shakespeare, both of whom he admires for "those occasional flashings forth of the intuitive Truth." The recognition of the "intuitive Truth" is a sign of genius, Melville writes. Furthermore, one cannot "know greatness ... except by intuition." He elaborates when he pleads for the acknowledgement of American authors, that is, "the whole brotherhood. For genius, all over the world, stands hand in hand, and one shock of recognition runs the whole circle round." Rather than genius merely recognizing itself, Melville suggests in addition that each artist, in undergoing his own "shock of recognition," is in a position to communicate his truths to his readers.

The source of Melville's phrase, "the shock of recognition" may well be a Masonic ceremony called "the shock." Melville's minor use of Masonic terms in The Confidence-Man and his ironic use of them in Pierre has been noted. In the "Mosses," however, he seems to be employing the essence of this initiation ceremony. Albert Mackey, a noted Masonic scholar, writes during the 1870s that, "a ceremony called 'the shock,' ... was in use ... in the beginning of this century, and is still used ... by all in the Shock of Enlightenment." Mackey explains that the "Shock of Enlightenment" ritual is "the symbol of the birth of intellectual light and the dispersion of intellectual darkness."

Not only the phrasing (which calls to mind mid-nineteenth-century social circles which experimented with electrical shock) and the essence, but the physical description of Melville's "brotherhood" of "genius ... stand[ing] hand in hand ... the whole circle round" echoes the Masonic ceremony as revealed by the notorious William Morgan in 1829:

All the brethren form a circle, and the Master, followed by every brother, says, "And God said, let there be light, and there was light!" At the same moment that the last of these words drops from the Master's lips, every member stamps his right foot on the floor, and at the same instant bring their hands together with equal force, and in such perfect unison with each other, that persons situated so as to hear it, would suppose it the precursor of some dreadful catastrophe. This is called "the shock."

A "shock of recognition" also occurs in Pierre. Melville writes of the "amazing shock of practical truth" experienced by Pierre. He explains its shocking features in intellectual terms: "his advance in insight had been so surprisingly rapid, so also was now his advance in some sort of wisdom" (NN, p. 165).

Melville dramatizes the suddenness and irrationality of the "shock of recognition." Also in Pierre, he describes the protagonist's insight as "that electrical light which had darted into his soul." This insight is so powerful, he laments, that "Not even his lovely, immaculate mother, remained entirely untouched, unaltered by the shock" (NN, p. 88).

The electrical metaphor may also be the source for a passage in White-Jacket, which is often interpreted as an intellectual baptism. White Jacket plunges into the depths of the sea, and believes himself drowned, until he feels "the coiled fish of the sea" brush his side; he states that "the thrill of being alive again" which this sensation conveys "tingled my nerves, and shocked me through" (NN, p. 333).

The "shock of recognition," then, appears to be a sudden, stunning, explosive acquisition of insight, much as Melville often described the growth of his own genius.

Notes
2 For instance, see Martin Fisher, Going under: Melville's Short Fiction and the American 1850's, pp. 8-9.
5 Elder Davis Bernard, Light on Masonry (Utica: William Williams, 1829), p. 29.

[Image]
Melville once complained to Hawthorne that “All Fame is patronage.” As Brian Higgins has demonstrated in painstaking detail, at least Melville has been spared the fate (ignominious diabolis?) he most feared: to “go down [in posterity] as a ‘man who lived among the cannibals!’” In this second volume of his research guide to Melville criticism, Higgins lists and annotates nearly two thousand items published between 1931 and 1960, easily the most exciting and productive era of scholarship on Melville since the revival of interest in his life and work. As early as 1950, in fact, Robert Spiller declared Melville was “the most thoroughly studied of all American authors.” Like its predecessor a decade ago, Higgins’ second volume is a model of bibliographical scholarship, an invaluable research tool that belongs in every academic library.

This bibliography is, in fact, another kind of Melville log, as remarkable in its way as Jay Leyda’s original compilation of biographical data nearly forty years ago. In this new volume, Higgins charts the discoveries of such second and third generation academic Melvillians as William Braswell, Willard Thorp, Henry Murray, Harrison Hayford, John Birss, and Leon Howard. He traces the increase in Melville studies after the pioneering research of the 1920s, from Thorp’s first PMLA article on Melville and his edition of Herman Melville: Representative Selections, both in 1938, to the postwar flowering of Melville scholarship that peaked in 1951, the centenary of Moby-Dick, and the publication of Melville’s Letters in 1960. He records the varied response to Melville by such writers as Hemingway, Maugham, Masefield, Auden, Conrad, Camus, Joyce, Mann, Forster, Muriel Rukeyser, Robert Lowell, and Robert Penn Warren. He even cites reviews of John Huston’s production of Moby-Dick and the several theatrical and operatic adaptations of Billy Budd. In these pages I learned, too, that Daniel Aaron’s first publication on Melville appeared over a half century ago and that Alexander Eliot published an autobiographical interpretation of “Bartleby” in 1947, six years before the more famous one by Leo Marx. Here I read about early essays on Melville’s work by psychoanalysts (“His crippled leg in Typee symbolizes his sexual inhibition,” “the whale represented the mother”) and atomic scientists (“The White Whale as symbol bears disturbing resemblance in our time to the atomic bomb”). Higgins even summarizes a delightful wrong-headed article in an industrial magazine which excoriated Melville for misrepresenting paper manufactures in “The Tartarus of Maids.” As Higgins suggests in his introduction, “The pages of this bibliography are testimony to the multifaceted fascination” with Melville.

In his annotations, moreover, Higgins has written a sort of private or inside narrative, a unique chronicle of critical wars and occasionally petty rivalries. The partisan bias of Melville’s reviewers in the 1840s and 1850s was shared, ironically enough, by polemical critics a century later who reinvented Melville as a sort of proto-Cold Warrior. Much as Ahab epitomized “the totalitarian type” and seemed to prefigur Stalin, the Confidence Man satirized “the utter intellectual and spiritual frivolity of the Henry Wallace type” of liberal. Higgins records salient events in the history of the Melville Society since its founding in 1945, and he discusses with tact and skill such topics as Egbert Oliver’s idiosyncratic source-criticism, theories about the composition of Moby-Dick, and the controversies over “Baby Budd” and Charles Olson’s Call Me Ishmael. These entries, connected like points in a line, comprise a genuinely entertaining if episodic literary history.

Higgins has assembled the volume with care, and it contains virtually no typographical errors, the peculiar bane of bibliographers. If only to prove I read the bibliography with some attention to detail, however, I might note a few minor flaws: The Journal of English and Germanic Philology, which Higgins cites by the entire title in item 1940.B19, is abbreviated JEGP in item 1959.B59 and JEG in item 1959.B60. The chronology of items is bewildering in at least one instance: item 1949.B120 is continued in item 1949.B43. Rather than identifying some writers only by their initials, Higgins might have fully named them (for example, Philip Blair Rice in 1945.B31 and Zoltan Haraszi in 1947.B41). Higgins understandably omits foreign-language criticism of Melville because these items have been compiled by Leland Phelps in another G. K. Hall bibliography. Though he lists English language reviews of these foreign publications, he inexplicably fails to index them (for example, K. H. Sudermann’s Herman Melville’s Gedankenquart [Berlin, 1937] and Gabriele Baldini’s Melville o le ambiguità [Milan, 1952]). Lest these points seem too pedantic, I should emphasize again that the work is both comprehensive and extremely reliable.

All Melvillians owe Higgins a debt of gratitude for the successful execution of a difficult project. His bibliography stands in stark contrast, for example, to Raymond Borst’s recent and utterly inadequate compilation of Thoreau criticism in the same G. K. Hall series. Higgins has again proven that, rather than measuring a writer’s reputation the way a butcher weighs a butcher’s, literary bibliographers labor at a calling with its own standards of excellence.

Tolchin’s Mourning
Sanford E. Marovitz
Kent State University


In all but the cumbersome title, this is a book worthy of superlatives. For all its clumsiness, however, that title—
Mourning, Gender, and Creativity in the Art of Herman Melville—provides a clear and accurate indication of Neal L. Tolchin’s complex thesis and his precisely focused approach to understanding most of Melville’s fiction. (He does not deal here with the poetry.) His coverage includes all but Israel Potter; the short concluding segment on Billy Budd is called an “Afterword.”

Scholars in the past have dealt with an aspect of the book’s point—the loss of and search for a father in Melville’s fiction—but no one to my knowledge has investigated his writings so thoroughly with nineteenth-century mourning practices and current psychological theories of bereavement at the center. It is evident throughout his study that Tolchin has invested an extraordinary amount of time in background research to grasp and define the necessary theoretical foundation for his analysis of Melville’s fiction, including the romanticized travel narratives. The direct statement of intention that opens his “Introduction”—“This book traces the emergence of unresolved grief in Herman Melville’s fiction”—is simultaneously a clear indication of what he expects to accomplish in his study and an illustration of his compact, forthright style. Given the complexity of the secondary material on which he bases his analysis, this clarity and directness are nothing short of remarkable.

Mourning, Gender, and Creativity originated as a disser-
tation, but one would never know it from reading this text. Professor Tolchin has presented sections of it at conferences I have attended in recent years, but effective as his papers were in isolation, I was eager to see how he would pull them together without forcing either the theory or the fiction.

In fact, he has done it well, and reading Tolchin’s persuasive, well-documented argument I was continually astonished over the fuller understanding I gained of Melville’s psychological investment in his work. For instance, he discloses how conflictive grief is repeatedly represented in Melville’s fiction by such characteristic images and motifs as dismemberment (for example, Ahab’s missing leg and Pierre’s Enceladus dream) and abandonment (for instance, Tommo, Taji, Redburn, Ishmael, Isabel, Pierre, and Billy Budd). In his “Introduction,” also, he summarizes several vital points, succinctly stating: “My book demonstrates that Melville largely obeys the cultural codes which assign women the social symbolization of grief; his representations of women are often mourning figures shaped by the genteel codes prohibiting excessive grief. Further, when his male figures express a sense of bereavement, they are also often feminized.” He demonstrates, in other words, that there is an unmistakable foundation in psychological bereavement theory to help explain many of the most controversial circumstances and characters in Melville’s fiction, from Ahab’s losing his leg to the Harry Bolton/Carlo portraits to the Ishmael/Pip relation and Isabel’s hair-brushed guitar. In his insightful account the center in mourning theory does indeed hold, and many heretofore bewildering pieces of the Melvillean puzzle suddenly fit precisely into place after all, leaving one to muse why the pattern had not earlier been discovered by the multitude of scholars devoted to gaining a better understanding of the relation among Melville’s life, writing, and culture. “[A]s he writes more deeply into both himself and his time,” Professor Tolchin observes, Melville’s “fiction shows an intensified recognition of the relationship between private griefs and social grievances.”

The study opens with an introductory chapter that places Melville in his culture with relation to contemporary mourning practices and current bereavement theory. In chronological order, each successive chapter selects an image of Melville’s romances from this perspective, exploring it as a network of signs that ambiguously represents Melville’s conflictive unresolved grief over the death of his father and the effect upon him of his mother’s psychological ambivalence over her loss of a husband. From one chapter to the next Tolchin traces the crucial role of inadequate bereavement as a principal force behind Melville’s creative energy and imaginative representations.

Yet he wisely never makes the case—as Ishmael attempts to do with his own narcissistic observation in “Looming”—that “this is the key to it all.” It is one crucial key, he suggests, but not the only one. He does, however, develop an effective argument supporting not only the strong link between Melville’s grief and his literary accomplishments but also between that and his pervasive social criticism. “Does grief, then, transform art into social critique?” he rhetorically inquires in the closing pages of his study; momentarily, yes,
it does; on the basis of ritualized bereavement, he observes, "we are in a position to situate mourning at the center of the American imagination, with its profound interest in spiritual regeneration and in literature as a species of renaissance." Perhaps he goes too far in generalizing to this extent, but his argument is well supported, and it will be difficult to counter. Be that as it may, *Mourning, Gender, and Creativity in the Art of Herman Melville* is a book rich in insight and invaluable in its far-reaching conclusions, not only for Melville studies but for a deeper understanding of the impact that unresolved conflictive grief is likely to have on the sensitiv-
y of any creative spirit with a vital imagination.

Does his analysis offer promise for similar studies of certain contemporaries of Melville? Hawthorne was only four when his father died at sea. Emerson, too, was but a child at the time of his father's death. Poe was still an infant when his father abandoned him and died. Jones Very was about Melville's age when he lost his father. In three of the four cases, the mother lived unwed for many years after with the children under her wing at home. Surely all this is not without meaning. We are indebted indeed to Neal Tolchin for accurately charting another of Melville's elusive psychological currents and in the process giving us access to a sounder comprehension of his contemporaries and his cul-
ture.

Reynolds' Beneath
Mark William Rocha
Glassboro State College

*Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagi-

In this sweeping account of the careers of the seven major writers of the American Renaissance, we have our most copious application yet of the Bakhtinian principle of heter-
oglossia. David S. Reynolds, Director of Whitman Studies at Rutgers University, Camden, construes the Bakhtinian method into what he terms "reconstructive criticism" in which the task of the historical critic is "to reconstruct as completely as possible the socioliterary milieu of literary works through the exploration of a broad array of forgotten social and imaginative texts" (p. 561). This re-attachment of the American literary canon to popular culture is by now a commonplace, but where Reynolds is most valuable is in demonstrating that each of the major texts is itself a case history in reconstruction.

Reynolds explores the myth that the writers of the Ameri-
can Renaissance (Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne, Melville, Dickinson, and Poe) were alienated from an American culture that demanded conformity while promoting a mindless boosterism; rather they incorporated into their writings a subversive imagination that infused much more of American popular literature than we have been given to believe. The difference, however, is that the major writers transformed the naive or vulgarized popular modes of the Conventional, Romantic Adventure, and the Subver-
sive by fusing them with such reconstructive elements as Renaissance drama. One result, for example, was that Mel-
ville's Ahab would be perceived by his contemporaries as both the immoral reformer of popular literature and Shakespeare's Lear.

That Melville appears along with Emerson in the book's subtitle signifies his importance to Reynolds' project. Nearly one hundred pages, three separate chapters, are given to Melville, and they constitute a truly fresh reading of Mel-
ville's can on and career through *The Confidence-Man.* In the chapter, "Melville's whit ed Scrup lers," Reynolds links Melville to the era's popular reform movements: the early novels spring out of his culture's dark-reform literature, which had adopted what Reynolds cal l a "benign-subver-
sive style" that established a moral preext as a shield against criticism in depictions of the tabooed or sacriligious. Thus Reynolds points out how in *Typee* and *Omoo* Melville "follows in the popular immoral-reform tradition of mani-
festing undeniable fascination with the tabooed topics he pretends to denounce" (p. 137). During this "apprentice period" Melville assumed a variety of popular reform poses without taking seriously their ideological content. Reynolds then marks *Mardi* as the first truly "Melvillean" novel because Melville began to distance himself from advocating any single social reform in favor of representing a heteroge-
necy of shifting moral voices in a fluid world. By relativi-
z ing American cultural values in *Mardi*, Melville moves closer to a post-Calvinist gloom that permeates *Moby-Dick.* For Reynolds the chief significance of *Moby-Dick* is Melville's *stylization* of reform. As Reynolds puts it, the liberal use of "reform imagery has eventually become for Melville a colorful shell, largely devoid of political or didactic content, that can be arranged at will in the overall mosaic of a subversive novel" (p. 153). So while in his early novels Melville experimented with the various concerns of reformists who saw society as a "whited sepulcher" hiding submerged evil, in *Moby-Dick* he extended his earlier primary interest in exposé to a complementary quest for philosophical truth in which the white whale as Nature "is invested with the most apparently benign but most ulti-
mately subversive qualities" (p. 158).

In the chapter "Melville's Ruthless Democracy" one reads of Melville's incorporation of such popular stereo-
types of sensational literature as the likable criminal and the justified pariah, products of the paradoxical nature of American democracy. As a devoted reader of New York's penny newspapers, Melville relished accounts of such crim-
inals as John A. Murrell, the "Great Western Land Pirate" who terrorized the South but who nonetheless was elevated to the status of a heroic warrior, thumping his nose at a corrupt society. (Melville's openness to such figures from sensational literature was not shared by the Young American literary movement led by Cornelius Mathews and Evert A. Duyckinck.) Such paradoxical figures as Murrell were re-
cast by Melville into such characters as Tuiji, the justified murderer of *Mardi*, and even more so in Henry Jackson of *Redburn* who is at once evil and yet admirable. Of course, few characters in literature are more paradoxical than Ahab. So Melville's stating his goal to attain "a ruthless democra-

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on all sides” is taken by Reynolds as an affirmation of a principle of subversion that ironically lies at the heart of democracy.

In “Stylized Laughter in Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville” one learns how in *Moby-Dick* Melville exploited the native idioms of frontier-humor and radical-democrat humor at the same time he lifted such idioms out of the merely carnivalesque. Reynolds posits that the carnival was even more important to the culture of democratic America than it was to the European culture Bakhtin studied, and Melville’s novels are replete with carnival imagery, as in the boisterous forecastle scene in *Moby-Dick*. Reynolds is most convincing when he places Queequeg in a line of radical-democrat characters that reached its apotheosis in Devil-Bug of George Lippard’s *The Quaker City*. The difference is that where Lippard stood content to exploit the vicious disruptive humor of Devil-Bug, Melville employed Queequeg’s gross subversive style in the service of an ennobling relationship with Ishmael.

Throughout these chapters Reynolds depicts an inexorable movement by Melville toward *The Confidence-Man*, which is the paragon work in Reynolds’ schema, and indeed the one with which he closes his book. For Reynolds, *The Confidence-Man* is a “remuneration of truth-seeking and a majestic assertion of stylistic creativity and flexibility” in which “the main reward was a renewal of the act of dialogue” (pp. 558-59)—that is, a dialogue with all the dominant modes of American popular culture. The value of Reynolds’ reading of Melville rests in the unity that results from accommodating all the novels of Melville’s first phase to his central thesis that Melville restores order to the American Subversive Style by going beyond subversion for the mere sake of it and to achieve a fusion of popular images in a literary text characterized by conscious irony.

Surely Melville scholars will find some of Reynolds’ evidence to be circumstantial rather than demonstrative—as when he argues the influence of the character of Black Sampson in the novels of George Lippard upon Melville’s Queequeg. Yet Reynolds acknowledges the limits of his reconstructive enterprise, at the same time he argues its necessity. For if the result of deconstructive theory has been to reduce the canonical stature of “major writers” like Melville, then Reynolds’ book is, to borrow from Frost, an invigorating guide to what to make of a diminished thing.

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**VERY LOOSE FISH**

*Herschel Parker*

*University of Delaware*

Gordian Press plans to publish in 1990 *The New Melville Log* by Jay Leyda and Herschel Parker, a three-volume edition in a new chronology, where items from the 1951 edition (often corrected and augmented) are run in along with items from the 1969 Supplement (similarly corrected and reshaped) and along with new items (many from the trove of Augusta Melville’s papers acquired by the New York Public Library in 1983). Since I am working from diskettes (the product of optical scanning), I can make additions and corrections until late stages of the preparation. In searching for new documents I have worked through discoveries reported by old hands in the 1970s and 1980s, including Henry A. Murray, Wilson Hefflin, and Merton M. Seals, Jr., as well as by newer hands, such as Patricia Barber, Hans Bergmann, very notably Stanton Garner, David Jaffe, very notably Joyce Duveau Kennedy and Frederick J. Kennedy, Alice P. Kenney, Kathleen E. Kier, Walter D. Kring and Jonathan S. Carey, George Montiero, Amy Puett, John P. Runden, and David K. Titus. (Jay laid on me the responsibility of giving Francis E. Plumeau full credit as the true discoverer of the Augusta Melville papers.) I have gone through such obvious sources as *Melville Society Extracts* and catalogues of major auction houses, and I have started making new circuits of the principal archives, carrying the working Log in hard disk in my laptop computer, but I am alive to the danger of missing even items which have been mentioned in print already.

*How can you help?* You can go through your files looking for any documents you have around that you were thinking of sending to *Melville Society Extracts* after you did a little more research on it. Just send it—it may fit right in. T. Walter Herbert, Neal Tolchin, and others have quoted documents not in the Log. Can they and others send me any transcriptions or photocopies they have (it being understood that I will verify all documents and obtain permission for their use)? If any of you have been annotating a copy of the Log over the years as I did, correcting mistranscriptions against originals and filling out documents from the originals in case you needed more than Jay quoted, I’d like to see those annotations. Please send me any transcriptions you have made of Melville’s marginalia, especially if you were consciously correcting Walker Cowen’s transcriptions. This is the time to come forward if you have a document that shows where Herman Melville was every month of 1838. (In a more decent world, any documents that just show where Melville was in the summer of 1838 would win you a set of the three volume Log and a trip to Tahiti.)

*How can you help?* Jay slept in the cheapest hotels and Y’s and cadged beds from Melvillians town to town. I’m too old for that, but not too proud to suggest you let me house-sit in New York or Boston a few days at a time while you go on a carefree vacation. (MWM, mid-fifties, avid jogger, professional, non-smoker, big but tidy. *Happy to water small nonaggressive plants but does not walk dogs or cats.*) The great generation of Yale students of Stanley T. Williams helped Jay, and so did Leon Howard, Wilson Hefflin, and many others. Now’s the time for another pooling of resources, for at last the Log is rolling, or at least scrolling up and down my screen, not just being salvaged but being freely augmented and...
burnished beyond anything I had dared to hope until Gordion Press put the 1951 and 1969 pages on disk.

I suppose it's too much to hope that someone can identify and correct my reading of a couplet that John Hoadley inscribed on p. 348 of his Clarel (Mar Saba, "The Beaker," line 212), as a gloss on "Was it embraces were for foes": "Friends meet to part, and [x xxx x?] at faith, / True foes [oo xx not?] ne'er part till death".

Hershel Parker, 1309 Gilpin Avenue, Wilmington, Delaware 19806—(302) 652-7971.

To Israel Potter
Robert F. McEwen
Chadron State College

The wheel upon which eagles broke the blue
Above Rhode Island while you lay asleep
Below, a babe, has come full circle, you
Are here. The cabin where you grew a lad
Is gone, your father and your mother turned
Into the way the sun at noon upon
The buckwheat cracks its rays. Against the stone
Your father used as hearth a farmer breaks
His plow each year, and only knows that once
Upon this land, the Potters kept a farm.

For fifty years the hemlock you had cut
And stacked lay weathering for your return.
While through the neighborhood each winter teams
Of oxen pulled the wood-sled, no one came
Into the grove you'd haunted here, an axe
Upon your shoulder and an eagle
In each eye. It is as if your lightning
Strokes had shattered time—or kindled embers
Slow these fifty years ablaze—your hemlock
Lies a mound of ashes under dust.

As hunter and as hunted on the land
And sea, but in the air your soul became
The sky. No death for you, Israel, your blood
In fire shall burn yet never be consumed.
For death was always in your weather-eye;
And blood, artemis-like, washed in your wake;
You drew it with your cutlass as a witch
Draws water from stone, and as a rod
Divines your musket marked where blood would flow—
Still soaring are the flames wherein you flow.

Mythology records you Israel:
The exodus which first began the blink
Of time, the fall, our first self-consciousness,
Our faring on the wild Atlantic, where
Between two jagged shark-toothed waves we rode
The rip-tide back and forth. Through certainty
Careening into doubt, the rising tide
Contained us as the darkest night contains
The promise of the rising sun, redeemer
Ripe, of eagle wing. You lived in exile

From the womb your mountains made, with meadow-
Land and promontories interspersed
With forests as familiar as your tongue.
Three tombs would trap you, Israel, all three
Enclosed in one, of which the other three
Were shades portending, balancing the whole.
Your progenitor is Jonah, belly-bound,
And the ancient tribe from which you take
Your name; as well is brash Ulysses kin,
And all the questers of the human race.

And yet there is a difference: unlike most,
Whose sole devotion is to penetrate
A myth or else obtain a prize, your great
Adventure was to stay alive. The way
To darkness runs through light; your way back home
Engulfed you in disease, in penury,
In holds of ships, and, briefly, shut within
The stony casement of a castle wall,
And left for dead. Identity became
For you a misty field, a foggy night.

The boys at Bunker, red and rag, are past
Remembering how Israel partook
Of slaughter on their day of reckoning.
The hill became a breast upon which sprawled
Like sleeping babes the dying and the dead.
The eyes you drew your mark on peck through yours,
And watch at dusk the lowering of flags,
The wasted light, and darkness swelling like
A surge of musketry announcing death.

No solace like the legacy of Jones
Or Father Franklin (eagle-eye and wit
And eagle heart—you never stood your fathers
Very well), for the crossed wounds on your chest,
The callouses and blood upon your hands.
Only endurance, your, both wide and deep
Outruns the superficial stream of fame
Upon which floats vaingloriousness, and luck.
Your tracks define these forests, mark this land;
Your handprints write the history of race.

Filming "The Sea Beast"

Merton M. Seals, Jr., forwards us the item below which appeared under the letterhead of the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research and over the name of Henry K. Mattoon, Enjoy.

Moby Dick (WB, 1930)
"Dauntless bravery, wounded pride, hopeless love ... the greatest thrill picture ever made!" claimed advertisements for this adaptation of Melville's novel. Sergei Eisenstein was less enthusiastic. "Moby Dick is a very bad film. I saw it once." Nevertheless, the film stands as an interesting period piece in Hollywood's attempts to gain prestige by
adapting literary classics and hiring actors away from the legitimate stage.

John Barrymore made his film debut in 1914 and initially used the profits to subsidize his theatrical career. "In Hollywood I can loaf and earn ten times more money than I do on the stage." In 1925 Barrymore signed a contract with Warner's for $76,250 per picture. The following year he played his first film version of Captain Ahab. He was tired of playing "so many scented, befuddled, bewigged and ringletted characters" that he relished Ahab's "rough and almost demoniacal character." One problem though: the novel had no love interest. Barrymore joked that the whale could supply it, but he changed his mind after meeting Dolores Costello, soon to become his third wife. (He originally wanted Mary Astor for the part, but her contract wouldn't allow it.) The resulting film, The Sea Beast, was a prestigious and expensive production—$12,000 alone was spent on the special-effects whale.

Barrymore was tempted away from Warners by United Artists, but he soon realized that Warners could offer films and a salary more to his liking and, in 1928, he signed again with the studio. Since The Sea Beast had done so well at the box office Warners and Barrymore remade the picture in 1930. Costello was pregnant at the time, and Joan Bennett was cast in the role of Faith.

The film, directed by Warners contract director Lloyd Bacon, took two months and $120,000 to complete. Barrymore had a hand in the production, personally selecting the character actors whose "ugly mugs" would provide the seedy atmosphere aboard ship and in seaside bars. The film was shot with direct sound, typical of the early talkies, evidenced by the sound of waves lapping against the ship and Ahab's wooden leg on the floorboards. Multiple cameras were used, also common in the transition from silent to sound. In filming a conversation between Ahab and Faith three cameras had to be used: one for each character and a third for establishing shots.

Bacon frequently shoots in depth, rhyming Queequeg's actions in the foreground with Ahab's in the background. Compositional matches also occur between scenes. Ahab pumps water and later his brother Derek pumps the bellows on the church organ; Faith's slippers are contrasted with a blacksmith fashioning the wooden leg; dark silhouettes are used to frame scenes. Finally, there is "the great profile" himself, his left profile favored throughout the film because he felt his right looked like a "fried egg." From the opening Barrymore establishes the physical aspect of his character; acrobatic turns from the crow's-nest, a graphic surgery room scene, and harpooning the whale.

A common practice at this time was to produce simultaneous foreign versions of Hollywood films for European audiences. The same sets would be used and the foreign cast and crew would shoot for only ten to fourteen days. The German version of Moby Dick was co-directed by William Dieterle (who also played Ahab) and Michael Curtiz (who was married to Bess Meredyth, the scenarist of Sea Beast). Both men would soon become important Hollywood directors.

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