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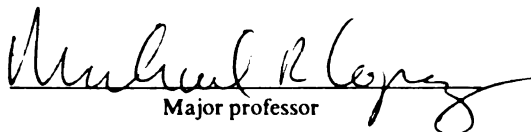
CROSSING INTO MILLENNIUM:
HERMAN MELVILLE'S NARRATIVES OF THE SEA

presented by

Marcus Lee Sheffield

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

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CROSSING INTO MILLENNIUM:
HERMAN MELVILLE'S NARRATIVES OF THE SEA

By

Marcus Lee Sheffield

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

CROSSING INTO MILLENNIUM: HERMAN MELVILLE'S NARRATIVES OF THE SEA

By

Marcus Lee Sheffield

The English Puritans who came to the New World had to cross over the Atlantic Ocean. For many of them this experience paralleled that of ancient Israel. God had called his people from Egypt, over the Red Sea, to Canaan, the promised land. "Crossing over" for the Puritans meant achieving a higher spiritual level, allowing them to enlighten the whole world through the example of their millennial society. The American romance writer Herman Melville (1819-1891) used this "crossing over" metaphor in his six major sea narratives: Typee, Omoo, Mardi, Redburn, White-Jacket, and Moby-Dick.

The story of the development of the American myth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well as the story of the American romance novel in the nineteenth century confirms the presence of this Puritan metaphor in Melville. Most Americans in the middle of the nineteenth century saw themselves as the destined millennial people of God. But during the nineteenth century the Puritan-American sense of millennial destiny was threatened by developments in the intellectual world which undermined trust in the Bible.

Melville's sea narratives point the way out of these intellectual dilemmas. Typee, Omoo, and Mardi contend that

Americans are in danger of backsliding into mere external morality. What Americans need is regeneration in the Puritan sense--a radical change of the inner self. Redburn shows that failure to take care of the poor and dispossessed makes a mockery of the millennial pretensions of America and that Americans need to return to primitive goodness. White-Jacket argues that the American millennium will occur only when individuals with vision and a sense of brotherhood catch a mystic sight of humanity's native soil lying far over the horizon, a place far different from the brutal world of the present. Finally, Moby-Dick demonstrates the nature of the false quest. Americans cannot become people of the "mind" who pursue illusions in an indeterminate world. They must "cross over" into heart religion, typified as an island of eternal peace within the soul.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,
Harold and Mildred Sheffield,
and to my wife
Joy,
without whose loving support
the doctor of philosophy degree
would have remained beyond the horizon.

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I would like to thank the faculty, staff, and fellow graduate students I worked with during my time in the department of English at Michigan State University from 1987 to 1990. The departmental secretaries Sharon Tyree and Lorraine Hart were always kind and patient even when I asked silly questions. Fellow graduate student Jason Peters was a fine listener, commiserator, and wise man. My thanks go to the outside reader Dr. Patricia Julius. Dr. Herbert Roth, Chairman, Department of English, Southwestern Adventist College, kindly provided time and encouragement that enabled me to complete my dissertation. Each of the members of my guidance committee taught me important ideas that he is perhaps unaware of, but without which this dissertation would be a far less proficient example of scholarship. Therefore, special thanks go to the members of my committee--Jay Ludwig, Donald Rosenberg, Stephen Arch, and Michael Lopez. Dr. Lopez, the director of this dissertation, originated my admiration and respect for the author Herman Melville and offered the continued encouragement I needed to pursue the ideas I have developed.

Preface

This dissertation is a study of the metaphor of the sea in the major sea narratives of Herman Melville. From at least the year 1492 until the first east to west flight in 1928, the journey to America involved a treacherous sea voyage across an open ocean. Travelers began the journey with a set of preconceptions and ideals which were threatened and challenged by traversing the unstable sea. "Crossing over" had a complex and metaphorical meaning for a particular set of travelers--the English Puritans--describing for them the manner in which individuals and society progressed toward a future millennium of peace and security. The way was often encompassed by spiritual hazards and threats that had the potential to destroy the enterprise.

Melville exploited the Puritan idea of "crossing over" in his sea narratives. He was a metaphysical traveler who invited the American people to cross over the abyss of human experience into a place of millennial wholeness. This millennialism remained distinctly Puritan in his writings. A close reading of the six major sea narratives (Typee, Omoo, Mardi, Redburn, White-Jacket, and Moby-Dick) demonstrates that the questioning and searching elements in them were not subversive or skeptical in spirit, but were firmly Puritan. Melville suggested that Americans, in coveting millennium,

would endure many troubling failures and doubts in achieving that goal.

Chapter 1, "O'th Raging Floods," details the Puritan conception of "crossing over" as well as scholarly interpretations of the place of the sea in the human imagination. The experiment that America was to be, as envisioned by Puritans, involved first crossing a large ocean. That voyage was difficult and dangerous. The Puritans' preconceptions and usual ways of seeing their world were threatened. Yet a special bond emerged between travelers. A new social and religious structure began to emerge different from what they imagined when they left England. Together the Puritans faced both expected and unheard of dangers.

The crossing experience was paralleled in the Old Testament. God was continually calling his people to follow him out of the old world (Egypt) and into the new world (Canaan). Puritans rejected the current image of the old world as exemplified by Europe and England and journeyed to America to invent a communal Christian society of regenerated individuals enabled to live out God's moral law of unselfishness. This special millennial community would enlighten the whole world. But for the Puritan this next stage in the progress of the gospel was not to be had without considerable trial and doubt. The individual had to "cross over" a frightening abyss to make it to the other side.

The central question for the student of Melville is the extent to which his use of the sea metaphor can be connected to the tradition of the Puritans. Do his writings contain the Puritan notion of "crossing over" into millennium? In answering this question one must first acknowledge the basic fact that the Melville canon is composed almost entirely of sea journeys. However, setting alone will not demonstrate the presence of the Puritan tradition. For this reason an important task is to examine the literary development of the romance novel in the nineteenth century and the manner in which such a development coincides with the ongoing need to tell the American story. Then, a connection must be made between the development of the American myth and the religious context in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 2, "The American Myth," asserts the Puritan/Biblical origin of the American story. The myth of America began with Cotton Mather's Magnalia Christi Americana. For Mather, even if the experiment in the wilderness was to fail in practice, it must live in the narrative of American specialness. During the revolutionary period, the story of America as a God-blessed and God-ordained republic meant to bring about a millennium of prosperity and peace became the secular sermon of the day. Such a conception of America could have no other source than the American Puritans. Early national poets created prophecies of the American future based upon reason and

scripture. America was viewed as the futuristic kingdom replacing the failed kingdoms of the past. The difference between what was revolutionary/political and what was spiritual/otherworldly became difficult to distinguish. It was asserted that only a virtuous people could maintain political freedom.

The American romance novel developed out of a need to tell the American story. The romance became the new medium for describing the socially confirming and defining myth of America during the time that Americans were searching for that set of beliefs which could explain a new set of circumstances in America. Modern life no longer seemed to fit the traditional assumptions of the Puritan past, and the romance novel was an art form used to describe a new social structure.

Melville's romances are an attempt to tell this new American story, to create a new American order. For him, the sea represents all that is disordered and unsure, and the objective of his various wanderers is to find "landedness." This goal has been interpreted as a flight from an American theocentric past, leading ultimately to religious skepticism, but this is not the case for Melville. In his fiction he achieves "landedness" by suggesting how Americans can complete their American-Puritan past.

Chapter 3, "The Blank Horizon," explores the theological and philosophical context for the writings of Melville. The chapter begins with a description of Puritan theology. The

fundamental belief of the Puritans relevant to Melville is the idea of God as the ultimate source of wholeness and righteousness. In themselves human beings are incomplete and unregenerate and in need of changed inner selves. Without such change, humanity is forever cut off and separate from God. The Puritans came to America to create a community of regenerate individuals who were capable of properly loving and caring for one another. This community was to be the new American Israel possessing the promise of an earthly millennium if individuals stayed in covenant relationship with God, which meant living lives of obedience to God's expressed will as found in the Bible. A potential pitfall for this new society was the temptation to substitute external morality for true inner regeneration.

In the early and mid-nineteenth century the idea of what it meant to be an American can be described as an extended kind of Puritanism that had been appropriated and secularized by American revolutionaries, turned into myth by the early national poets, exploited by revival preachers, and then evaluated by the literary community known as the American Renaissance. Along with the continuing and developing notion of America as an advancing, millennial, Christian nation came serious intellectual threatenings from higher criticism, evolution, anthropology, and comparative religion. These new philosophies undermined nineteenth-century America because the undergirding authority of the nation, the Bible, was itself undermined. Melville was a part of the investigation

and assessment of the American character as it existed in this new context. For many intellectual Americans, the horizon of American promise indeed seemed blank. In this context, then, the writings of Herman Melville should be read, first of all, as jeremiads on the American condition, and then as quests for a workable, reconditioned American-Puritan faith.

The remaining portion of this dissertation is an examination of Melville's six major sea narratives (Typee, Omoo, Mardi, Redburn, White-Jacket, and Moby-Dick) in order to recover his "new" American faith. Chapter 4, "The Quest for the Internal" (covering the first three novels), traces the identification of what was wrong with American culture and then describes Melville's solution for the problem. Even though it appears that Melville "went native," Typee is a work which criticizes both the South Sea natives and the Christian missionaries sent to convert them. The natives are healthy, free, beautiful, happy, innocent, and gentle, creating a doubt that Christianity is the one truth faith.

However, the natives are simultaneously bloodthirsty, lazy, ignorant, lustful, and spiritually dead. Into this native culture come the Christian missionaries, whose influence has been mostly evil. The missionaries have brought in western cultural trappings and moral constraints without the accompanying hope of inner change, what Melville called "true religion." The missionaries have been able to bring the vices but have not been able to transfer the virtues of

Christianity. Melville's wanderer leaves the island and goes back to the ocean in search of answers to this problem. In Omoo the search for millennium continues. The work is a continuation of the quest for a workable Christian philosophy of life seen in Typee. Melville's wanderer witnesses again the missionaries' inability to convert islanders into true Christians. Sadly, vice among the people only increases. Once more, the wanderer pines for the billows and is off on his search.

In Mardi Melville widens the quest beyond the South Seas by creating an allegorical archipelago representing the whole world. Taji the wanderer, with his band of companions, goes from island to island searching for Yillah, a female representative of the spiritual experience he wishes to possess. Every island in the archipelago represents spiritual failure of some kind. The most skeptical of the band of wanderers, Babbalanja the philosopher, experiences a Christian conversion on the island of Serenia after seeing that the islanders have successfully wedded precept and practice. He finds "landedness" while Taji and the others miss the significance of the island and continue on a false quest.

The first three novels are a quest for the "landedness" found by Babbalanja. Chapter 5 of the dissertation, "New Wine into Old Wineskins," extends the personal search for the internal Christian experience to a wider arena. In Redburn Melville seeks to convince his audience that American culture

needs the same infusion of redemptive power as that experienced by Babbalanja. Although set in England and ostensibly referring to English social problems, Redburn addresses the American scene. Melville argues that American society possesses the mere shell of Christianity but not its soul. The emphasis in the novel is on the lack of proper social action commensurate with the purpose of millennial America. The novel singles out old guidebooks for criticism, demonstrating that such books are not the answer for the social ills that predominate in England, a land with a long "book" history. The answer is found in human benevolence, love, and equality. Books contain the precepts but not the promise of human action. In the new world of America, Christian action must predominate, not mere words. There must be new wine in old wineskins. The role of covenanted America cannot be reached until, as Melville put it, "we become what Christianity is striving to make us." America had to bypass that which is temporary and external in exchange for the eternal and the spiritual if she were to become her millennial self.

Chapter 6, "Toward the Inland Zone," discusses the last two major sea novels, White-Jacket and Moby-Dick. White-Jacket introduces the emblem of America as man-of-war. On the unruly sea, a warship operates effectively only under the most rigid discipline. The captain is a dictator who determines life and death. There is little concern for the individual sailor's inner self. Ship life works well only if

a sailor obeys, to the letter, all the ship's regulations. From the maintop of such ships sailors with the proper vision catch a glimpse of a "long-sought land," a fragrant and sweet native home of the oppressed. Maintop sailors are able to pierce the mask of their man-of-war world with all its abuses and brutishness, and to perceive their final millennial destiny.

Moby-Dick describes an unusual quest in the Melville canon. Ahab, the principal character, pursues that which destroys him. But placed in its proper perspective, this American romance can be seen as the faith-affirming work of a Puritan imagination rather than as an agnostic work, as it is often characterized. Moby-Dick concerns the false quest of a man determined to pierce through that part of the mystery of God for which there can never be a solution. The sea metaphor helps readers understand the nature of what Ahab attempts to do since he never leaves the sea. The sea is that place of mystery, flux, change, and loss of perspective. It is the testing abyss over which every Puritan must pass. Ahab doesn't cross the abyss; instead, he is determined to subdue and conquer it. Thus, the novel can be read as an example of Solomonian wisdom literature. In the book of Ecclesiastes Solomon tells of the experience of false pursuit. Nothing under the sun can be made to make sense, nothing satisfies the human need for wholeness. The work ends in the realization that there is nothing for a man to do but quit the attempt to figure out the mystery of life under the sun

and simply to obey God's commandments. Ahab, like Solomon, is determined to hunt down and destroy the mystery of life. The white whale is a representation to him of all that is unfathomable and mysterious, including the pain and suffering of life. He fails to realize that the world and life are ultimately indeterminate things. Ahab misses the consolation of Ishmael, who finds the "one insular Tahiti" within his own soul. Ishmael has crossed over the "Atlantic of [his] being" into an "inland" place where there is "eternal mildness of joy."

In the perspective of the first five works in this study, a clear connection can be made between the inland voyage of Ishmael in Moby-Dick and the quests for wholeness of experience in Typee, Omoo, Mardi, Redburn, and White-Jacket. Melville is arguing that America can never become the millennial nation of destiny as long as she strays from the primitive and fundamental virtues first advocated by her Puritan forefathers.

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Chapter 1

O'th Raginge Floods

Before April 13, 1928 every traveler to the new world risked a journey on one of two great oceans, the Atlantic or the Pacific. On that little-regarded date in transportation history, three men completed the first east to west air flight across the Atlantic Ocean. For the two Germans and one Irishman (Captain Hermann Koehl, Baron Gunther von Huenefeld, and Commandant James Fitzmaurice) the trip was hardly more reassuring than a ship crossing. In their single-engine, German Junkers airplane Bremen, they battled equipment failure, headwinds, dense fog, and blizzard to crash land at Greenly Isle, Labrador. At one point in their crossing they dipped low trying to find a hole in the fog, only to find a treacherous sea seeming to grasp for their plane (Robert J. Hoare 60-68).

The three fliers would not have considered their journey less hazardous than that experienced by other first-time travelers to America. The Atlantic Ocean grasped at a different set of seekers of fortune in America--the English Puritans. Writers and other important figures in early American literature from Captain John Smith in 1607 to Edward Taylor in 1668 boarded small wooden vessels to risk months-long journeys on the open ocean. This was true for William Bradford on the Mayflower in 1620; for Robert Cushman on the

Speedwell about 1621; for John Winthrop and Anne Bradstreet on the Arabella in 1630; for Roger Williams in 1630; for Edward Johnson in 1630; for Thomas Hooker in 1633; for John Cotton on the Griffin in 1633; for Nathaniel Ward in 1634; for Anne Hutchinson in 1634; for Henry Vane in 1635; for John Norton in 1635; for Thomas Shepard (with Thomas Shepard, Jr.) in 1635; for Peter Bulkeley in 1636; for John Davenport in 1637; for Michael Wigglesworth in 1638; for Thomas Tillam in 1638; for Mary White in 1638 (as a two year old); for Samuel Sewall in 1661. David Cressy notes that "Every adult in New England before the 1650s was a veteran of the ocean passage" (176).

Each one, excepting perhaps the small child Mary White, was a searcher of things spiritual and metaphysical. Each pursued a vision fostered in the mind by the words of others--discoverers and adventurers perhaps--but usually Protestant ministers possessed by a spiritual mission. Harry S. Stout, in The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England, writes convincingly of the way early New England culture was explained and preserved by the weekly sermon. What accompanies this fact is another equally true one. The countless sermons, books, pamphlets, and broadsides created in old England and Europe contained the vision transplanted to New England. The millennial and spiritual experiment that was America was the direct result of ideas anciently conceived and then transferred in the minds of thousands of Puritans crossing the Atlantic.

Cressy has investigated the Puritan experience of the crossing of the ocean in Coming over: Migration and communication between England and New England in the seventeenth century. He argues that "the Atlantic crossing was a vital formative part of the colonizing experience." Cressy describes the voyage as a trial Puritans endured with the help of "a coherent framework for understanding ... giving significance to their ocean passage" (144). Since most Englishmen at that time were agrarian, they began the voyage in great fear of the ocean itself (146). Puritans arrived on board the ship not as a group, but usually as individuals or families. Once on ship, the new conditions created a new sense of community (149). The social structure of Old England was at once modified. A sense of rank continued, but the journey itself forced all to have a feeling that their fates were inextricably linked. Cohesiveness, commitment, and bonding increased (150, 151). Religious practice was necessarily liturgically primitive. Cressy writes, "Ministers conducted services at sea without the paraphernalia of vestments and altars, a practice that foreshadowed the purity of the ordinances in New England." In short, "The vessel provided a felicitous environment for the making of Puritans" (158). The voyages were often marred by conflicts with a profane crew, seasickness and disease, delay, foul weather, and the fear of piracy. This is the reason Cressy notes that for Puritans "the crossing itself became a metaphor for conflict against worldly corruption" (176).

It is not surprising, then, that the early literature of exploration and discovery points out something unique about America and American writing. It has usually been a struggle to get here, and it has always been difficult to describe and comprehend America. In an essay entitled "The Literature of Discovery and Exploration," Wayne Franklin notes the need to invent the idea of America after the fact of the discovery of America. Explorers often wrote, he writes, "in a language the roughness of which caught the strain of their hard traveling by land or sea or river" (16). Franklin generalizes that the literature of exploration ends up being a strange combination of "great hopes and the direst of ends." "That, in a sense," he writes, "was the deepest of discoveries; that was the moral terrain whose strange contours still awaited exploration" (23). The Puritans were hardy adventurers in the moral realm. Their journey involved the greatest of hopes as well as the possibility of the direst of ends, both physical and spiritual. Little wonder that Sacvan Bercovitch writes, "For the American Puritans the highpoints of the pilgrimage--flight from corruption, sea-crossing, 'wilderness-condition,' conquest of Canaan--were all too real" ("Cotton Mather" 142).

An important first impression after the journey across the Atlantic is recorded in Thomas Tillam's poem, "Upon the first sight of New-England June 29, 1638." The poem presents us with strong images of death and resurrection to new life in a kind of half-way Canaan offering spiritual achievements

and experiences heretofore impossible (in the Old World). His poem of 1638 reads:

Hayle holy-land wherin our holy lord
 Hath planted his most true and holy word
 Hayle happye people who have dispossessed
 Your selves of friends, and meanes, to find some
 rest
 For your poore wearied soules, opprest of late
 For Jesus-sake, with Envy, spight, and hate
 To yow that blessed promise truly's given
 Of sure reward, which you'll receve in heaven
 Methinks I heare the Lambe of God thus speake
 Come my deare little flocke, who for my sake
 Have left your Country, dearest friends, and goods
 And hazarded your lives o'th raginge floods
 Posses this Country; free from all anoye
 Heare I'll bee with you, heare you shall Injoye
 My sabbaths, sacraments, my minestrye
 And ordinances in their puritye
 But yet beware of Sathans wyllye baits
 Hee lurkes amongs yow, Cunningly hee waites
 To Catch yow from mee live not then secure
 But fight 'gainst sinne, and let your lives be pure
 Prepare to heare your sentence thus expressed
 Come yee my servants of my father Blessed.
 (Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco 126-127)

The sea in this poem represents another in a long list of trials through which the spiritual traveler passes in order to attain a purer experience.

The journey to America cleanses the seeker of encumbrances that separate him from the Word who precedes him to the promised land. The Word always goes before. Hazarding life "o'th raginge flood" is the ultimate test. One risks all on the sea. For what? For the next stage, free of annoyances but with trials of a new sort--trials of security. But the new trials will be worthwhile because the Word will again go before the seeker, this time calling, "Come yee my servants of my father Blessed."

Tillam's poem resonates with the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Oppressed by hundreds of years of slavery, ancient Israel was called by Moses to cross the Red Sea. On this journey, God went before the people. Exodus 13:21-22 reads,

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.
(New International Version).

This method of travel continued during Israel's sojourn in the wilderness on the way to the promised land. Numbers 9:17 indicates that "whenever the cloud lifted from above the Tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped." Christ was interpreted by the Puritans as the Old Testament captain of the host, the leader who decides when and where his people Israel should move.

Since the crossing of the Red Sea, God's true people have followed their savior and king wherever he leads. The Puritan errand into the wilderness was simply the historically current example of a crossing over another abyss into God's plan, of escape from the world into a higher destiny prepared by God for his people. The cloud by day and the fire by night signaled the time to advance. In 1631 Thomas Hooker noted,

Look to it, for God is going, and if he do go, then our glory goes also. And then we may say with Phineha's wife, I Samuel 4:22, The glory is departed from Israel. So glory is departed from England; for England hath seen her best days, and

the reward of sin is coming on apace; for God is packing up of his gospel, because none will buy his wares (not come to his price). God begins to ship away his Noahs ... and God makes account that New England shall be a refuge for his Noahs and his Lots, a rock and a shelter for his righteous ones to run unto. (Heimert and Delbanco 69)

The faithful will give up all to follow their God.

Notwithstanding the often disappointing results of "arriving" in the promised land (noted by Patricia Caldwell 119-134), the Puritan habit was to continue in the "way" in hope of achieving a greater spiritual goal.

Puritan Robert Cushman sought to explain this in his tract, "Reasons and Considerations Touching the Lawfulness of Removing out of England into the Parts of America." He argued that America was not given to the English in the same way that Canaan was given to the Jews. He writes, "But now we are all in all places strangers and pilgrims, travellers and sojourners, most properly, having no dwelling place but in this earthen tabernacle; our dwelling is but a wandering, and our abiding but as a fleeting, and in a word our home is nowhere, but in the heavens" (Heimert and Delbanco 42). The dangers of the crossing are a necessary part of the struggle. "As for such as object the tediousness of the voyage thither, the danger of pirates' robbery, of the savages' treachery, etc., these are but lions in the way." America is merely "a vast and empty chaos" convenient for the full working out of the Gospel plan. "But we have here great peace, plenty of the Gospel, and many sweet delights, and variety of comforts." The American wilderness is a place to start mankind anew, to

eradicate war, dissension, envy, murmuring, repining, contentions, and economic exploitation. Cushman pleads, "Let us not thus oppress, straiten, and afflict one another, but seeing there is a spacious land, the way to which is through the sea, we will end this difference in a day" (emphasis supplied, Heimert and Delbanco 44).

Puritans left the Old World because of her failure to create a pious Christian society. As Bercovitch has observed, Puritan historiography was a "renunciation of Europe" ("Cotton Mather" 139). The Magnalia Christi Americana viewed the European world as "an extension of Egypt, Babylon, and pagan Rome" ("Cotton Mather" 140). The way to a new righteous community was to be found by crossing over the abyss into the American wilderness. This was a distinctly metaphysical justification capable of generating the spiritual and physical energies of many people. A powerful ideal and vision was to infiltrate every phase of their lives, both inner spiritual experience and outer conformity to civil law.

On board the Arabella during the Great Migration of 1630, John Winthrop summarized the height and depth of the new communal ideal in a sermon entitled "A Model of Christian Charity," an ideal valuable enough to risk life by passing "over this vast sea to possess it" (Heimert and Delbanco 92). The enterprise was to be no less than the work of God himself. The new community was to give him "the more occasion to manifest the work of his spirit" and to show forth "the glory of his greatness." Under this umbrella of glorifying

God, men and women leaving England for the unknown had certain obligations to one another. Winthrop said, "There is likewise a double law by which we are regulated in our conversation one towards another ... the law of nature and the law of grace, or the moral law or the law of the gospel" (83). He goes on to identify the one proposition of Christianity summarizing all the law--the command to love your neighbor as yourself. Winthrop fully realizes that none but the regenerate can obey this command. In asking the company of Puritans to obey this law in their future relationships in America, Winthrop intended the new commonwealth to be something very great. In proposing that the new inhabitants of America obey the central command of Christ, Winthrop was asking them to achieve the ideal of not only the New Testament gospel writers, but of the Old Testament as well, since the New was the fulfillment of the Old. The Puritans were to be the capstone of the promise of God's people on earth, the New Israel. Puritans were, in fact, given the commission to be the restoration of the innocence that existed before the fall of Adam. Winthrop said,

Adam in his first estate was a perfect model of mankind in all his generations, and in him this love was perfected in regard of habit. But Adam rent himself from his creator, rent all his posterity also one from another; whence it comes that every man is born with this principle in him, to love and seek himself only, and thus a man continueth till Christ comes and takes possession of the soul and infuseth another principle, love to God and our brother. (87)

This love was not to be some hazy goal. "This love among Christians is a real thing, not imaginary." And it was love that was to be the binding element of the new community. "This love is as absolutely necessary to the being of the body of Christ, as the sinews and other ligaments of a natural body are to the being of that body" (88). Later, Winthrop writes that the inhabitants of the new world will be "all in each other knit together by this bond of love" (89). Using the explicit language of the Old Testament idea of a covenanted people, Winthrop notes the serious nature of the proposed relationship between God and his new Israel. Israel is under full obligation to perform her side of the contract. If she should fail, "the Lord will surely break out in wrath against us, be revenged of such a perjured people, and make us know the price of the breach of such a covenant." It is in this context that Winthrop makes the well-known statement about the witness of such a people.

For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. (91)

John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress describes a similar pursuit of the Puritan ideal in terms of the individual Christian walk. Just as the community of saints must leave England for the experiment that was America, so also Christian, called by the Word and with his eye on the light, must leave family and friends to traverse through many sore

trials during which there are moments of joy, insight and hope--plateaus of calm on the flatland of affliction.

Bunyan's autobiography, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, explains the experience in the language of the sea.

Thus, by the strange and unusual assaults of the tempter, was my soul, like a broken vessel, driven as with the winds, and tossed sometimes headlong into despair, sometimes upon the covenant of works, and sometimes to wish that the new covenant, and the conditions thereof, might, so far forth as I thought myself concerned, be turned another way and changed. But in all these I was but as those that jostle against the rocks; more broken, scattered, and rent. (86)

Between moments of helplessness other events intervene--times of "breaking out" or "lifting up" into understanding.

However, "before many weeks were over I began to despond again" and "I began ... to examine my former comfort" (91).

Grace Abounding describes a hermeneutic of religious experience--thesis, antithesis, synthesis. The continual trials and doubts, the wrestling with scripture, produce a "sure affirmation" (94). Biblical texts, which before had tormented him with seeming conflict, appeared to "meet" together in his heart (98). "Chains fall" from his legs and a summarizing "scripture" grows in his heart, a scripture not found in the Bible, which says "Thy righteousness is in heaven" (106). This "scripture" represents the central, satisfying truth he has been searching for. This truth is the "Word" in the conscience that energizes his life into active preaching and ministry (125). Both Bunyan's autobiography and The Pilgrim's Progress delineate the experience of the

achievement of ultimate rest by first "crossing over" trial and doubt.

Herman Melville's literary works describe the same mode of advance demonstrated by The Pilgrim's Progress. Melville was a metaphysical explorer who invited his readers to cross over a wide abyss of tormenting experience into another realm, into a millennium of peace and security unavailable to those who remained behind in the "Old World."

Melville's life as a sailor served as raw material useful for creating the symbols necessary to describe such a search. He can rightly be called America's finest author of the sea. After a number of disillusioning events over the first twenty years of his life, he set out on his first sea voyage to Liverpool, England on the ship St. Lawrence in 1839. In early 1841 he left Fairhaven, Massachusetts on a whaling trip. The ship, the Acushnet, arrived in 1842 at a place that was to figure prominently in Melville's early works--the Marquesas Islands. These islands in French Polynesia lie some eight degrees south of the equator and are 4,200 miles west of Lima, Peru, 3,500 miles southwest of San Francisco, and 900 miles northeast of Tahiti. On the little island of Nuku Hiva Melville and friend Toby Green jumped ship and went in search of the Happar tribe. Instead, they found the Typees, a tribe thought to be cannibalistic. Later, he and Toby escaped on the whaling ship Lucy Ann. He joined the American navy in Hawaii in August of 1843, returning to Boston on the United States by October 1844. His next major

sea voyage occurred during an 1856-1857 trip to Palestine, including stops in Rome and Egypt. He also sailed from Massachusetts by clipper ship to San Francisco in 1860.

A list of Melville's major works and their settings demonstrate the influence of the sea and exploration on his imagination: Typee, 1846 (South Sea islands); Omoo, 1847 (South Sea islands); Mardi, 1849 (South Sea islands); Redburn, 1849 (Atlantic voyage to Liverpool); White-Jacket, 1850 (American navy ship); Moby-Dick, 1851 (whaling cruise); Pierre, 1852; Israel Potter, 1855 (American navy ship); Piazza Tales, 1856 (including "Benito Cereno," a story of mutiny, and "The Encantadas or Enchanted Isles," sketches of the Galapagos Islands); The Confidence-Man, 1857, (river steamboat); Battle-Pieces and Aspects of War, 1866; Clarel, 1876 (Palestine); John Marr and Other Sailors, 1888; Timoleon, 1891; Billy Budd, 1891 (English navy ship).

Critics have observed that the sea has a remarkable psychological effect on the human mind. Writing on Moby-Dick, Paul Brodtkorb, Jr. notes that

water-formlessness seduces the mind to blend in with its own fluidity [and] provides relaxation from the rigors of patterned and patterning thought--the mind just drifts; but perhaps because the normal mind eventually will move out of total passivity to some kind of active exploration and direction of its thoughts, the formlessness ... eventually becomes a kind of affront to thought itself, and finally a challenge to mind to exercise its proper powers. (24)

The sea forces the mind to make sense of new thoughts which arise as a result of the sea itself, for as Brodtkorb says,

"formlessness and unpredictable spontaneity can defeat the mind's comprehension" (28). Crossing the sea is symbolic of the process through which human beings travel in order to arrive at new levels of experience and comprehension.

When the voyager in the Old World traveled, his psychological state and set of stabilizing beliefs were strongly affected by the very fact of travel. Again, Brodtkorb remarks, "Earth-bound men engage in water-reveries as they face the sea. Mentally, they move from fixity into a mobile realm of interest. When one of these men goes to sea in actuality, he is giving physical expression to a prior mental motion ... the domain of the stable and the familiar takes on the character of the impenetrable" (34,35). The Puritan removes himself from England because England is frozen in an objectionable spiritual condition, the former condition of the now-concerned Puritan. This is the reason the religious experience of the Puritan is symbolically realized by the travel metaphor. The act of sea travel opens up paths that were not contemplated or thought possible.

William Spengemann, in The Adventurous Muse, discusses the literature of discovery, noting a significant shift in emphasis between 1500 and 1900. At first, writers focused on the "changing world" and later shifted to "the meaning of change itself," "from the world America was changing, to the source of that change; from the world that was growing quantitatively with each new acquisition of territory, to a world that was changing qualitatively with each deeper

penetration into terra incognita." Writers in the Old World watched the world recede before their eyes while writers in the New World observed a change in the very meaning of the world. Thus, Spengemann can make a strong case for the influence of travel writing on American literature--"American travel-writing is organic to the literature in which it grew and which grew out of it" (1). He explains this influence in terms of the multitude of travel materials and documents upon which American writers substantially drew. Literary artists modified these materials to advance "their new view of the world" (2).

According to Spengemann the greatest period of connection between travel literature and formal literature is the era of American Romanticism. He states that American Romanticism "is only accidentally a congeries of conventional subjects and attitudes" (2). (Such as those listed in handbooks of literary terms? Examples might be the emphases listed here: extravagance, the exotic, melancholy, the natural goodness of man, the noble savage, emotions and feelings, the hatred of worldly life, self-dramatization, spontaneity, simplicity, the rustic, nature, the spirit, the sublime, perfectibility, the individual.) Instead, Spengemann says, "[Romanticism] is essentially an acceptance of change--of movement, time, and process--as an ineluctable dimension of reality, and hence the ground upon which reality must be apprehended" (2). He continues, "In a very important sense, the discovery, exploration, and settlement of America created

the world that Romanticism was invented to deal with, the world of change" (2). The America that was being created in the early 1800s could not be understood by the Old World of Europe, which was frozen in its past, but only by Americans themselves who were continually molding it in their own image (2, 3). Spengemann concludes that it is not proper to see American Romanticism as merely imitative of Old World Romanticism, but as a new literature made in the New World (5). Thus, the Puritanism and the Romanticism of the New World are closely linked. Both involved emphases on change and progress. Bercovitch's observation about Mather's Magnalia is accurate. "[Mather] permeates his descriptions of the Atlantic crossing with allusions to baptism which lend allegorical dimension to the contrast between the New World and the Old" ("Cotton Mather" 143).

The first reports back to Europe attempting to describe America in the language of Europe failed to account for the reality. Susan Manning writes, "Since Columbus reported his unexpected discovery to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1492, European observers and settlers have confronted the pristine facts of America with a language already freighted with centuries of tradition and association--European realities" ("Literature and Society in Colonial America" 3).

Manning's point can be extended to the whole of Melville's works: Melville is an American Romantic writer who uses images of the sea, of travel, of discovery, who metaphorically explores "pristine" spiritual places unreached

by most other Americans of his time. Harry Levin in The Power of Blackness writes "that voyages of discovery have served as real or imaginary vehicles for our literature, from John Smith to Ernest Hemingway, [and] that its prevailing movement has been westward" (5). Levin refers to Melville's chapter on "Time and Temples" in Mardi in this connection, a chapter which argues "that architecture represents duration, whereas travel is the measure of space" (5). And further, that rather than being a subversive writer undermining basic American values (as some critics have said), Melville actually writes, as William Carlos Williams has phrased it, in the American grain and is firmly rooted in essential Americanness. This American grain was first exemplified by the American Puritans and by all other Americans who came west.

To overturn the old order, to be subversive, to go west, is to be American. David S. Reynolds clarifies Melville's relationship to the notion of change in Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville. He writes,

A close look at Melville's fiction reveals that his literary development was tied even more closely to popular reform than was Hawthorne's. Because previous critics have wrongly associated antebellum reform with progressivist optimism, Melville's complex fiction has been commonly viewed as a rebellious gesture by a dark writer who, in the words of one critic, intentionally 'subverts the ideology of reform.' To stress Melville's supposed distance from his reform culture, however, is to overlook an important source of his thematic and stylistic breadth. Melville's unique openness to the rhetoric and spirit of a remarkable variety of reform currents enriched his early novels and

contributed greatly to his major literary triumphs.
(136)

The reform movement is part of a mentality which sees beyond current realities into the way things ought to be. Like the Puritans (who pursued through the abyss a vision of the way things ought to be, who decamped with Christ, captain of the host, who migrated from Old Israel (England) to New Israel to create a communal ideal, who in their individual experiences searched for the state of grace), Melville made himself a stranger in a strange land to search for the ideal America, the America of brotherly love and perfected faith so eagerly sought by the Puritans.

If this connection exists between the Puritan's experience and Melville's, then Nathaniel Hawthorne's statement concerning, as T. Walter Herbert, Jr. termed it, Melville's "darker meditations" and "apparent obsessiveness" is true (Moby Dick and Calvinism: A World Dismantled 12).

Hawthorne said,

Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything else that lies beyond human ken, and informed me that he had 'pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated'; but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and, I think, will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. It is strange how he persists--and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before--in wandering to-and-fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand hills amid which we were sitting. (quoted in Herbert 12)

There are two examples of other responses to the ideal that is America. Both involve sea journeys. Each represents competing visions lying to the right and left of the path

blazed by Melville. The first example is that of the already-mentioned Williams in his essay on Christopher Columbus (In The American Grain). The other example is an allegory entitled The Spiritual Voyage, Performed in the Ship Convert, Under the Command of Captain Godly-fear, From the Port of Repentance-unto-life, To the Haven of Felicity on the Continent of Glory. An Allegory. This allegory, published in 1828, was written by a Baptist minister from South Carolina named Edmund Botsford. Williams, Botsford, and Melville each tell a sea story. Melville's story, as represented by the sum of all his stories, tells of his search for the proper America, the America that ought to be. That story is the subject of this dissertation. The other stories represent other traditions, which when compared to Melville's creation, illustrate much about his themes and concerns.

Botsford's allegory is strictly within the Puritan allegorical tradition. It might easily be called a sea-version of The Pilgrim's Progress. As the full title so clearly expresses, the story represents the Christian struggle to reach heaven under the guise of a sea voyage. Each character, as in most simple allegories, has a significant name exemplifying some Christian virtue. There is Mr. Serious-consideration, Mr. True-peace, Mr. Enlightened-mind, Mr. Sincerity, Mr. Careful, Mr. Fortitude, Mr. Hate-sin, etc. God appears as the Emperor of Glory, and Christ as his son, the Lord High Admiral of the Empire. Along the way to the Haven of Felicity the Convert encounters various

spiritual obstacles in the form of storms, rocks, quicksands, and enemy ships.

Only rarely is the allegory as lively as The Pilgrim's Progress, but occasionally certain scenes elicit poignant moments. One such occurs near the island of Impatience. There,

the water was rough, and the ship laboured in a hollow sea, which damaged her hull a good deal. We found this a dangerous place. If we had not had a good pilot, we surely must have been lost. One day as we lay tossing and tumbling in a hollow sea, which threatened destruction to us, who were in such a crazy condition, we saw a fine looking ship run ashore on the island of Presumption, and every soul perished. (102)

This scene accomplishes something Bunyan could not. It represents a spiritual condition difficult to recreate metaphorically apart from the sea. On a voyage to salvation, Christians encounter places "in a hollow sea." The sea is a featureless void to be sure, yet Botsford is able to describe an even more desperately lonely place within the void of the sea--a hollow sea. Botsford makes no comment about it other than to point out the potential destructiveness of such a condition. His characters merely pass through the void. Botsford says, "By the skill of the pilot, the good conduct of our captain and officers, the attention of our men to their duty, and above all, by the blessing of God, we weathered all our dangers, surmounted our difficulties, got into smooth water, and had fine weather, which soon recruited our spirits" (104).

Botsford's allegory is not substantially different from other Puritan expressions of the stages of salvation and the advance of salvation history except in one critical area. There is not the slightest hint that the land of the New World or America has any connection with the pursuit of a blessed rest. There is no longer any suggestion of "Hayle holy-land" as expressed by Thomas Tillam. The place of salvation has receded beyond America to an abstractly conceived "Haven of Felicity." And America plays no part in this goal, it is no longer the half-way Canaan. The allegory is a great leap forward to ultimate rest. It seems clear that for Botsford America itself is now in the position of old England, the old Israel. America has exhausted its potential as a communal, saving society. This is in sharp contrast to works such as Edward Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Savior in New England (1654) and Cotton Mather's Magnalia Christi Americana (1702), both written in epic style to defend the advance of the gospel in America.

In Mather's "A General Introduction" to the Magnalia, he defends the importance of the place of America. "I write the wonders of the Christian religion, flying from the depravations of Europe to the American strand" (Miller The American Puritans 60). Mather praises God because he "hath irradiated an Indian wilderness" (61). He indicates that Protestants have been "driven to seek a place for the exercise of the Protestant religion, according to the light of their consciences, in the deserts of America" (63). The

place of America, formerly a "dark region," is now to be lighted by God's golden candlesticks [symbolic of the presence of God's Spirit] (66).

Botsford's work pointed the mind in a different direction--outward, beyond the social and the physical world. America is not criticized or condemned. It is simply no longer relevant. Williams' book In the American Grain seeks to create another perspective on America. His chapter on Christopher Columbus entitled "The Discovery of the Indies" makes some comments about Columbus's relationship to the Old World and the New World and about the meaning of America. He writes,

The New World, existing in those times beyond the sphere of all things known to history, lay in the fifteenth century as the middle of the desert or the sea lies now and must lie forever, marked with its own dark life which goes on to an immaculate fulfillment in which we have no part. But now, with the maritime successes of that period, the western land could not guard its seclusion longer; a predestined and bitter fruit existing, perversely, before the white flower of its birth, it was laid bare by the miraculous first voyage. For it is as the achievement of a flower, pure, white, waxlike and fragrant, that Columbus' infatuated course must be depicted, especially when compared with the acrid and poisonous apple which was later by him to be proved. (7)

Williams describes two things besmirched by the discovery of America--the land itself, pure and pristine, and Columbus, poisoned by the very prize he was seeking. Columbus's troubles began, Williams says, when after a pleasant westward journey, he turned back toward Spain. He writes, "But as he neared the home coast at last his trials grew worst of all.

Everything hung on the point of being lost" (7). A terrific storm developed and Columbus feared death. Williams notes Columbus's journal, which says, "'but what caused me boundless grief and trouble was the thought that just now when our gainsayers were to be convinced and the discovery of a New World victoriously to be announced, that just now the Divine Will should wish to block it with my destruction.'" He becomes so fearful that he decides to write a note to be placed in a cask and thrown overboard describing "'how I had discovered the lands I had promised to find.'" The entire crew, he felt, "'believed it some act of devotion'" (8). Columbus and his crew do not perish. However, the return to Spain offered him only the pain and conflict of the false accusations and false promises of others. Soon, though, his dreams of the New World return.

Immediately the urge was on him once more. He must return at once to the New World. Never content would he be for the balance of his whole life, following his fortune, whose flower, unknown to him, was past. But now he saw before him the illusive bright future of a great empire founded, coupled with a fabulous conquest of heathendom by the only true church. (9)

Against all such hazards he persevered. "Yet this man, this straw in the play of the elemental giants, must go blindly on. More and more he threw everything he had into the contest, his sons, his brothers, in the hope that his fortunes would be retrieved in the end." The enemies of this quest, understanding his isolation and sacrifice "turned [them] to their own advantage, being closer to that curious

self-interest of natural things than he." At this point Williams comments on the distinctive power of America. It is no longer the desert or wilderness of the Puritans prepared by God for the renewing presence of his people Israel. Instead, in Williams' understanding, America is a natural force blind to the strivings and hopes of men. "Heroically, but pitifully, [Columbus] strove to fasten to himself that enormous world, that presently crushed him among its multiple small disguises. With its archaic smile, America found Columbus its first victim" (10). For Williams, America represents what the whole of Nature offers every brave voyager going against the grain--a bite of bitter fruit (11).

Columbus suffered mightily in his pursuit of a westward passage to the East. He saw his grandiose dreams for his discoveries melt away. During his third voyage he was returned home chained and soon saw a host of others crowd into the business of discovering new worlds. He found that being first to the New World was a mixed blessing. His death came when he was both physically sick (with arthritis) and humiliated and frustrated.

What is most relevant about Columbus's discovery, however, was his justification for the find. The new lands were more than just sources of gold and slaves. He indicated in 1502 to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella that "'neither reason nor mathematics nor maps were any use to me: fully accomplished were the words of Isaiah'" ("Columbus" The New Encyclopaedia Britannica 605). Columbus refers here to Isaiah

11:10-12, a messianic prophecy foretelling that "the Root of Jesse ... will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth." This vision for the future of the newly discovered lands is exactly that of the American Puritans. The New World is the place ordained for the creation of a special society. That place has a threatening, malignant aspect to it in Williams' view. It is a place that encourages dreams because America is new, but crushes dreams because that is the way Nature operates.

Herman Melville is within the American Puritan tradition and outside of the tradition of which Williams writes. He was a metaphysical traveler who kept going westward in an attempt to find the ideal America. Where did he go? What did he find? America means continual growth and search for meaning. This search is not subversive or threatening to basic American values. In fact, subversion, destruction, and growth are her basic tenets. Melville was creating a vision of a millennial America. The America of dreams. The destiny she should have achieved but was in danger of losing. In Melville exist great hopes and dire ends because that is always the risk for any traveler. He searched for what could be achieved in America by Americans, who are the only people who can actually accomplish what Americans imagine is possible. Herman Melville was a Christopher Columbus of another potential America.

Chapter 2

The American Myth

The development of the myth of America began early in the Puritan experiment in the wilderness. Cotton Mather's Magnalia Christi Americana of 1702 celebrated the idea of America rather than the reality of its accomplishment. Bercovitch observes that "beneath the aggressive optimism of their rhetoric, the emigrant ministers convey an unmistakable disquietude. As in the course of the century dream and reality veered farther apart, the orthodoxy came more and more to rely on rhetoric" ("Cotton Mather" 142). Mather wrote, "But whether New-England may Live any where else or no, it must Live in our History!" (Heimert and Delbanco 322). Mather's New England existed only in "the epic world" (Bercovitch "Cotton Mather" 143). Thus, stories of America were to become particularly important as images of what it meant to be an American. Americans were to be a people with a narrative imprinted on their minds. William L. Hedges notes,

Mythologizing had begun early, particularly in New England, thanks to Puritanism's predilection for typological readings of Scripture and history. The Puritan conception of America as the foreordained site of the completion of the Reformation--later of the onset of the millennium--is tied historically to the extravagant American self-image projected in the literature of the Revolution. (192)

Just as every child of ancient Israel was to have the story of the Exodus repeated to him at every passover season, so

too the American child of the future was to know the story of New England's reason for being. A future America could make no sense without the story.

Revolutionaries such as John Adams made clear that America had been settled by God for the emancipation of enslaved mankind. Adams wrote in A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law, "'I always consider the settlement of America ... as the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence for the illumination of the ignorant and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind'" (quoted in Hedges 192). Adams' expression of America's role is couched in the same language as that used by countless Puritan ministers. Thomas Philbrick observes that the idea of Revolutionary America was constructed between the French and Indian Wars of 1763 and the formulation of the Constitution in 1789. "It was as if," he contends, the sermons and tracts of the seventeenth century gave way to the newspaper articles and pamphlets of the eighteenth century in "a secular transformation by which the quest of salvation was translated into the pursuit of liberty." American Revolutionaries "retained something of their predecessors' millennial vision and preoccupation with values larger and more lasting than the interests immediately at risk in a specific political controversy" (139).

The poets of the Revolutionary and Early National period wrote glowingly of America's future in terms of prophecy and millennium. These poets sought to describe a new culture in the making. Although they used the verse forms and diction of

old England, "their aim was ... to convince an outsetting people of the truths of new thought, and thereby to supersede the British tradition through imitating it" (John P. McWilliams, Jr. "Poetry in the Early Republic" 157). McWilliams calls some of the poems of these poets "secular sermons" which were, as he says, to describe the present and map the future. This description and this future were to be based, not on the imaginative power of the poetic mind, but on "images consistent with a universal Reason, itself still dependent, for many, on the scriptural word" (158).

The search for a defining image and myth of America created a need for an expressive mode commensurate with the nature of the subject. Revolutionary poets used the oratorical prophecy subgenre (heroic couplets or blank verse of 200-600 lines). Literary historians have labeled this form the prospect, vision, or rising glory poem. Titles during this period include "Prospect of the Future Glory of America" by John Trumbull (1770), "The Rising Glory of America" by Philip Freneau and Hugh Henry Brackenridge (1771), "The Prospect of Peace" by Joel Barlow (1778), and "A Poem on the Happiness of America" by David Humphreys (1786) (McWilliams 159-160).

Poets of this period attempted to peer into the future in an attempt to establish what America would be. Her possibilities seemed endless. She would create a republican and peaceful empire that would spread west and then to the rest of the world. With her influence would go all of

humanity's beneficial knowledge of farming, manufacturing, religion, business, science, art, and law. Often these poets used the language (directly or allusively) of the millennium to describe this future. Americans were exhorted to retain and act upon the old faith. "Whatever variety of republican empire is anticipated, however, its future is said to be secure as long as its believers will act upon their faith" (McWilliams 160).

The prospect poems anticipated a magnificent American future, yet were insightful in their warnings of possible pitfalls. They saw the coming conflict between reason and revelation, the horrors of slavery, and the battle over women's rights. One poem, Barlow's The Columbiad, contained astonishing predictions of "the Panama Canal, submarines, airplanes, the United Nations, and a universal language, all the while warning the reader that international commerce might finally be man's only deterrent to global war." These great hopes and concerns created a vague sense that the future might be difficult; therefore, the public stance of hope sometimes gave way to private worries about other possibly dark and apocalyptic visions of the future. McWilliams writes that "the American prospect poem was relentlessly futuristic. In its most extreme form, it projected an entire culture upon a void" (161). But the rising glory poets accomplished their visions in the well-used forms of English writers. Francis Scott Key's "The Star Spangled Banner" (1814) and Timothy Dwight's "Columbia,

Columbia, to Glory Arise" (1783) based their melodies on British drinking songs. "They thus provide telling examples of the era's need to pour new wine into old skins" (161).

In a recent article on Timothy Dwight, Peter K. Kafer points out the source of much of the language used by the rising glory poets. Kafer states that Dwight searched for a poetic voice, finding it in a mixture of his grandfather Jonathan Edward's millennialism, God, and American chauvinism. Kafer identifies other revolutionary poets as using specifically millennial language. Two poets, Freneau and Brackenridge, authors of "The Rising Glory of America" modeled the poem, according to Kafer, after George Berkeley's well-known paean to the westward movement of civilization, "Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America" (Kafer 197).

This Enlightenment poem indicates that the Muse is disgusted with the state of learning in the Old World and "In distant lands now waits a better Time." These "happy Climes" are "Where Nature guides and Virtue rules." There the "Pedantry of Courts and Schools" will be replaced with "Truth." Another "golden Age" awaits in America. Probably referring to the four empires of the biblical book of Daniel (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome), Berkeley indicates that "A fifth shall close the Drama with the Day." This sweep of history has direction. "Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way." Berkeley's future is purely positive and upward, not apocalyptic. The last empire will be "Time's

noblest Offspring" (1521). Such an "idea of progress has itself exercised an enormous influence over men's lives. For two centuries it has served both as the most widely accepted model of historical development and as the justifying secular faith of the North American peoples" (George Dekker 73). In America of the eighteenth century, then, millennialism, though considerably secularized, was a hopeful doctrine closely related to the Enlightenment vision of the future.

The myth of America was a creation of the poets of the eighteenth century. Hedges indicates that, "By 1800 many Americans were anxious about their literature." There was a deep desire for more than merely religious and political books. Some Americans wished to see more substantial works equivalent to those of England and Europe. The nationalistic poets yearned for a national epic that would encompass the America they had envisioned. Hedges writes,

Peering into America's utopian or millennial future, the nationalistic poets invariably predicted the coming of American Homers, Virgils, and Miltons. They wanted a literature commensurate with the civic eminence of the emerging republic. They conceived of the epic as what it had often been for readers in earlier societies, a monumental poetic embodiment of a nation's ethos and sense of destiny. (188)

McWilliams indicates in The American Epic that the coming of the future writers of epic was all part of the Revolutionary poets' belief in the westward movement of heroic culture, from Greece to Latium to England and then to America (16). The only problem with their goal was the conflict, Hedges writes, "between their commitment to freedom and their

tendency to accept many of the artificialities of style and form sanctified by the aristocratic taste of the past" (188).

Developing myth-makers in America were stymied by the need to create a specifically American, non-aristocratic epic. Hedges points out the kind of mythology of America which came about. He writes, "In some texts the mythology revealed itself in a blend of metaphors that evoked both the Whig story of the perils of Anglo-American liberty and the Christian story of reformed religion's exodus from the Old World in search of a promised land." The language of political freedom and individual salvation were united. "Sermons formulated as jeremiads exhorted God's people simultaneously to resist parliamentary encroachment and to renew themselves in virtue. Corruption--in biblical terms, enslavement to sin and Satan--in any form, in any situation, loomed as a threat to liberty" (194). The future writer of epic had among his qualifications the ability "to perceive in the Republic's recent past the seeds of future glory" (McWilliams The American Epic 16). Since the revolutionary experience was so closely tied to the Puritan past through biblical language, it is reasonable to assume that the American epic of the future would incorporate Puritan and biblical language as well. As indicated by Dekker, the history of the development of the historical romance shows that Hawthorne and Melville sought to change the genre's historic "center of action and moral interest" toward the human interior (28).

Thus, the American Romance novel developed as a response to the search for a workable, Puritan American literary form which incorporated Puritan fascination with the progress of the soul. In the form of the Romance, American writers of the nineteenth century, including Melville, attempted to create the epic of Puritan America. Seen in the context of the Puritan spiritual concerns, the jeremiad, the language of exhortation, in the context of the Early National poets, and in the context of the blending of secular and sacred concerns, the appearance of the Romance as the prime American literary form is no surprise. Preliminary to his discussion in The American Epic, McWilliams quotes from George Lukacs' The Theory of the Novel. Lukacs observes that the novel and the epic are the "'two major forms of great epic literature'" and that only "'historico-philosophical realities'" determine which form is used. "'The novel,'" Lukacs says, "'is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality'" (1). Melville and others "deliberately assimilated the spirit and conventions of the epic poem within the prose romance." This process began among the poets of the Early National period, who though imitative, were actually transforming the "generic" forms into something "newer" and "more open" (2).

McWilliams discusses the debate between two critics of the epic genre, George Lukacs and Mikhail Bakhtin (author of



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"Epic and Novel" [1940]). Both of these critics agreed that true epic summarizes and makes immanent a set of cultural values. Each saw that epic poems no longer hold literary preeminence, and that they were being replaced by the novelistic form. "They also," McWilliams writes, "associated the novel with a godless world, a subjectivity of authorial vision, an openness of form, and a mixing of linguistic levels, all of which worked against the unifying affirmations of traditional epic literature." The two critics disagreed about the possibilities of epic in the novelistic form. Lukacs argued that any hero who could perceive, in McWilliams' words, "immanent meaning in a world abandoned by God" is necessarily heroic. Bakhtin, however, said that the epic form was rigidly concerned with "'fathers, beginnings, and peak times'" (5). Novels are ironic and open and thus cannot be turned into the closed and unitary world of the epic poem. Epic can only exist in a world of absolutes. However, in a world devoid of those values "everything becomes potentially absurd" (McWilliams' words). McWilliams indicates that he accepts the idea "that, once prose became the dominant literary medium, no poem could any longer do the cultural work ... required of the epic" (6).

Using the Romance form, Melville sought to reestablish a set of distinctly American values in an America searching for a set of values useful for making its way in a new world of rapidly changing social, religious, and intellectual climates. The novel in America came about at a time when

American poets were still creating the myth of America. Cathy Davidson writes in Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America, "For all practical purposes, there were no indigenous novels before the American Revolution. What we have is a genre emerging within a culture precisely as that culture attempts to define itself" (viii). According to McWilliams, Melville straightforwardly wished to create "the new American epic" of universal proportions. Critics of his time lamented the lack of such an epic, complaining that in a country dominated by the railroad, canals, balloons, stump speeches, circuses, wealth, commercialism, and skepticism, that the heroic was dead (The American Epic 187, 188). In response to this need for a national epic, Melville "associated any new American epic with a willfully improvisational genre allowing for high national feeling, praise for commercial and democratic values, a brooding sense of life's hellish mystery, and a heroic openness to all possible meanings" (The American Epic 192). In short, he helped to create the American Romantic epic.

The development of the nineteenth-century American Romance cannot be detached from America's Puritan past. M. H. Abrams suggests such a connection in Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature. The use of Biblical themes by secular and pagan writers began in earliest Christianity, increased during the Renaissance, reaching an apex during the era of Romanticism, he writes. The rationalism and decorum of the eighteenth century gave

way to a return to the fundamental images of Christian doctrine and life such as "destruction and creation, hell and heaven, exile and reunion, death and rebirth, dejection and joy, paradise lost and paradise regained." Romanticism sought to recast Christian doctrine and soteriology into forms "intellectually acceptable, as well as emotionally pertinent, for the time being." This process secularized Christian expression without really destroying it. The Romantics found this impossible to do. Western culture was simply too "Divine." Abrams discusses the major Romantics (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Carlyle), noting how each struggled to create a secular philosophical system based on Christian mythology, and that "the general tendency was ... to naturalize the supernatural and to humanize the divine." Thus, Romanticism can be called "a displaced and reconstituted theology, or else a secularized form of devotional experience ... because we still live in what is essentially ... a Biblical culture [with] hereditary ways of organizing experience." Some have seen this attempt as a failure to properly face reality, while others see the Romantic achievement as a brave struggle "to sustain the inherited cultural order against what to many writers seemed the imminence of chaos" (65-68). An American Romantic author such as Melville demonstrated such a secularizing tendency as well.

Spengemann sees modern symbolism as the end of a line stretching from Puritanism. According to Spengemann, Puritans

tended to divorce expression from truth. Truth was something rooted in Scripture which could be taken out and dressed up in the language of men. However, they saw that truth could not exist abstractly. Experience must accompany the growth of truth in the life. Experimental faith validated the truths of the Bible (199). The Puritan existed in a world (as delineated by the Bible) of struggle and conflict between the irreconcilable forces of good and evil, darkness and light, alienation and incarnation, order and disorder (Richard Chase 11). But as dogma relaxed and the power of scientific authority grew during the eighteenth century, it became more difficult to root oneself in godly absolutes. Expression was to be tied to revealing the laws of nature. The focus gradually shifted from the mind of God to the shifting sands of the human mind. Modern literary symbolism, therefore, is a movement which began with the belief "that literary form reveals the truth and [culminates] in the idea that literary form is the truth." This is the reason, Spengemann indicates, that Robert Frost saw literary expression as "'a momentary stay against confusion.'" The truth would change with its expression (198, 199).

A statement by F. D. Reeve makes sense in this context. He writes that the American Romantics "were not muckrakers exposing practical corruption but moralists pointing out the irresolvable contradictions of a modern life ill-adapted to traditional values. Even as they believed in and supported those values, they understood that modern life made such

values inadequate" (10). American Romantics did not seek to overthrow belief but attempted "to eliminate arbitrary discrepancies and partial beliefs" (11). So, as Spengemann notes in the following passage, Romanticism was really a search for absolutes in a world of collapsing absolutes.

But Romantics like Melville found the transcendent reason as unreliable as divinely revealed Scripture or consensually validated nature. Emerson and his Enlightenment forebears had lived on the capital of absolutist belief amassed by Christian tradition without ever feeling the need to replenish it. By the time writers like Hawthorne and Melville came to take their share, there was practically nothing left. To get along, they had three alternatives. They could keep up appearances, as Hawthorne tried to do by professing liberal Christian ideals which he only half believed. Or they could try to restore the squandered capital by returning to long-abandoned forms of orthodoxy--a tactic employed by the many Romantics, including Hawthorne, who toyed with Catholicism. Or they could live hand to mouth, as it were, on the hard-won daily earnings of their art, trying to generate enough meaning from each artistic effort to justify it and to tide them over to the next one.

The immediate result of the loss of absolutes was confusion--a mingled sense of liberation and purposelessness. In time, American writers would either discover in symbolism new possibilities of form and expression or else find new systems of authorized belief to satisfy their need for the absolute--in the ideas of Spencer, Freud, and Marx. In the meantime, writers like Melville, who could neither accept traditional forms of belief any longer nor see clearly a way to operate without them, would revise old literary forms and devise new ones in a continuing attempt to satisfy both their disbelief and their need to believe.
(200, 201)

This discussion accounts for Chase's ideas as expressed in The American Novel and Its Tradition. He indicates that "American fiction has been shaped by the contradictions and not by the unities and harmonies of our culture." American

fiction has been content to rest in "polarities, opposites, and irreconcilables" (1). "These qualities constitute the uniqueness of that branch of novelistic tradition which has flourished in this country. They help to account for the strong element of 'romance' in the American 'novel.'" The English novel takes the strange, the odd, the unusual and incorporates it all into a great central vision of sanity and normalcy. Disorder is almost entirely absent from the English novel. The American novel "has been stirred ... by the aesthetic possibilities of radical forms of alienation, contradiction, and disorder" (1, 2). This concern indicates a tendency "to explore, rather than to appropriate and civilize" and "to discover a new place and a new state of mind." Thus, "The American novel is more profound and clairvoyant than the English novel ... and it tends to carve out of experience brilliant, highly wrought fragments rather than massive unities" (5).

W. H. Auden's insight is perceptive when he points out that the classical hero never looked with disdain on his culture and became tragic only out of an excess of pride, while the Romantic hero was heroic because "he comes of neurotic stock" (96). It is in disorder where arise the possibilities of movement into a new place or state of mind. The novels of Herman Melville contain stories of Romantic heroes and wanderers who attempt to extract from disorder a an order representing secure rest.

Melville's works were written in the language of exhortation, warning Americans of their tenuous spiritual condition and urging them on to the achievement of the real destiny of America as the city on a hill. Taken together, Melville's works summarize a new "myth of America," a culturally defining story of the need and desire for a new myth of America, and a description of the path to this future America. Bercovitch points out that the language of exhortation has been with America since Puritan preachers of the seventeenth century alerted New Englanders to their situation of crisis and outlined a plan for revitalization. "The legacy of this ritual mode may be traced through virtually every major event in the culture, from the Great Awakening through the Revolution and the westward movement to the Civil War ... [and to] the Star Wars of our latter days" ("The Puritan Vision of the New World" 41). The sea and the language of discovery was the vehicle Herman Melville used to further the American Puritan tradition of exhortation. The exhortations found in his writings encapsulated Melville's conception of where America ought to be and what it should have become. Through an accident of time, his exhortations were structured in the form of Romance, mythology, and quest.

A recent book written by Bruce L. Grenberg substantiates the presence of the notion of quest in the works of Herman Melville. In Some Other World to Find: Quest and Negation in the Works of Herman Melville, Grenberg argues that "Melville's first six novels ... are all built around quests

... [and] are intimately related in that taken all together they represent the goals of Enlightenment man and Romantic man. [Each main character] seeks completion: the idea of an ordered plenary universe, or of a universe that can be ordered and mastered by mind and will, is an assumption shared by the protagonists of all six novels" (3). The title of Grenberg's book is taken from Melville's poem Clarel; the selection is worth quoting here.

This world clean fails me: still I yearn.
 Me then it surely does concern
 Some other world to find. But where?
 In creed? I do not find it there.
 That said, and is the emprise o'er?
 Negation, is there nothing more?
 This side the dark and hollow bound
 Lies there no unexplored rich ground?
Some other world: well, there's the New--
 Ah, joyless and ironic too! (40)

Images of quest and exploration are replete in this selection. The "other world" is a metaphor for a state of mind or a metaphysical place or spiritual experience the poet yearns to find. In his experience thus far, creed alone has not satisfied his desire. Neither, however, is he satisfied with simple negation, or complete loss of purpose and meaning. Somewhere, on this side of our world ("the dark and hollow bound") and not beyond in some foreign, unearthly place, lies an "unexplored rich ground." That rich ground is the real "New World" for which he searches. The search and exploration will take place on the sea, and as long as the search continues the poet is at sea. When the poet arrives at the desired place, he will have achieved landedness, he will

have found his other world. Landedness is Melville's quest. The story of the quest is the American epic. The fact that there must be such a quest is the American myth.

Levin (The Power of Blackness) and Brodtkorb (Ishmael's White World), generalize that "It is the business of fiction to explore what might have been, what may be, what is not" (Levin 5), and that

Man moves forward in time toward his own possibilities. The flow of time is his ground; or, rather, he is time, and the way he incarnates it sums him up: what he was, is, and will be. To understand time would be to understand earthly Being, which is becoming; to understand one's own time would be to understand oneself. (Brodtkorb 97)

The business of going forward is, as we have seen, imperative to American literature (particularly the American Romance). Setting and landscape can take on increased importance in such literature. Pamela Schirmeister, in The Consolations of Space: The Place of Romance in Hawthorne, Melville, and James, writes that "landscape is, by nature, visionary, so that its details necessarily constitute a trope of perspective. It is the space that the writer creates, and in which he or she stands to see things better, to see them under the particular lights and shadows that make romance possible" (3, 4). Schirmeister argues that romance finds its center, its place, in the landscape of the mind, so that literal place in romance is merely a trope for a mental perspective (4). Auden, in The Enchafed Flood: or the Romantic Iconography, writes that all myth begins in chaotic seas. He writes,

The sea or the great waters ... are the symbol for the primordial undifferentiated flux, the substance which became created nature only by having form imposed upon or wedded to it. The sea, in fact, is that state of barbaric vagueness and disorder out of which civilization has emerged and into which, unless saved by the effort of gods and men, it is always liable to relapse. It is so little of a friendly symbol that the first thing which the author of the Book of Revelation notices in his vision of the new heaven and earth at the end of time is that 'there was no more sea.' (18, 19)

Both Auden and Schirmeister consider the sea to be critically important to Melville. Schirmeister calls it, among other kinds of landscape, an "obsessive concern" (4), while Auden uses Melville's White Jacket to illustrate his listing of four "new notes in the Romantic attitude" toward the sea. Auden describes how the Romantics used the symbol of the sea.

- (1) To leave the land and the city is the desire of every man of sensibility and honour.
- (2) The sea is the real situation and the voyage is the true condition of man.
- (3) The sea is where the decisive events, the moments of eternal choice, of temptation, fall and redemption occur. The shore life is always trivial.
- (4) An abiding destination is unknown even if it may exist: a lasting relationship is not possible nor even to be desired. (23)

Thus, Auden can say that "The ship, then, is only used as a metaphor for society in danger from within or without" (19).

Melville's fiction of the sea, then, is only another in a long series of messages of exhortation sent to the American people. Emory Elliott writes that "the classic American writers created literary works that internalized, quarreled with, but invariably preserved the values, myths, and beliefs

that constituted an American ideological consensus" (337). Melville did not reject American values, he simply showed Americans "prospect." Here you are now, he says, and here is where you should or could be. The hill upon which they stood was composed of the essential American story and defining idioms. These notions include, according to Elliott, "liberty, equality, freedom, geographic expansion, and manifest destiny" (338).

The language of prospect does not signal a rejection of the past. This means that even though the language of essential Americanness was firmly established and then generally applauded by American writers from the beginning, the idea of the newness of the American experiment remains. R. W. B. Lewis discusses this in The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century. He writes that "the American myth saw life and history as just beginning ... in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World. It introduced a new kind of hero, the heroic embodiment of a new set of ideal human attributes." This hero was free of all that had plagued men and women in the Old World. The new American hero was freed of the ties of family, culture, and history. Such a hero is most easily identified with the first man, Adam. In the eyes of a Christian culture, Adam possessed moral superiority and innocence, as well as power over nature

and language. He was the namer of things new, making of himself a type of the original creator (5).

Thus, Melville can use the language of Americanness while at the same time exploring the very roots of experience itself. He remains very American in this process. It is not surprising that a critic such as H. Bruce Franklin, in The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology, expresses seemingly subversive intentions to be found in Melville. Franklin writes that "Melville's major works, taken together, provide a coherent and extremely valuable exploration of myth [including Christian myth]" (203). This concern of Melville's does not have to be taken as opposed to or different from the American Puritans. Franklin errs in thinking that Melville explores the world's myths and then strips them "of their dangerous mythic trappings," leaving "the safety of a nonmythic religion of the heart" (204). Such an exploration of myth remains well within the American tradition. It can be demonstrated that in Melville's Mardi the "religion of the heart" is firmly Christian.

Michael Davitt Bell's concern with the "revolutionary" attitudes in Melville is understandable. He writes, "Melville proclaimed clearly and fully what most of his predecessors only intermittently hinted at: that the unleashing of these lurking energies [in various 'wretches' found among Melville's characters] was the essence at once of romance and of revolution." It is not surprising that Bell writes of the "revolutionary promptings" in Melville. Bell indicates that

"Melville surveyed a culture whose surface had come to seem to him as duplicitous and arabesque as the rhetorical surface of romance" and was "fast approaching a crisis over capitalist exploitation and chattel slavery. Melville's fiction ... is filled with images of abuse and corruption of political authority" (198, 199). Exploration of what America had become and what it should be was Melville's chief object. But such concern is no more "revolutionary" than Cotton Mather's concern for what was to happen to the idea of New England or than John Winthrop's worries over what would happen to the Puritan sense of the double covenant between a man and God, and a man and his brother.

The American Romantic genre was the perfect form for Melville's purposes. Chase argues that the Romance is actually poetic and epic rather than novelistic. The novel grasps for comprehensive detail, relationship, and intricate character development. The Romance creates mystery of character and symbolism and is much more likely to mimic myth and allegory.

It does not confine itself to what is known, or even what is probable. It grasps at the possible; and, placing a human agent in hitherto untried situations, it exercises its ingenuity in extricating him from them, while describing his feelings and his fortunes in the process. (12-17)

Melville wished to continue telling the American story. But the American story was difficult to tell because it had yet to be lived to its full potential. American history and American writers of the past were replete with the

possibilities of America but not with a strong sense of accomplishment. America was about starting over, about beginning again, about re-creation, about finding the new. The truly American genre had to incorporate this reality. This is the reason Spengemann closely connects the literature of exploration with the American Romantic novel. He demonstrates that inherent in the American experience are the seeds of its own destruction. Exploration values individual pursuit and assumes that such a pursuit goes in the same direction as other pursuits. There was one truth and all paths led to that truth. However, American Romantic novelists found that this was not the case. Individualism destroyed all absolutes. "Free to pursue his self-will, the individual ends either in mad demagoguery, which destroys society, or in paralyzing nihilism, which destroys the individual himself" (211). Melville continued the search for the "how" of the American story. How could the original plan, the original hopes and possibilities of America be enacted in the nineteenth century? The "how" could be best explored and explained in the Romance novel. Perry Miller, in "The Shaping of the American Character" (Nature's Nation), writes that Americans have been seeking an identity since the early nineteenth century. "The reason for this national anxiety is that being an American is not something to be inherited so much as something to be achieved" (3). Since the American Revolution Americans have shown a profound desire "to live

from a blueprint" (4). That blueprint can be found in the writings of Herman Melville, the great romancer of the sea.

Chapter 3

The Blank Horizon

The central tenets of Puritanism relate directly to an interpretation of the writings of Herman Melville. The most useful and comprehensive source for a survey of Puritan belief is Perry Miller's monumental work, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century. In this scholarly masterpiece Miller describes Puritanism as a vigorous religious piety with strong connections to the spirituality of St. Augustine, and centrally concerned with a serious human predicament.

In the Puritan understanding, all of human life depended upon mankind's bending to a knowable truth controlling the entire universe. Puritans confronted this truth without fear, no matter what its implications. When a man found himself in conformity to this truth, he experienced an ecstatic sight of wholeness and righteousness. God was himself the ultimate meaning of everything and the source of righteousness. Anything out of harmony with God was sin. The vision of the difference between God and sin was a sought-after illumination. Reprobation was, Miller said, the failure to live within the illumination. Unregenerate man needs desperately to get beyond himself since he is alone and unimportant and knows nothing of the qualities of God.

Miller observed that Puritan piety "finds the infinite variety of the world's misery reducible to a concrete

problem, the relation of the individual to the One" (8). Regeneration was the one great hope of mankind, through which the great separation between an infinite God and man could be bridged. Men could be brought around to God's vision of things. From man's point of view nothing occurred by chance in a world controlled by God, neither death nor accident nor divine intervention. This strong sense of God's controlling will led to the doctrine of predestination, which in Puritan eyes seemed perfectly understandable, since in no other way could they explain why one person had faith and another did not.

Biblical authority was the pedestal upon which Puritanism rested. As Miller writes, "without a Bible, this piety would have confronted chaos" (19). A Puritan could never turn to reason, the church, immediate inspiration, science, philosophy, or innate ideas as the source of truth since each of these means of learning was seriously flawed in some way. There always remained for the Puritan a gap "between the revealed will and the secret will" (21). No system of thought could close this fissure.

Puritans explained the natural world in symbolic terms. Nature, they believed, told the story of the spirit. To explain the natural world was merely to uncover the patterns left there by God. Susan Manning speaks to this Puritan habit of thought and argues persuasively for the Puritan foundation for American literature. In The puritan-provincial vision: Scottish and American literature in the nineteenth century

she discusses two of the similarities between Puritans and American Romantics. First, she notes that when given a choice between the world and the spirit, the spirit always won out. In this context she quotes from Ralph Waldo Emerson's Nature - "'The sensual man conforms thoughts to things; the poet conforms things to his thoughts'" (66). Second, she states that Puritans found "uninterpreted signs" threatening since the spiritual was more real than the natural and thus important to dominate and control. She observes that Melville thought, as did Thomas Carlyle, that only the elect (the Heroes) could pierce behind the mask into the hidden reality of the spirit (66). This point helps explain much in Melville and shows his debt to Puritan thought.

Early in Puritan history this kind of thinking led to some famous and typical examples. Cotton Mather, while urinating, witnessed a dog doing the same and lamented the fact that man and beast were not so terribly different. (At least one literary historian says Mather was clearly insane.) In another instance, John Winthrop read the entrance of a snake into the synod at Cambridge as an attempt by the devil himself to enter into Christ's church in New England, only to be crushed on the head just as the seed (Christ) of the woman (Eve) had promised. Charles Feidelson, Jr. describes this method as "[uniting] the objectivity of history with the meaningfulness of Scripture" (78). In Symbolism and American Literature Feidelson says that Puritans read life as a story both human and divine, so that "every passage of life,

enmeshed in the vast context of God's plan, possessed a delegated meaning" (79). This sort of reading of signs is closely related to the typological method used by Puritans to interpret the Bible. Typology, originally used by the apostle Paul, read the Old Testament as a type or pattern of the New Testament, whereby Old Testament stories foreshadowed events of the New Testament. Ursula Brumm, in American Thought and Religious Typology, indicates that typology is "another kind of symbolism" (18). She argues, however, that Puritans were not true symbolists since they were hostile to "any symbolic representations of religious doctrine" (15).

As Miller indicates in The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century, Puritans were terribly anxious and hungry for spiritual fullness. Without the touch of God's regenerating power life itself was a dead thing for them. Regeneration was the giving by God of life itself, the establishment of humanity in the same way that Adam was brought to life by the power of God. While an anxious people, Miller notes, Puritans did not view life tragically. They faced the realities of existence with an admirable strength and were ultimately hopeful and optimistic. That which doomed Puritanism, at last, was the failure to distinguish between mere morality and the truly regenerated heart. By the beginning of the eighteenth century Puritans were beginning to give a wide latitude to the possibilities of morality as a kind of guide to regeneration. A growing thought emerged that men were not to be left with the mistaken impression that

they might be morally irresponsible and still claim justification by faith. The growth of this new concern with the obedient, as opposed to the pious life, doomed the spiritual power of Puritanism. This new pharisaism is one of Miller's central insights into Puritanism.

In connection with the larger concerns of American history, the most influential belief of the American Puritans was the notion of the covenant. Puritan ministers and their committed followers came to America to establish the New Israel of God. They were to be, as Winthrop put it, a city on a hill, proclaiming to the world the power and might of Jehovah lived out in the lives of a regenerated people. Miller suggests that the covenant was actually a convenient method of advocating the production of works by the covenant people, to let them know that predestined or not, their own activities were the determining factor in the successful outcome of the covenant.

Miller (The New England Mind: From Colony to Province) shows that in the 1670's there emerged a special kind of sermon, since that time designated the "jeremiad," which called on Puritans to persevere in their special relationship with God. That relationship was threatened by various sins and backslidings among the people, horrors which were punished by God in the form of wars, storms, and disasters. Miller records a catalogue of sins especially noted by ministers attempting to warn the people, sins such as pride, contention, disrespect, extravagance, heresy, swearing,

sleeping during sermons, Sabbath-breaking, family discipline, anger, sexual sins, abuse of alcohol, lying, worldliness, deadness of spirit, mercantile spirit, and cheating (34-37). The difficulty with the covenant, and the jeremiads that accompanied it, was the critical problem of external morality. Puritans could fall into the trap of works as a means to acceptance before God (104).

Closely related to the covenant theology and the doctrine of predestination is the fact that Puritans were committed millennialists. Ernest Lee Tuveson writes, "Millennialism applies predestination to historical as well as personal salvation" (51). The term millennium comes from the Apocalypse of John, better known as the Book of Revelation. John writes of a spiritual battle that will be followed by a thousand-year period of saintly reign, followed by the destruction of Satan and sinners. There are two phases of the righteous kingdom of God: (1) the kingdom of God in the heart, advocated by the New Testament book of Mark, and (2) the future kingdom of glory. The kingdom of glory was to be brought on by the gradual development of the first kingdom as human hearts were transformed by righteousness. Miller comments in From Colony to Province that at the beginning of the eighteenth century men were "hailing the dawn of the century as an era in which piety, and piety alone, would accomplish the tendency of our spirits to reunion with God, [and] would attain the goal to which the Reformation had aspired but been unable to reach" (408). Millennialism, also

known as millenarianism (a point indicated by the Encyclopedia of Religion but disputed by Tuveson), is generally defined as

the belief that the end of this world is at hand and that in its wake will appear a New World, inexhaustibly fertile, harmonious, sanctified, and just. The more exclusive the concern with the End itself, the more such belief shades off toward the catastrophic; the more exclusive the concern with the New World, the nearer it approaches the utopian. ("Millenarianism" Encyclopedia of Religion 521)

H. Richard Niebuhr comments that Puritans "could not be utopians" since they assumed that the problem with society was the individual and not his institutions (49). However, James Holstun (A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America) argues that Puritans were utopians since they advocated "new corporate entities built according to a new organizational detail from the bottom up, as opposed to the monarchical body politic unified from the head down." Individuals are not ungovernable monsters, but the "raw material of utopia" (93). The Christian commonwealth could be achieved. The barren ground could be made to bear fruit (106).

Bercovitch's interpretation of the argument between Roger Williams and John Cotton over typology can be used to support the notion of Puritanism's utopianism (in "Typology in Puritan New England: The Williams-Cotton Controversy Reassessed"). "[Cotton]," Bercovitch writes, "refuses to abandon the literal parallel between the biblical chosen people and the children of Israel in New England. Williams

... maintains that the events and laws of Israel, having found completion in the New Testament, were without exception purely moral and ceremonial, and thus, in their entirety, 'dead' for all practical purposes" (173, 174). Cotton, as opposed to Williams, thought that a parallel existed between the civil state of ancient Israel and the experiment in New England (174). Israel and New England were part of a continuous historical development. Israel prefigured New England, and New England prefigured the New Jerusalem (176). Bercovitch points out the spiritual reach exhibited by Puritans, "The New England theocrats attempted to join seemingly incompatible doctrines: the national covenant, by which a group of men enter voluntarily into a pact with God, and the covenant of grace, by which God mysteriously determines to redeem certain individuals" (181).

Millennialism (or millenarianism) is divided into three types. (1) Post-millennialism, the position of the Puritans (except for the Mathers and Jonathan Edwards), holds that Christ will come after the millennium. Post-millennialists see little struggle between this world and the next and tend to be reformers. (2) Premillennialism advocates a more radical position in the sense of waiting for the advent of Christ before the millennium. Premillennialists believe that the next world will come about as a result of some awesome cataclysm. (3) Amillennialism (a view advocated by St. Augustine) suggests that the millennium merely symbolizes the church age.

Millennialists are careful observers of time and events. They are often confronted with questions about what their proper reaction to events should be. They ask, Should we abide and do nothing? Should we flee? Should we build another society? Should we fight evil? What are the signs? Is there time left? Where do we fit in the scheme? What is our role? Rarely do millennialists merely abide. To the uninitiated the mathematics of millennialists is strange. Numbers take on symbolic meanings which often signal wholeness and completeness.

One of the best sources on millennialism in America is Tuveson's book Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role. Tuveson explains that Protestants understood the idea of the millennium very literally. They did not view millennium through St. Augustine's allegorical eyes. The City of Man could be made into the City of God: "militant action against the remaining wrongs had now a great promise of success" (19). Evils such as superstition and injustice, which were inherent in the city of man, could be ameliorated and overcome in the light of the Reformation itself. The spiritual reawakening of the Reformation cast a wider and wider net into all areas of human life. We might, Tuveson says, misunderstand the source for such social concern, thinking that the Enlightenment was at the source, "rather than ... traditional religious doctrine." Even so rationalistic and revolutionary an individual as John Adams found "the source of the usurpation of human rights [in] the

perversion of true religion" (21). America was viewed as the continuation of the Reformation and Americans as a holy and millennial people (24-25). Tuveson defines "millennialist" as a person who believes "that history, under divine guidance, will bring about the triumph of Christian principles, and that a holy utopia will come into being" (34).

What Melville wanted for America as indicated in his novels and short stories would not have surprised his Puritan ancestors. As Delbanco has demonstrated, Puritans were fundamentally conservative and absolutist (and thus primitivist as one critic has noted) and only sought for a new sight of old light in contradistinction to someone like the Anglican Richard Hooker who advocated undecidability and relativism. According to Delbanco, Hooker thought men were free to use reason to decide best what was right for any historical period (30, 31). The Puritans, however, saw no alternative to TRUTH and could never accept an indeterminate universe (32). This is why Feidelson can say, "Puritan rationalism, unlike the scientific world view that supplanted it and to which it is in some ways cognate, predicated an indivisible unity of thought, word, and thing" (92). The American Puritans set for themselves a considerable goal: the living actualization of their doctrinal truths. They felt strongly, as Sargent Bush, Jr. suggests, that America was to be the place "where scriptural prophecy and history would at last be harmonized" (63). Melville sought to delineate the

pathway to the harmonious unity of ideals and practice within society in a way consistent with American Puritanism.

The influence of Puritanism on American life is incalculable. That it is central has only recently been doubted. Ralph Waldo Emerson, as well as other prominent nineteenth-century Americans including Melville, advocated a similar love of the primitive and original elements they saw in Puritanism. According to Lawrence Buell in New England Literary Culture, the Puritan settlement of New England represented for Emerson "the sense of the pristine." The whole notion of Emerson's "original relation" demands not becoming captured by the future, but having a clear sight of the pious Puritan past (202, 203). Buell notes that in the nineteenth century such advocacy of the Puritan past could be found across the political spectrum, from Whig to Democrat (199). Buell observes that Americans tended to view their history as a progressive unfolding of an original Puritan idea (201). Thus, "American values became to a large extent a nationalized version of what was once the ideology of the tribe that had become dominant in the New England region" (196). Since the New England region steadily lost power and influence between 1776 and 1860, New Englanders consoled themselves with the notion that all Americans were symbolic Puritans (207).

Some contemporary historians such as Jon Butler contend that the critical religious influence in America was not Puritanism but, as Butler writes,

the post-1680 Anglican renaissance, the renewal of Christian denominational authority, the effects of the African spiritual holocaust, the further development of authority and power in the Christian denominations after the Revolution, and the development of highly volatile antebellum mixtures of popular supernatural views.... (291)

This eclectic view diverges sharply from Miller's position. He argued for the central importance of Puritan spirituality in American life. Miller stated in Nature's Nation that the Puritans "left so deep an impress on the country, that the Puritan definition of purpose has been in effect appropriated by immigrants of other faiths, by those who in the nineteenth century left lands of a culture utterly different from the English." Miller notes the special importance of Winthrop and his sermon "A Modell of Christian Charity," stating that "Winthrop stands at the beginning of our consciousness" (emphasis supplied) (6).

Larzer Ziff agrees. In Literary Democracy: The Declaration of Cultural Independence in America, he points out that while Puritanism was essentially a social response to a developing need to solve everyday problems found in England (see preface x), he later posits the otherworldly example of Jonathan Edwards, who he says, "was concerned with attaching his readers not to an American reality, but to a vital eternal reality. The meaning of history was to be felt by them in their psychic makeup rather than in their connection with social institutions" (304). Ziff notes that Emerson continued in the path of Edwards, seeking a more

spiritual and miraculous world to replace the materialistic one of his time. "Thus does Emerson modernize the Puritan view, revivified before him by Edwards, and fit it to romanticism as Edwards did to sentiment" (305). Ziff broadens the Puritan influence on Hawthorne and Melville, suggesting that both Hawthorne and Melville are investigators of the psyche in the context of "the workings of a divine plan" (305).

Ziff makes the Puritan connection even more explicit in his discussion of Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin, who he says, represent two branches of the same Puritan river--Edwards the pious and Franklin the moral. Ziff writes,

The relationship between piety and morality had shifted in the wake of the old charter's death and the advent of mercantile dominance. A man's outward behavior came in New England to have a communal importance at least as great as his inward spiritual condition Morality, in being increasingly accepted as the equivalent of piety, was converting the provincial from Puritan to Yankee. (307)

The scholarly focus on the important comparisons and contrasts between Edwards and Franklin (see Miller's discussion on the relationship between Edwards and Franklin) points to the larger secularization of Puritanism into general Americanism. Secularization reeks of inevitability in Puritan millennialism. As Tuveson points out, notions of redemption and the millennium in America became increasingly preoccupied with this world (58). This development should not be surprising since general human progress had been the justification of the American experiment from the beginning.

America was to be a continuation of the Reformation and the agent nonpareil for the spread of knowledge and manifold avenues of development. Holstun supports this,

For the Puritan pre-Enlightenment of the earlier seventeenth century, millennialism and enlightenment are related to each other not as sacred precursor and secular successor but as coexistent signs of each other. Both promise the submission of all places, times, and ways of knowing to a single domination, historical plot, and reason. (50)

The Encyclopedia of Religion contains the following statement: "Latter-day social scientists have made millenarianism doubly emblematic, for they describe it as the sign of transition from a religious to a secular society" (527). In its development, a millennial society will appear to become secularized, when in actuality it is only becoming more fully millennial--less pious perhaps, as in Franklin's case, yet as completely progressive as any seventeenth century Puritan who foresaw the day when righteousness would possess the American landscape. The impulse to "do good" possessed Franklin as much as it did a Puritan such as Cotton Mather. Kenneth Silverman, re-telling the story of Franklin, points to Franklin's detachment from Puritan religion and the necessity for spiritual regeneration (108). However, Franklin's individual case does not negate the essential Puritan element of his active life aimed at encouraging all of the same philanthropic ideas similarly advocated by Puritans--care for the poor, education, literacy, and anti-enslavement. Silverman contends that the parallels between

Franklin and Mather are quite striking, even to the similar downplaying of prayer and meditation in favor of doing good (108).

But Franklin's life of doing good was acted out in the context of the new kind of society he was so instrumental in formulating. How is this different from a Puritan such as Samuel Sewall, who Bush indicates expressed a belief in America's millennial destiny while pleading for "secular" and humanitarian concerns such as the anti-slavery movement (66). After all, as Miller says, American revolutionaries had a difficult time doing away with the religious notion of America's special covenant (Nature's Nation 8). Sewall's example was all part of a general tendency at the end of the seventeenth century toward a greater concern with the spiritual health of the whole community, not just of the individual (Bush 63). Miller considers this period to be one of "a turning toward a way of life in which the secular state ... has become central" (From Colony to Province 171).

Butler argues that the Revolution had a profound effect upon millennial language and thought. Millennialism, he observes, became less concerned with the apocalypse of Christ, a negative image, and more concerned with positive and hopeful millennial images. The Revolution seemed to have bypassed the second coming and brought on the thousand-year reign of Christ (217). Butler contends that revolutionary optimism and evangelical millennialism were actually closely combined in people's minds because

millennialist rhetoric performed important functions in revolutionary society. Above all, Christian millennialism played a significant role in rationalizing popular secular optimism, which it transformed more often than it confronted. Rather than make extensive critiques of secular optimism, millennialist propagandists offered a vision of optimistic progress that was made more understandable by Christian teleology. (217)

Perhaps Alexis de Tocqueville was right. America had created a new faith: "'a democratic and republican religion'" (quoted by Butler 289), a "religion" some said, only sustainable in a distinctly Christian form (Butler 264; see also 200). Winthrop's original Arabella sermon still seems remarkably relevant, as Miller has argued. Winthrop, Miller says,

probably did not entirely realize how novel, how radical, was his sermon; he assumed he was merely theorizing about this projected community in relation to the Calvinist divinity What in reality he was telling the proto-Americans was that they could not just blunder along like ordinary people, seeking wealth and opportunity for their children. (Nature's Nation 7).

Melville's was essentially an American Puritan imagination; therefore, it is important to establish the particular religious context of the first half of the nineteenth century. As Butler describes it, this period was a time of intense religious ferment in America. Experimental and/or utopian faiths of all kinds spread from the civilized east to the pioneer west. At the same time, new spiritual emphases brought about new groups such as Mormons, spiritualists, Mesmerists, Swedenborgians, Millerites, and Adventists; other more radical versions of already

established groups also emerged. This new condition of religion in America would have been incomprehensible to those living at the time of the revolution. Christianity, in general, continued to thrive while in Europe it suffered. Americans remained convinced that their leaders should be Christians.

Growing religious pluralism, however, led some to seek support for Christian orthodoxy. This movement was partially influenced by the notion that Christian progress might be stopped by indifference and pluralism. Members of unorthodox groups might threaten the fundamental Christian identity of America. Established Christian institutions sought power and authority in a way comparable to the church of the Middle Ages. These institutions were successful in creating a vigorous and disciplined American church (Butler 282-288).

The most startling religious phenomena of the period was the single great revival which ebbed and flowed for the first 60 years of the nineteenth century. As Miller tells the story in The Life of the Mind in America: From Revolution to Civil War, the credo of the period could be summarized as the powerful belief in the promotion of religious excitement (this notion was expressed in 1835 by the exemplar of revivalism, the evangelist Charles Finney). Religious excitement was put to the task of rescuing America from the abyss of atheism into which she nearly fell after the American Revolution. The culprit was the French Revolution, which had, in the words of one minister of the time, "'burst

forth like a volcano and threatened to sweep the United States into its fiery stream'" (4).

The years 1790 to 1815 in America witnessed a general condemnation of the French Revolution, an attempt to dissuade the youth from the influence of such men as Paine and Voltaire. But the effect of the threat from Europe seemed only to increase American self-examination and a new focus on evils such as idolatry, covetousness, love of the world, Sabbath-breaking, disobedience, and drunkenness (as the Methodists understood American evils in 1795). It was this emphasis on America and how she should be reformed which ultimately fueled the revivalism which began about 1800.

The Revival (always capitalized by Miller) began in the Appalachian mountains (ministers in New England were fearful of possible condemnations concerning revivals similar to those of Charles Chauncy in the last century). Ministers, mostly Presbyterian, invented the great religious phenomena, the campmeeting, thereby lighting a match which started a firestorm of emotion (Miller calls it an "orgy," see 7). Miller indicates we can understand neither Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, nor Melville without taking into account the spirit of revival sparked in 1800. Revival was seen as the means of saving America as she swept westward into the wild unknown. But it spread backward too, especially into the state of New York until at least 1850 (Melville was born and raised in New York during this time).

The greatest preacher of the period was Charles Finney, a lawyer turned evangelist. His book Lectures on Revivals of Religion in 1835 captured the meaning of what was happening to America. As he and others expressed it, revival was meant to take the already churchd and electrify them with spiritual power. But the emphasis was on community rather than on individual spirituality (in contrast to the Great Awakening). The nation was to grow and progress into a regenerated bloc of individuals.

Miller describes campmeeting-goers as being much more unsettled in the literal sense. Ministers did not actually go to the people in that they visited the churches; instead, people came en masse to the campmeeting with no clear sense of denominationalism or church identity. Thus, these scattered individuals were creating a new entity, a new nationalism. One minister in 1851 wrote that "'the grace of God ... can save us from the fate of former republics, and make us a blessing to all nations'" (13). The strictly Puritan language used by this minister was reflected in the criticism of the revival by another minister in 1844. This minister noted that the revival was essentially "'Puritan and Methodist'" and relied on "'justification by feeling rather than by faith'" (16).

Finney justified the emphasis on feeling with language used by literary romantics, including Melville, who said, "'To the dogs with the Head'" (quoted in Miller 26). The head could grasp truths and yet not be affected by them. Thus, for

Finney the central battleground was the heart. Critics countered that only intellectual propositions could be unifying since men might agree together concerning them. Finney was not, however, a mere ranter or ignoramus. He advocated the simple truths expressed in the plain style by the educated preacher. The new hermeneutic was common sense. By this approach he thought that he was preserving the consciousness, not destroying it. He felt that within a man was the ability to help himself, to do and to act. Finney was thoroughly American.

What startled Europeans about the revival was the fact that within the multiplicities of denominations could emerge, in the words of the nineteenth-century religious historian Philip Schaff, "'something wholly new'" (40). A single society had been created in the midst of what appeared to be only disorder. The principle of voluntary adherence to religion created a more pure church free of coercion. Heresy had been free to reign, but it did not! In freedom the churches prospered; Truth was winning the day. And this could do nothing but strengthen the spirit of national identity. Foreign visitors noted that the spirit of revival had placed all on a "'common footing'" (45).

Miller contends that the revival generated "a homogeneous America", and that "the Revival ushered the country into modernity." Thus, the revivalists were right in their assertion in the middle of the century that "'More is now being done to elevate the intellectual, social, and moral

condition of our race, than at any period since the Saviour was born'" (48). The country was enlightened not by the Enlightenment, but by the gospel beacon. By 1848 men were saying that recent advances in technology were part of the new spirit in the land. Both technology and the revival signaled that Christianity was about to triumph in the world. Not far behind this rhetoric was the language of millennialism. It became a well-known view that America was to be a missionary nation in both a spiritual and political sense. Men, learned or not, came to believe that the purposes of God were coming to a central point of completeness in America. All the old kingdoms since Babylon had perished, but America, because of her voluntary Christianity, would create the special spirit of communion necessary for the fulfillment of Christianity and thus American nationhood.

James Turner, in "Christianity Confused, 1840-1870," discusses the development of voices of unbelief in American religious history at the end of the period of revival addressed by Miller. The revivalists, Turner notes, had by 1840 made sure that America was a Christian nation. However, a persistent minority entertained doubts as to the authenticity of the faith. Old questions returned with greater power. Turner says that "a process of rethinking began. Out of it came eventually a new Christianity" (142).

Turner details that rethinking. First was the problem of the inhumane God. Does God really hold the yet unborn responsible for original sin? Are the heathen really destined

for eternal damnation for having not been reached by missionaries? Related to the inhumanity of God was the notion of eternal hell fire. That doctrine no longer fit so neatly into the modern mind. Another problem was the Bible, a source of authority which was no longer under the tight control of the church. Individuals were allowed to interpret its meaning within the bounds of literalism and common sense. The literal and commonsensical approach left the Bible open to attack by scientists and scholars on the basis of factual correctness. Higher criticism especially brought up doubts concerning the authorship and accuracy of the Bible, as well as a direct attack upon the historicity of Jesus himself. In an effort to defend Biblical texts, some critics came to view it mythopoetically and symbolically. This interpretation led to even muddier questions of authority.

Scholarship opened up other avenues of wisdom beside the Bible's, mainly from the Orient. Emerson is the best example of a writer combining Biblical and Oriental thought. The historical method emphasized development and change in every area of study from theology to science. Anthropology and comparative religion emerged as important disciplines by the middle of the century. Evolutionism looked for primitive elements for every aspect of modern life. Christian ritual was shown to be rooted in savage precursors, turning traditions like the Eucharist into primitive ceremonies in which worshippers ate their god. For many intellectuals, truth no longer seemed unique and everlasting but only

tentative and relative. The claim to absolute truth made by Christianity was threatened. Every religion seemed only to approach, as Emerson put it, some still undiscovered Truth. Many Christians were only left with a tepid faith in Christianity as a good philanthropic organization but with weak claims to specialness.

These new developments did provide some credence to the spirit of progress endemic to the age, however. For this, Christians could only blame themselves and their millennialism, which itself bound together progress and the Christian mission. But within such notions of progress lurked another notion--that Christianity would itself merely be a stepping stone to some higher level. The basic rituals were under attack, a condition making it more difficult to believe in the larger structure of faith. Some clung to a theism without the formal church institution, a belief which immunized them against atheism. Transcendentalism was the most powerful bridge out of formal Christianity and allowed one to preserve spirituality, values, and hope. For Transcendentalists God was a nebulous entity and often could not be distinguished from Nature. Spiritualism provided another avenue to the unseen by trying to create an aura of scientific validity for faith.

Belief seemed based, after all, on mere authority. What could be "known" became narrowed and select. The options for believers became compressed because the pursuit of truth split into the secular and the sacred. The sacred seemed so

intangible and disputable. As a result, language itself became compartmentalized as it had never been before into the language of science and precision, and the vaguer and more fluid language of the spirit. "Reality" became the province of science. The very methods developed to investigate the sacred issues had destroyed the thing sought. Some sought preservation in heart religion, intuitive faith, or subjectivity as the reality of religion.

One American theologian of the period, Horace Bushnell, absorbed all of this and sought to defend Christianity. He contended that since language itself was metaphorical, religious issues were by definition more difficult to investigate than scientific ones. Individuals could never come to ideas as precise about God as the scientist could about astronomy. Some in the church community accepted ideas like Bushnell's (Henry Ward Beecher, for example). Bushnell's ideas seemed to meld with notions of heart religion and safely placed Christianity into an area of knowledge apart from science. Many of the orthodox, however, saw that Bushnell was only pointing the way out of Christianity and was saying something not much different than Buddhism or Transcendentalism. A tenet of Christianity had always been that science and religion were in agreement, that there was no conflict. For those leaning to scientism and materialism, Bushnell only confirmed their belief that Christianity really wasn't worth staying with. Agnosticism was becoming an acceptable alternative, very nearly an intellectual

necessity. The questions continued to point, not to a different faith but, in Turner's words, "toward a blanker horizon" (141-166).

Melville was born into the American world described by Turner--a culture with aging Puritan assumptions about itself now enlivened with revival, a culture jolted by new science and new philosophy, but also a country hungry for answers to the problem of the blank horizon. Melville's was primarily a Puritan/Protestant imagination butting against the intellectual dilemmas of his age. Reeve writes that Melville "believed in absolute truth" (75). He was not a subversive attempting to undermine his generation's belief system. Instead, he was a searcher for workable propositions and solutions to a Puritan problem--how America could become the holy instrument of God's plan for her in the midst of agnosticism and loss of faith. Melville's literary productions detail the search for the proper pathway.

Many Melville critics accept the notion that Melville was a rejecter of orthodox belief. (An early extreme example is Melville's Quarrel With God in which Lawrence Roger Thompson basically calls Melville a hypocritical heretic. See 6). Herbert in Moby-Dick and Calvinism indicates that Melville studied the tenets of both Unitarianism and orthodoxy (as well as other philosophies) but failed to accept any of their views of reality. He then set out in his works (particularly Moby Dick) on a quest for "'vital truth.'" Thus his works are dominated by the same questing

characters, all pursuing a coherent truth. But Herbert indicates that Melville's quest after truth was not founded on agnosticism but was primarily a religious one in the sense that he was searching for a religious answer, not an agnostic or atheistic one. Readers of Melville often seem to focus on Melville's themes of frustration and unmeaning, but as Herbert writes, "the possibility of final unmeaning ... is native to religious thought" (3-6).

Melville was attempting to make sense of his American Puritan world, not overthrow it. As Harold Bloom has said, British writers leave their fathers, while Americans complete them (William Shurr 12). Melville was definitely not like deist Thomas Jefferson, who wrote that Calvin's god of the five points was a demon or a malignant spirit. Instead, as Herbert indicates,

Melville did not challenge the theocentric presuppositions of his time from a standpoint in symbolist theory, or psychoanalytic theory, or naturalism, or phenomenology, or existentialism. The aesthetic structures of Moby-Dick evoke the religious crisis that gave birth to such contemporary doctrines because Melville challenged the theocentric scheme by working within its own terms. (Moby-Dick and Calvinism 9)

Melville was much closer to Thoreau, who Shurr says, attempted "to purge and purify ... trying to pull away from the calvinist force-field set up by his culture" (13). While theologians and philosophers in Europe and America "yielded to secular frames of reference ... Melville is generally recognized ... as a prophet of this spiritual revolution [the historic shift in perspective]" (Herbert Moby-Dick and

Calvinism 9). Thus, Lewis is correct when he observes that the work of Melville (and others of the American literary renaissance) represents an "off-beat kind of traditionalism" (8).

That new spiritual perspective, and not the subversion of Puritanism, was Melville's goal. He was still a Yankee individualist concerned with personal salvation. D. H. Lawrence wrote that "Melville hated the world: was born hating it. But he was looking for heaven" (142). He did not wish to overthrow the world of Calvin's God, but to learn to live sanely and completely within it, as William Ellery Sedgwick argues in Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind. Melville, Sedgwick writes, sought an inward vision "not so much of life as of what it is to be alive, and alive as a complete human being and not a mere two-thirds or three-quarters of one" (15). As any good Puritan ancestor would have, Melville "was forever precipitating himself against the ultimate truth of creation" (9). One of the primary questions with which Melville was concerned was, "How are we as human beings to accommodate ourselves to the external creation in which we find ourselves?" (3). Not having answers meant only chaos, a condition feared as well by Puritans.

This concern expressed by Sedgwick for the human element agrees with James Duban's assessment in Melville's Major Fiction: Politics, Theology, and Imagination. Duban writes that Melville attacked the cultural assumptions of America ("messianic nationalism, covenant psychology, racial

superiority, human perfectibility") in strictly Calvinistic terms in that he, like any believer in Original Sin, doubted the purity of human motivations (257). Puritan doctrine was not the problem, human beings were the problem. Herbert writes, "The theocentric system gave him a fundamental idiom in which to comprehend himself and his world; problems of doctrine were for him continuous with problems of experience" (15). The assumption for Melville was that Puritanism merely described the world as it really was. Thus, modernists cannot claim Melville as one of their own, since, as Harold Beaver writes, "he fits uncomfortably into the history of modernism" and was an exemplar of "the Calvinist insistence on the 'Great Art of Telling the Truth'" (128). In fact, William B. Dillingham makes an interesting argument by comparing Melville's sense of freedom with John Calvin's idea of true liberty for the Christian, a liberty which can be summarized as (1) freedom of law, (2) an overwhelming focus on nothing but love for God, and (3) freedom from externals. "Knowingly or not," Dillingham observes, "Melville was using a Calvinistic framework to arrive at his own unique final vision" (138). (I differ with Dillingham in that he qualifies this last statement by saying that Melville's vision "is anything but Calvinistic," a qualification itself qualified one page later.) Melville's vision is within the Calvinistic tradition.

For a "heretic" and "subversive" attacking theism and faith, Melville made a profound and large use of the Bible.

As Nathalia Wright has shown in Melville's Use of the Bible, he was a hardworking student of the Bible and reader of major Biblical scholars. The Bible was overwhelmingly important to Melville's voice and style. He never gave up using it (in fact, Biblical allusions increased as his career progressed). Neither Emerson (a minister) nor Hawthorne (an excellent student of Puritanism) approach Melville's extensive use of Biblical literature. His mind "seems to have been saturated with its stories, its ideas, its language" (7). Wright calculates that there are approximately 1400 allusions to the Bible in the complete works of Melville (8). The more profound the work, the greater the amount of Biblical allusion (9). The person of Christ throughout the collected works always appears as the ideal person worthy of worship and imitation. Wright indicates that Melville seemed to use Biblical imagery and symbolism to capture that "'ungraspable phantom of life'" he was seeking in his life's quest (18). Levin is right when he comments on the connection between John Bunyan and Herman Melville (Dillingham makes the same connection 142, 143). Levin says that "American fiction sprang from religious allegory" (20). Melville was on a pilgrimage to his celestial home (19).

Chapter 4

The Quest for the Internal

Herman Melville's first six novels are literary romances describing sea voyages. The first three can be seen to comprise a single unit by virtue of a number of similar characteristics, (1) all are set in the islands of the South Seas, (2) little emphasis is given to the technical prowess of sailors or sailing ships (begun in Redburn), (3) all three emphasize the theme of searching, and (4) Melville himself appears to have seen them as a unit. In the preface to Mardi he complained,

Not long ago, having published two narratives of voyages in the Pacific, which, in many quarters, were received with incredulity, the thought occurred to me, of indeed writing a romance of Polynesian adventure, and publishing it as such; to see whether, the fiction might not, possibly, be received for a verity: in some degree the reverse of my previous experience. This thought was the germ of others, which have resulted in Mardi. (661)

Though incredulous about the factual veracity of certain events, readers have tended to perceive the first two novels as straightforward adventure stories with few symbolic elements. This can be substantiated by Melville's publishing history, which began with strength in the popular and exciting adventure story Typee and ended in oblivion in the obscure and dark Pierre, ostensibly because of Melville's increasing concern with symbol and his abandonment of the

formula story. An example of such criticism can be found in Joel Porte's comments in The Romance in America: Studies in Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, and James. Porte argues that Melville fought his readers' increasing "incomprehension with incomprehensibility." Porte accepts the notion of increasing obscurity in Melville and states that romance itself is to blame, a genre which, he writes, "gravitates inevitably toward mystery, inexorably turning into the kind of literature that illuminates meanings" (155). The first three novels are critically important because they set the stage for understanding Melville's later works, especially Moby-Dick. They pose a number of essentially Puritan questions and dilemmas in the form of a searching voyage. Thus, all of Melville's works can be read as symbolistic voyages of "becoming" (see Feidelson where he refers this notion to Walt Whitman 27).

The Melville canon is a unified collection consistent in purpose from the start and not an author's failed search for the right publishing formula. Schirmeister writes of Melville's creation of an internalized "romance world ... in which the values of a transcendent self, free of history and free of culture, might obtain" (134). The romance world for Melville begins with Typee and not with Mardi or the frequently mulled-over Moby-Dick, and applies with equal strength to Omoo or Billy Budd.

Typee is the first person account of two young sailors, Tom and Toby, who desert the whaler Dolly at Nukuheva hoping

for better treatment aboard a different ship. With little food, they seek aid from an island people, only to discover that the tribe are the dreaded cannibals, the Typee. Among the Typee they enjoy good treatment but have a vague sense of danger because they are virtual prisoners. One native is Kory-Kory, a kind of companion/guard to Tom. A beautiful maiden named Fayaway becomes close to him also. Eventually Toby escapes the island, leaving Tom alone among the cannibals. During his time among the Typees, Tom is able to observe their habits of life. They do little work, and enjoy smoking, laughing, and talking. Their social structure seems to work very well since there is never discord among them. Religious piety is weak, although tattooing is held in high regard as a kind of spiritual observance. At one time a battle takes place with another tribe, and Tom is kept away from the celebration afterward. He suspects cannibalism. Marnoo is a taboo tribesman enabled to travel freely among all the island's tribes. He informs a ship's captain of Tom's plight, and when a small boat approaches the shore, Tom is able to escape.

From the beginning of Typee to the end can be seen an intense struggle for comprehension. Tom's preconceptions of the island are forcibly wracked by the power and the mystery of contradiction and contrary evidence, and he must make constant mental adjustment (his confusion over which tribe to fear, Typee or Happar, is an example cited by Spengemann 181). As his ship heads for the Marquesas after six months

whaling, he yearns for the definiteness of the shore, even if that shore is inhabited by "visions of outlandish things" and other heathen activities (13). From the first a great rift exists between the fine Christian intentions of the local missionaries and the savage realities on the island. Christians despair of moving the inhabitants away from heathenism and have merely bent them to the trappings of civilization and Christianity. The king of Nukuheva, Mowanna, is seen dressed in a French officer's uniform, complete with "gold lace and embroidery." He has but one blemish--"A broad patch of tatooing stretched completely across his face" (16). The trappings have in reality left Mowanna's savageness untouched.

Nukuheva is a veritable Eden, and suffers, ironically, only to the extent that Europeans have brought corruption (21). But what confuses Tom is that the blessings of beauty and health accompany moral laziness among the savages. The women especially exhibit "an abandoned voluptuousness" (25). Even more confusing is the fact that advanced and refined Western nations commit the most hideous atrocities against the local inhabitants. "A high degree of refinement, however, does not seem to subdue [European] wicked propensities" (27). Tom observes that the spirit in the hearts of Christian soldiers who could commit atrocities is clear to the savages. Such a spirit raises the question, who is the savage? (37)

To Tom's mind civilization seems to have brought only the appearance of progress to Europeans and left the

undeveloped savage the happier of the two (40, 41). The Typee man expends great effort in producing a fire, an operation accomplished with a match in civilized society. However, the Typee father can raise a family with less energy than it takes to light a fire. He only has to pluck fruit from a tree; the civilized father has to struggle to keep his children from starving (136). The white man's "progress" creates misery in the islands. For every virtue he brings, he adds "a hundred evils in reserve" (149). War is among the worst evils, making not the cannibal but the civilized white man "the most ferocious animal on the face of the earth" (150).

However, there is an enigma in the condition of the Typees. They are a "passionate" and "wayward" people (171). Ignorance is their happiness. Their joy is light and simple because their minds are "unoccupied by matters of graver moment." Mere trifles make them happy while the white man draws pleasures "from more elevated but rarer sources" (172).

Every day is like another. Life is "uniform and undiversified" (178). The natives give much of their strength to sleeping (182). Intellectual investigation is non-existent. They give superstitious and ignorant answers for mysteries in their lives (184). Considering their ancestor's mechanical skills, these natives are probably a degenerate offspring from some superior race before them (186). In their religious practice they maintain "an unbounded liberty of conscience," not out of principle, but from an uncaring

attitude toward their stone idols, which they treat with disdain as a sort of amusement (202, 205). They know nothing spiritual, but seem to value pleasure alone. Faith is a humbug, a trick played by priests (208). As such, their religion is in a state of decay (211, 212).

Tom begins to make sense of his many observations. He contends that it is better "to remain the happy and innocent heathens and barbarians that they now are, than ... to enjoy the mere name of Christians without experiencing any of the vital operations of true religion, whilst, at the same time, they are made the victims of the worst vices and evils of civilized life" (215). Their present existence is better than civilization because "the penalty of the Fall presses very lightly upon the valley of Typee" (229, 230). They possess physical beauty exceeding the white man by far (213, 214). There is an equality, simplicity, humility, and freedom from restraint among them. If deference is required, it "was willingly and cheerfully yielded" (219). Sustenance comes easily without work (230).

Tom argues that the great evil is the conversion of the natives into "nominal Christians" (230). Then, falsely, it is declared that "Truth" has triumphed in the land, when in actuality, the natives have given up their way of life, and their island is stripped of its value (231). Tom is careful to add "that against the cause of missions in the abstract no Christian can possibly be opposed: it is in truth a just and holy cause" (233). Christianity is still the goal (234). But

the natives have something to teach the white man about law and justice. With no established law these savages have been able to maintain a good social order. How did they accomplish this? Tom says, "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, say what they will of the inborn lawlessness of the human race, has its precepts graven on every breast" (235). The white man seems only able to produce "blue laws" regulating people's moral behavior, a practice inviting hypocrisy (295).

Typee is entirely Puritan/Protestant. Readers at the time of publication clearly missed the point of the book when they either condemned its "'barbarism'" (Grenberg 7) or envied Tom's enjoying the pleasures of watching naked Eves romp among the palm trees. The work argues for the power of heart religion over that of nominal Christianity and speaks in the voice of the Puritan jeremiad by its pointed warnings of spiritual decay in the western world. The criticisms of the failures of Christianity are no more anti-church than the original jeremiads of the 1670's. Melville is simply calling for a completed, millennial faith.

Bell notes the contrast between primitive and arbitrary virtue in Typee (200). Dillingham writes that in Typee "reality is not static but dynamic and thus ultimately unknowable, 'indefinite as God'" (4). He observes that Tom "distrusts the dogmas and systems he sees mankind

worshipping," and that he prefers the continued searching on the open sea for the "'howling infinite'" (30).

Lawrence, in Studies in Classic American Literature, sees the reason Tom doesn't wish to stay in Paradise with the beautiful Fayaway. It is because no Americans can go back. They want "to fight. But with the weapons of the spirit, not the flesh.... The mills of God were grinding inside him.... Why? Heaven knows. But we've got to grind down our old forms, our old selves, grind them very very small, to nothingness." Purgatory for Melville [Tom] was staying where he was (147). "But we can't go back. Whatever else the South Sea Islander is, he is centuries and centuries behind us in the life-struggle, the consciousness-struggle, the struggle of the soul into fullness" (145). Lewis agrees. He writes that after his experience with the islanders, Melville realized "that Polynesian life never advanced into the realm of spirit." "Life, in the Typee valley, was restricted to the visible spheres of love; it was Melville's restless ambition to penetrate to the invisible spheres" (136).

Miller sees Tom's experience as "a flight to the primitive" which proves "the superiority of the natural Reason over the civilized Understanding" (Nature's Nation 192). Miller's position fails to explain why the islander's behavior is often criticized and undermined. Spengemann is correct when he contends that Melville "does not explicitly advise the reader to abandon Europe for the South Seas." Were Melville to do this, then Tom's leaving the island "would

seem inexplicably perverse" (179, 180). Tom leaves the island because he has not found what he is looking for. As Ziff explains in Puritanism in America, "Melville, finally, opts for history and for language, knowing full well the pain he must resume His historical self is returning. And so he flees into the sea" (10).

Grenberg perceives the millennial tone in Typee. Although he does not apply the term per se, Grenberg notes that Typee does not represent a set "of polarized and polarizing values" (8). Instead, he writes, "Melville sets himself the task of wedding the two [sets of values] and putting them to rest in harmonious felicity" (9). And later, "we begin to suspect that Tommo's allegiance lies with neither native nor with civilized culture, but with some ideal realm not yet seen by land or sea" (11). Grenberg calls this ideal realm a place where there might be "some ideal fusion of possibilities" (11). Instead of seeing Melville's presentation of the problem of multiple truths as an indication of Melville's moral relativism (see Reynolds 140), Grenberg argues that in "Typee ... Melville depicts the self's determined, even desperate, efforts to square this multiplicity with [the] drive to unity" (13). "Tommo demands the best of possible worlds; he requires an ideal, composite reality that will include all the good and exclude all the bad features of his real experience" (14).

All of the elements in Typee advocating heart religion, internalized faith, knowledge, history, and the possibility

of the creation of an millennial ideal here and now are originally Puritan notions and are neither subversive nor out of character with the context of the Second Great Awakening.

Omoo is a sequel to Typee. The theme of searching is especially pronounced. The title of the work means a "wanderer" or "rover" in the native language. The title refers to one who wanders from island to island; as such, Omoo describes literally the events of the novel, and serves as an excellent forerunner for Mardi, which greatly develops the theme of the search into an allegorical search of the entire world.

Saved by a whaling ship from Nukuheva, Tom joins up as a deckhand. The Julia is a bad ship and the conditions are terrible. Finally, with the captain himself ill, the ship pulls into Tahiti. The crew, however, is not allowed to leave the ship. They mutiny and are imprisoned on a French frigate. When the men refuse to return to their ship, they are taken into custody and placed in a native house on Tahiti. The native jailor, Captain Bob, is kind to them and their captivity is easy. Eventually, the Julia sails with a new crew, leaving the mutineers to fend for themselves on Tahiti. Soon, Tom and his friend Doctor Long Ghost are hired as laborers on a neighboring island called Imeeo. The work was too hard for the two lazy sailors, so they left for Tamai, an inland village. Within a day or so the natives chase them off for no reason so far as they can tell. Next, the two seek to meet the queen of Tahiti, so they travel to the village of

Partoowye. There they hear of another whaling ship. After failing to meet the queen, the two attempt to join the whaling ship. Doctor Long Ghost is turned down, but Tom ships out without him, hoping to make it home eventually.

Omoa fully develops a theme begun in Typee: the white missionary's detrimental effect on native peoples, an effect identified as "genocidal" by recent critics (see Robert Milder 431). The novel can be understood as a "mere extension of Typee" (Grenberg 16). However, as Grenberg points out, the novel offers a much more profound discussion about how humans learn, as well as "the correlative problem of distinguishing between appearance and reality, truth and falsehood" (17).

Grenberg's idea is important since Melville's critique of white missionaries is carefully focused in a way consistent with Melville's Puritan heritage. Melville makes it clear that he means "no harm to the missionaries nor their cause" (510). He adds that "the morality of the islanders is, upon the whole, improved by the presence of the missionaries" (511). Like English Puritans during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Melville opposes a system not on its moral claims, but rather on its experiential failures. Omoa is not a book advocating a return to romantic primitivism of the native sort, but a jeremiad calling for a fulfillment of Christian potential. Behind the sometimes-debilitating activities of the white missionary is the possibility of a true missionary spirit which might assist the developing islanders. Grenberg is correct that the issue is appearance

and reality, since Melville must bludgeon the missionary while not seeming to destroy Christian idealism (Milder agrees that the book is an appeal to Christian idealism, albeit an ineffectual one 431).

According to Grenberg Omoa is the beginning of an attempt to define total human potentiality since neither of the alternatives seems to be achieving that potentiality. Grenberg writes that "the cultural interaction at Tahiti provides Melville a synecdoche of the human capacity to give full vent to total potentiality" and, "At Tahiti it is impossible for Tom to be a savage, and he finds it equally impossible to identify totally with the civilization that brings disease, corruption, and death to nature and nature's children" (18). It is this quest for human completeness which points in the direction of what Melville asks for in America. The American millennium will arrive when the American spiritual potential is reached.

For now, however, Americans exhibit bigotry and hatred for an innocent people largely unknown to them. Tom observes, "Indeed, it is almost incredible, the light in which many sailors regard these naked heathens. They hardly consider them human. But it is a curious fact, that the more ignorant and degraded men are, the more contemptuously they look upon those whom they deem their inferiors" (351). While the Polynesian natives may be said to have found their place in nature, the American sailors are caught in "the immense blank of the Western Pacific" (360). The Julia and her crew are

swept westward, not seemingly by virtue of expertise, but from a pure reliance on nature's force. In fact, her navigator Jermin is a drunkard. Sailing from the Marquesas "he went staggering about deck, instrument to eye, looking all over for the sun--a phenomenon which any sober observer might have seen right overhead" (389).

In Tahiti Tom comes in contact with the missionaries. The Protestant missionaries took no notice of the sailors except to leave them a bundle of tracts. By contrast, the French priests made a courtesy call. But the priests have their problems too, looking "sanctimonious enough abroad" but living dissolute lives of drunkenness and immorality with their "trim little native handmaidens" (469, 470). One of the spiritual audiences of the two groups of missionaries, the sailors, were a sorry lot with weak ties to their own faith. Tom and others attend mass in order to gain alcohol from the priests.

The other audience of the missionaries, the native peoples, find themselves in a bit of confusion in attempting to live out European faith. Melville illustrates this by the problem of the round world. When the missionaries first arrived in the South Seas by ship, they had gained a day without realizing it. Therefore, the worship day originally brought to the island was a day earlier from what later missionaries knew it to be. This discrepancy became a point of contention between sailors and islanders. All efforts to solve or explain the dilemma of the time change were

fruitless. Each group doggedly held to its position without really understanding why the differences existed (490). When Melville's descriptions of the moral weaknesses of sailors and natives are compared, it is clear that he intends to make the question of Sabbath observance an illustration of the nature of the conversion of both groups. Both primitive islander and civilized sailor have become attached to a mere surface proscription which has done nothing for their inner moral condition.

Spiritual differentiation between missionary and native is not stressed. The prospect of inner change is not presented. Instead, external habits, social proprieties, and western rules are pressed on the people without their consent. Missionaries make a spectacle of the externals by making conspicuous promenades in all their finery, causing the Tahitians to "slink into their huts" (492). Sailors fare no better in the presence of missionaries. One evening Tom shows himself friendly by greeting a family sitting on their veranda. The response is revealing: "Hysterics and hartshorn! who would have thought it? The young lady screamed, and the old one came near fainting. As for myself, I retreated, in double quick time" (493). Dividing lines are formed on the basis of class difference rather than inner qualities. In one sermon Tom hears, the missionary warns native girls not to consort with sailors because, as Tom hears it told in translation, "'Where they come from, no good people talk to 'em--just like dogs'" (499).

Missionaries inculcate prejudice rather than true Christian conviction. Transferring authentic Christianity seems the unachievable goal of the missionary. Tom observes that "In fact, there is, perhaps, no race upon earth, less disposed, by nature, to the monitions of Christianity, than the people of the South Sea." He tells of the Sandwich Island revival of 1836 which resulted in "no sober moral convictions [and] an almost instantaneous relapse into every kind of licentiousness" (500). The native problem is "an aversion to the least restraint," a quality that is one of "the greatest possible hinderances to the strict moralities of Christianity." Such behavior leads to a love of hypocrisy (501).

The observed native love-of-the-flesh is the reason their experience with Christianity is so radically different from the American experience and so clearly related to the Old World of Europe. Tom notes that hypocrisy is "nourished in Tahiti, by a zealous, and in many cases, a coercive superintendence over [native] spiritual well-being" (504). "Whippers-in of the congregation" are used to fill the churches. Other offensive behavior is also controlled ecclesiastically (505). Melville notes that Christianity was begun by force in Tahiti (632). In America during the early 1800s Christianity is realizing unprecedented growth, revival, and prosperity in the presence of religious freedom. Melville's descriptions of missionaries in Omoo are descriptions of English and French representatives, not

American. Melville is creating a distinction between what is occurring in America and the experience of the native peoples of the South Seas. The behavior and methods of the European missionaries is not the way to the American millennium. The millennium will not be based upon coercion, that favorite principle of the Old World.

The weakness of the missionaries is that they manage to pass on European behavior patterns while condemning innocent island behavior. A source quoted by Melville in Omoa notes that such religion "'forbids every innocent pleasure, and cramps or annihilates every mental power'" and merely encourages "'ignorance, hypocrisy, and a hatred of all other modes of faith, which was once foreign to the open and benevolent character of the Tahitian'" (512). The success of the missionary effort is measured not "by the number of heathens who have actually been made to understand and practice ... the precepts of Christianity" but by "the number of those [who] ... have in any way been induced to abandon idolatry and conform to certain outward observances" (513).

In the islands there is no community between the heathen and the Christian ("the two races are kept as far as possible from associating" and "every effort is made to prevent [young whites] from acquiring the native language"). The efforts of the missionaries only increase the amount of vice among the islanders, a result which forces "numerous, severe, and perpetually violated laws against licentiousness of all kinds" (514). In America revivalists had learned opposite

methods. Their appeals to heart religion and inward experience promoted community, nondenominationalism, and freedom from coercion.

The islanders express some disgust with this faith as promoted by missionaries. They cry out against the various evils "solely of foreign origin" (such as drunkenness, small-pox, and venereal diseases),

Distracted with their sufferings, they brought forth their sick before the missionaries, when they were preaching, and cried out, 'Lies, lies! you tell us of salvation; and, behold, we are dying. We want no other salvation, than to live in this world. Where are there any saved through your speech?' (518)

The language is millennial. The native peoples are asking for a salvation truth which will bring forth its results in this life. The evidence against the missionary truth is in the effect in this world. Native peoples provide Melville the perfect justification for criticism of this sort. His complaint against Christianity is not its doctrinal truth, but its experiential failure. Only natives far from European influence and ecclesiastical jurisdiction retain their healthy beauty, as Tom observes on one visit. This occurs only because they "bury their charms in this nook of a valley" (566).

But once again, as in Typee, the wanderer Tom "pined for the billows" (642). In the various places visited in the environs of Tahiti he does not find that which he pursues. Certainly more interesting and exotic than Europeans, the sad truth remains that native peoples largely waste the

"inexhaustible fertility" of their islands and remain "improvident", preferring to lounge under their ever-giving bread-fruit and cocoa-nut trees (590, 591). Omoq closes as Tom meditates, "Once more the sailor's cradle rocked under me, and I found myself rolling in my gait. By noon, the island had gone down in the horizon; and all before us was the wide Pacific" (646).

In Mardi Melville turns from any pretense of writing non-fiction prose. The search element, subtly developed in Typee and expanded in Omoq, becomes the unambiguous basis for an allegorical pursuit of Truth and Goodness. The narrator of the story is once again a young sailor. The sailor is almost certainly the "Tom" of the previous two novels. Such a conjecture makes geographic and narrative sense considering that Mardi opens just as the narrator is off on another ship, this time the whaler Acturion. "I had stepped ashore some few months previous," he says (663). In Omoq Tom told us that the wide Pacific lay before him. The narrator in Mardi informs us that he has joined the Acturion from the Pacific island of Ravavai, not "very far westward from Pitcairn's island" (663). The assumption is that the narrator in Mardi is Tom, but he will be referred to by the name given to him by island friends he meets--"Taji." Tom as Taji accounts for the increasing abstraction of the quest apparent in Melville's first two books. Grenberg sees the connection between the first three books also. He writes,

In a very real sense, Mardi is best viewed as a continuation and discursive commentary on the art, thoughts, and implications of Typee and Omoo, for although one might detect in Typee and Omoo the roots of Mardi's concern with the riddling questions of death, time, space, sexuality, and self, it is with Mardi that Melville holds nothing back in his attempt to push these questions to their ultimate implications and to find workable answers to them. (27)

Tom cannot find what he looks for among the islanders of the South Seas. He realizes that neither native nor white man owns the thing he wishes to possess. So off he goes into allegory and romance, a world where he can give substance to his dream. The historical world does not yet contain what he yearns for.

The Arcturion cruises for the whale, but finds none. When the ship heads for the cold waters of the Russian peninsula Kamchatka, the narrator and a friend named Jarl escape in a small boat. They head west and, while looking for friendly islands, come upon a drifting ship. On the ship they find a native man and his wife. Later the wife is killed in a storm and the ship is sunk. The three men escape in a whaleboat. Days after that they find a strange thing--two canoes with a platform lashed in between. They discover that a native priest is holding a beautiful blond girl named Yillah captive. The men rescue the girl, who wishes to return to her home islands. The narrator falls in love with her and wishes to help her return home. Coming upon some islands, the group lands and is welcomed enthusiastically. It seems that the natives think the narrator is a god, Taji, prophesied to

return as a human. The narrator accepts this accolade as not particularly harmful to him and settles into life on the island with Yillah. However, Yillah disappears, and Taji receives flowers from the dark queen Hautia. The natives think the flowers symbolize Hautia's love for Taji and that he should not pursue Yillah. But Taji is not to be put off. He, his friends, and a party of important natives (Media the king, Yoomy the singer, Babbalanja the philosopher, Mohi the historian) launch off in a large and elegant canoe in search of Yillah. Again, Hautia attempts to stop the quest by flower symbol, but the group presses on. The rest of the novel involves a series of visits to various island peoples, each of which represent beliefs, philosophies, and ways of living. Along the way the group discusses many areas of thought and knowledge. Some of the islands are thinly disguised representations of the United States, Great Britain, and Europe. The entire group of islands is called Mardi and is meant to represent the entire world and its thought. Finally, at the island of Serenia, Babbalanja finds what he is looking for, but the rest journey on. Not finding Yillah anywhere, Taji finally goes to Queen Hautia and is tempted by her. He remains with Hautia, but continues asking for Yillah.

The Arcturion's search for a whale is inauspicious from the beginning. Trade winds in the area of Ravavai tended to take ships in a giant, weary, monotonous circuit (663). Days pass in dreary sameness as the crew looked to the business of whaling (665). Aloft at the mast-head, the narrator's

thoughts go abroad into the wide ocean. "Vistas seemed leading to worlds beyond." As a lone bird flys by, his thoughts follow it.

My spirit must have sailed in with it; for directly, as in a trance, came upon me the cadence of mild billows laving a beach of shells, the waving of boughs, and the voices of maidens, and the lulled beatings of my own dissolved heart, all blended together. (668)

The wide, wide Pacific does this to a man. It discourages precision and comprehension. When Jarl and Taji come upon the startling phenomena of a glowing sea, they attempt to analyze it by repeating "various sage opinings" of the past, then move on "to record more reliable theories," which are merely what land-bound scientists might say. "But," Taji says, "these are only surmises; likely, but uncertain" (784). One is never able to penetrate the mystery.

In this context Taji's statement about Yillah is significant. After rescuing her, he says,

Besides, what cared I now for the green groves and bright shore? Was not Yillah my shore and my grove? my meadow, my mead, my soft shady vine, and my arbor? Of all things desirable and delightful, the full-plumed sheaf, and my own right arm the band? (806)

Whatever else Yillah stands for, finding her represents all Taji has looked for. The language he uses mimics Old Testament descriptions of heavenly rest for the people of Israel--in short, the language of the Christian millennium. Taji says, "For oh, Yillah; were you not the earthly semblance of that sweet vision, that haunted my earliest thoughts?" (820). Yillah is the thing Taji looked for,

thought he grasped, but didn't find among the idyllic peoples of the South Seas. Now Taji possesses it, and "forebodings departed, no happiness in the universe like ours. We lived and we loved; life and love were united; in gladness glided our days" (821). This significant statement provides a clue as to the nature of the happiness he finds in Yillah. Life and love are brought together. They are no longer separate entities in a compartmentalized, fragmented world.

The nature of the objective pursued by Taji must be understood in terms of an experience rather than a place, for when Yillah disappears from the blessed little islet on which he has been residing with her, he loses everything. The severed connection to her cannot be made up by other experiences or other persons on Odo. Yillah gone, he must pursue her among all the islands of Mardi. His new mission, now that he has already experienced that which he sought for, is to re-establish a relationship. Therefore, the narrative of Mardi is fundamentally different from Typee or Omoo in that the thing sought is a known quantity. There can be no other place in all the islands of Mardi answering to Taji's need except Yillah herself. All of the cultures and philosophies witnessed on the quest are actually ironic contrasts with what must be found. The places to be visited can provide mere substitutes. They represent ideas about the possible makeup of Yillah, but they are doomed to fail since by definition, ideas are not experiences. And Taji pursues an experience.

When Taji visits the island of Valapee with Peepi its king, who possesses within himself various spirits of past important persons, Taji discovers the unreliable nature of the king. Peepi is found to be a man "subject to contrary impulses, over which he had not the faintest control [and] was plainly denuded of all moral obligation to virtue" (865, 866). In analyzing this passage it is difficult to surmise that Taji idealizes the "obligation to virtue" as some sort of pathway to that which he seeks. True, "King Peepi was minus a conscience" (866). But that does not mean that Taji is pursuing conscience. He yearns for Yillah and Connectedness. The same qualification applies to the other places visited in the Mardian archipelago. An example might be the island of Juam, where pleasure and luxury are the great pursuits. Here Taji asks, "Was Yillah immured in this strange retreat?" (879). Both Valapee and Juam, as well as all other ports of call in Mardi, with one exception, are merely false paths to that which humanity seeks.

In "Time and Temples," Melville discusses the weakness of all ideas of development and change through time. When men build their great temples and monuments, they fool themselves with the thought that they have created eternity. "It is not the Pyramids that are ancient, but the eternal granite whereof they are made; which had been equally ancient though yet in the quarry." And, "In all the universe is but one original; and the very suns must to their source for their fire; and we Prometheuses must to them for ours; which, when

had, only perpetual Vestal tending will keep alive" (890). In the element of time, man is only and always becoming. He never is. "And his whole mortal life brings not his immortal soul to maturity; nor will all eternity perfect him" (891). The journey through time never brings man to anything final, "Thus deeper and deeper into Time's endless tunnel, does the winged soul, like a night-hawk, wend her wild way; and finds eternities before and behind; and her last limit is her everlasting beginning" (892). Taji does not see his desire for Yillah in these limited terms. To behold her, to possess her, is to possess everything his soul desires. This chapter plays a vital role in explaining the nature of Yillah. Yillah is outside of time. She is eternal, she is original.

The ruler of Juam, Donjalolo, illustrates the difficulty of finding the eternal and the original in the world (Mardi) itself. Donjalolo sends out two men to report on the distant island called Rafona. Each brings back a different description of a reef there, and Donjalolo mourns the contradictions in their stories. He exclaims, "'For me, vain all hope of ever knowing Mardi! Away! Better know nothing, than be deceived.'" The philosopher Babbalanja, observing this scene, remarks to Media, "'My lord, I have seen this same reef at Rafona. In various places, it is of various hues. As for Zuma and Varnopi, both are wrong, and both are right'" (911). In the world men perceive only limited and partial elements of the the one grand Truth, and in general, are blind to their own blindness. As Babbalanja observes

later, truth is a thing hidden and voiceless so that "'things visible are but conceits of the eye: things imaginative, conceits of the fancy. If duped by one, we are equally duped by the other'" (944).

In Mardi Melville offers a distinctly Puritan answer to the dilemma of partial knowledge and the weakness of human perception. In "Faith and Knowledge" he writes, "But let us hold fast to all we have; and stop all leaks in our faith." Thus arrayed in the armor of the apostle Paul, we may defend ourselves against the infidel Turks, he says. Growth in faith is not the development of naive belief, but a nearer grasping of the original. "The higher the intelligence, the more faith, and the less credulity: Gabriel rejects more than we, but out-believes us all. The greatest marvels are first truths; the first truths the last unto which we attain. Things nearest are furthest off" (957). The act of rejecting falsehoods that societies call true makes one a dissenter and a heretic. Actually, however, dissenters believe more than those clinging to past truths because the dissenter is now closer to the first Truth. Any society able to achieve first truths as the foundation for action would be an ideal society. Melville is advocating a society of healthy skeptics who are actually a nation of great believers.

This insistent pursuit of first truths is a compelling theme in Mardi, and Babbalanja is the great practitioner of the hunt. When Mohi tells a simple story, Babbalanja demands

its purpose. Mohi defends it as an entertainment. But
Babbalanja responds,

'I am intent upon the essence of things; the
mystery that lieth beyond; the elements of the tear
which much laughter provoketh; that which is
beneath the seeming; the precious pearl within the
shaggy oyster. I probe the circle's center; I seek
to evolve the inscrutable.' (1008)

Words such as these are a blatant advocacy of political
and ecclesiastical dissent and thereby are demonstrably
Puritan/Protestant. The uncovering of first principles
threatens traditional powers. Melville is creating a contrast
between the healthy Protestant nation and a nation ruled by
the principles of Roman Catholicism. In *Mardi* this island is
Maramma, to which the searchers go in pursuit of Yillah
(982). The island is a thinly disguised reference to Roman
Catholicism in action. It is ruled by a "Pontiff" Hivohitee
MDCCCXLVIII (or 1848; *Mardi* was published in 1849), a ruler
who traces his lineage back to the divine Hivohitee I "the
Original grantee of the empire of men's souls and the first
swayer of a crosier" (989). The island of Maramma was a place
of confusion and arbitrary power. Its language "had become so
full of jargonings, that the birds in the groves were greatly
puzzled; not knowing where lay the virtue of sounds, so
incoherent." The Pontiffs were "spiritual potentates" who had
a special connection to sharks, a creature deified and given
special protection from enemies. The logic of their special
place is wonderfully strange, being that though "'they
destroy human life ... are they not sacred?'" (990). Later,

when the group visits the secluded Hivohitee the Pontiff, Yoomy interviews him. When the Pontiff asks him what he sees, Yoomy responds, "'Nothing.'" The Pontiff then says, "'Then thou hast found me out, and seen all!'" (1017). In a truly Protestant critique, Melville has Babbalanja say that "'in Maramma and in all its tributary isles true brotherhood there is none'" (1287).

Even though Babbalanja admits that the pursuit of first truths has its dangers (see 1008, "'I am wrong in seeking to invest sublunary sounds with celestial sense. Much that is in me is incommunicable by this ether we breathe'"), finding such original truths gives the possessor tremendous moral authority, power, and a legitimate claim to precedence. Finding "'the original and true'" trunk of the multi-boughed banian tree is difficult. (Babbalanja tells of the attempt of nine blind men.) But there is "'a reward offered for discovering the trunk'" (1012). To find the original is to find God since individuals, as heavenly satellites, "revolve round the great central Truth, sun-like, fixed and luminous forever in the foundationless firmament" (1023). When one looks around the world, the original truths are impossible to find. As Babbalanja notes, "'The microscope disgusts us with our Mardi; and the telescope sets us longing for some other world'" (1038).

That other world is the place Melville is searching for. And the method for finding it seems to owe much to Calvinistic theology. As Mardi comes to an end it becomes

clear that finding Yillah is going to be impossible. The focus of the romance turns less to finding Yillah than to the discovery of an inner experience which is a substitute for her phantom-like nature. Babbalanja indicates this new direction. He meditates on the nature of human choices and identifies their source as outside of the mind. He says,

'There is something going on in me, that is independent of me. Many a time, have I willed to do one thing, and another has been done. I will not say by myself, for I was not consulted about it; it was done instinctively. My most virtuous thoughts are not born of my musings, but spring up in me, like bright fancies to the poet; unsought, spontaneous. Whence they come I know not. I am a blind man pushed from behind; in vain, I turn about to see what propels me. As vanity, I regard the praises of my friends; for what they commend pertains not to me, Babbalanja; but to this unknown something that forces me to it. But why am I, a middle aged Mardian, less prone to excesses than when a youth? The same inducements and allurements are around me. But no; my more ardent passions are burned out; those which are strongest when we are least able to resist them. Thus, then, my lord, it is not so much outer temptations that prevail over us mortals; but inward instincts.' (1111)

Babbalanja goes on to state that men are controlled by their own natures and that "'it is easier for some men to be saints, than for others not to be sinners.'" Within man is "'one dark chamber ... retained by the old mystery [the incomprehensible stranger]'" (1112). When Babbalanja mentions this idea, Media calls it his "'devil theory'" and argues that it is a dangerous departure from moral responsibility. Babbalanja agrees, indicating that telling the good man that he is free to do wrong will not induce him to do it, and

telling an evil man not to do wrong will not make him refrain from evil (1113).

That the Mardi narrative is unfolding toward a Puritan solution for the philosophical dilemmas it poses can be demonstrated by the thinly-veiled discussion of America (the island of Vivenza). Melville uses Biblical language to describe her early promise: "Vivenza was a noble land. Like a young tropic tree she stood, laden down with greenness, myriad blossoms, and ripened fruit thick-hanging from one bough. She was promising as the morning." And, "Vivenza might be likened to St. John, feeding on locusts and wild honey, and with prophetic voice, crying to the nations from the wilderness.... [and] seemed a young Messiah" (1128). However, America had not fulfilled her promise. She had become a warlike, slave-holding braggard. The truth of America is that she is only one nation along the way to a completion of humanity's social desires. There will be other promised lands that will more fully complete the experience demanded of a specially-called people. The worth of any nation can be measured only by the psychic development of her people, not by her natural resources or form of government. "'We must measure brains, not heads,'" Babbalanja says (1172).

That inner quality is the real goal. As a fiery youth in Vivenza states, "'It is not the prime end, and chief blessing, to be politically free. And freedom is only good as a means; is no end in itself.'" Every politically free man is still "'a slave unto Oro [God].'" The truth is that men need

to learn to rule themselves. The average man must "'be better, and wiser, than the wisest of one-man rulers'" (1184). So, because the people of Vivenza have not experienced the inner changes necessary for a millennial people, it must be true that Yillah is not there; and she is not (1192). Though Vivenza "'cheers our hearts [and] is a rainbow to the isles'", it is also true that she has not yet proved her creed. "'Her climacteric is not come'" (1199). The age when America, or any nation, fulfills her creed is the millennial age Melville looks forward to.

But failing to find such a place, as represented by the presence of Yillah, the band of wanderers is seemingly lost. Babbalanja says, "'This Mardi is not our home. Up and down we wander, like exiles transported to a planet afar:--'tis not the world we were born in; not the world once so lightsome and gay; not the world where we once merrily danced, dined, and supped'" (1281). Babbalanja makes it clear that the answer for living now is to remember that Oro lives in Eternity and that "'we live in Eternity now'" (1282). To enter into eternity is seen by Melville to be entering into the life for which precept and practice are identical. Babbalanja says, "'But we care not for men's words; we look for creeds in actions; which are the truthful symbols of the things within. He who hourly prays to Alma [Christ], but lives not up to world-wide love and charity--that man is more an unbeliever than he who verbally rejects the Master, but does his bidding'" (1288).

At the island of Serenia Babbalanja finds his Yillah because there he is converted. He finds an island community that fulfills his philosophical requirements; where the within matches the without. Here is the place with happiness and holiness in the now. As their guide indicates, "'Tis Mardi, to which loved Alma gives his laws; not Paradise'" (1289). This is the place where the millennial age lives, in an absolute perfection, not of social condition, but in wholeness of inner experience. "'Yet not by statute,'" the guide says, "'but from dictates, born half dormant in us, and warmed into life by Alma. Those dictates we but follow in all we do; we are not dragged to righteousness; but go running'" (1289). "'We love him [Alma] from an instinct in us;--a fond, filial, reverential feeling.... We love him because we do'" (1290).

Babbalanja responds to this description of Serenia in the language of Christian conversion. "'Some black cloud seems floating from me. I begin to see. I come out in light.... Quickened in me is a hope'" (1291). And finally, "'Oh, Alma, Alma! prince divine!' cried Babbalanja, sinking on his knees--'in thee, at last, I find repose'" (1292). Babbalanja has found his landedness, for at sunrise, he and his companions stand upon the beach. He says,

'My voyage is ended. Not because what we sought is found; but that I now possess all which may be had of what I sought in Mardi. Here, I tarry to grow wiser still:--then I am Alma's and the world's. Taji! for Yillah thou wilt hunt in vain; she is a phantom that but mocks thee; and while for her thou madly huntest, the sin thou didst cries out, and

its avengers still will follow. But here they may not come: nor those, who, tempting, track thy path. Wise counsel take. Within our hearts is all we seek: though in that search many need a prompter. Him I have found in blessed Alma. Then rove no more. Gain now, in flush of youth, that last wise thought, too often purchased, by a life of woe. Be wise: be wise.' (1300)

Taji and his companions continue the quest for Yillah, though now Taji has assumed the role of "the hunter, that never rests'" (1301). The restless sea still calls him "'beyond the reef'" (1301). Taji now becomes the victim of the malignant queen Hautia. He is a figure seen throughout the rest of the Melville canon--the restless wanderer.

Critics have failed in large part to see the essential Puritan nature of Mardi. They tend to focus on Taji's continuation of the quest and downplay Babbalanja's discovery of the core of human meaning and existence. Milder separates the two characters' quests as if they were searching for two different things (Taji for Yillah and Babbalanja for "the ideal way of life") (431). Milder's idea of a dual ending for Mardi leads him to suggest that the novel is merely a gesture "of accomodation and defiance" for "a spiritual crisis that enduringly defied resolution in life" (432). Miller misses the point also when he asserts that the ending of Mardi shows "the ambiguity of nature. The blonde Yillah is lost in the dark Hautia" (Nature's Nation 193). What of the discovery of Babbalanja? Feidelson also ignores Babbalanja, although he correctly recognizes what Taji becomes. "Taji," he says, "cannot trust absolute experience; he is too much aware of

its disintegration into rational opposites" (175). But Feidelson is incorrect when he observes, "And Melville, no less than Taji, is committed to an intellectual search which holds out no prospect of success but to which there is no alternative" (175). Levin argues that Melville failed to reach any "symbolic Ultimate" (175). Dillingham posits a world in Mardi in which the narrator "seeks substance and meaning but finds only empty reflections" (105).

For Dillingham, as for the other critics, Babbalanja's discovery is invisible. Dillingham is correct in identifying Taji as an Ahab (see 107, "[Taji's] mind is closed tight with a monomania that sends him madly in pursuit of a tangible object. The wanderer recognizes that ambiguity, not final answers, lies at the heart of life"), but incomplete in rejecting the answer that lies in Serenia. In discussing the connection between Bunyan and Melville, Dillingham falsely contends that "there is no peace in Melville's eternity" as compared to that of Bunyan (143). To all of these critics the question can be posed: What of the Puritan quest, originally outlined by Winthrop and reiterated by Melville, of a Christian nation possessed by love in its millennial greatness? This communal goal was the vision of the heirs of Puritanism during the second Great Awakening in the first half of the nineteenth century, and was the prospect envisioned by Herman Melville in Mardi as exemplified on the island of Serenia. Melville's desire for internalized Americans is no different from what Bercovitch observes

Puritans imagined for themselves from the beginning. Puritans thought that their physical flight to the New World and its subsequent development were "symbolic. The more closely they examined the actual, the more clearly they perceived the Grand Design, which, they kept telling a deaf or incredulous world, rendered New England's progress the historical analogue to the private, interior movement of grace" ("Cotton Mather" 142).

Lewis was much more accurate in his assessment of Melville. His idea of the American Adam leads him to write the following of Melville: "He has the Protestant's contempt for the long line of commentary and influence; he can go directly to the source and find it anywhere" (144,145). Thus, as Lewis contends, "The Adamic hero is an 'outsider,' but he is 'outside' in a curiously staunch and artistically demanding manner." The Adamic hero is unlike the European or modernist outsider who was "dispossessed," "superfluous," "alienated," and "exiled" (128). "Melville ... had penetrated beyond both innocence and despair to some glimmering of a moral order" (133). Melville has achieved salvation for the Puritan mind caught in the new world of nineteenth-century skepticism.

Chapter 5

New Wine into Old Wineskins

Redburn represents a significant development of Herman Melville's millennial ideals for America. The story concerns a young boy named Wellingborough Redburn and his adventures in New York, on the Atlantic Ocean, and in England. As in the preceding works of Melville, Redburn is a tale of quest and discovery of metaphysical truths. Having lost his father, Redburn decides to ease his mother's cares by going to sea. He joins a ship headed for Liverpool, England, named the Highlander. As a greenhorn he at first regrets going on a sea voyage, but soon finds ways to make himself into a sailor. He finds that most sailors are not a bad lot, though they have corrupted manners. Once in Liverpool he finds the ill-treatment usually given dirty sailors. His most enlightening and shattering experience is the attempt to use an old guidebook to find his way around the city. The guidebook has become outdated and useless. In Liverpool he meets Harry Bolton, a sort of prodigal son who wishes to emigrate to America. The return voyage to America is rough because a fever breaks out among the passengers. Arriving in New York, Redburn finds that the captain will not pay him his wages, and that in fact Redburn owes the ship money. Harry and he angrily leave the ship.

In Redburn, Melville engages in a powerful criticism of the American and English social systems and describes a set of values necessary to the purpose of America. These values are Biblical/Puritan, but yet are tempered by nineteenth-century notions of heart religion and a blurring of denominational distinctions, concepts which are themselves inherent in Protestantism. Melville, in the midst of spiritual searching and confusion at the time of writing Redburn, secularizes the old-fashioned understanding of America's millennial role into a new blend--the democratic equality of all peoples and the Puritan notion of a covenanted people. In a sense Melville overlays Biblical concepts on the political and social problems of the day. Sin becomes social problem; salvation becomes political solution. Melville de-emphasizes the necessity of spiritual conversion in the coming millennium, which seems to rise out of social action rather than through radical inner change. Melville's state of mind and intellectual development during the 1840s and 1850s are important in understanding his vision of a new kingdom, a new millennial America. The very newness of this kingdom called for fresh approaches, original thinking, and unusual interpretations of the critical, undergirding, American source texts, including the Bible. Melville had rejected European and English literary models, happily proclaiming the "true American author." Bercovitch sees this desire for a new authorship building in Melville's career toward Redburn and only later giving way to

disillusionment (The Puritan Origins of the American Self 181). In his letters Melville demonstrates the radical nature of this newness. He wishes the American author to see into the absolute truth of things in a completely independent way. "We think that into no recorded mind has the intense feeling of the visable [sic] truth ever entered more deeply into this man's [Hawthorne's]. By visable truth, we mean the apprehension of the absolute condition of present things as they strike the eye of the man who fears them not ... the man who, like Russian or the British Empire, declares himself a sovereign nature (in himself) amid the powers of heaven, hell, and earth" (124).

William Braswell, in Melville's Religious Thought, provides excellent documentation for the reasons Melville struck such an independent pose. Melville came from a family of "sturdy faith" (8). But various sticky theological questions plagued his mind; for example, Why does God permit evil? Calvinism was content with seemingly contradictory positions. But Melville was unable to accept such tenets unquestioningly. Braswell writes that "[Melville] is one of the strangest and most pathetic cases in his century. None of the English men of letters affected by the skepticism of the time ... were hit quite so hard by their disillusionment" (3).

Although scholars do not know whether or not Melville attended church regularly in his youth, Braswell concludes that from the 1850s on, he seldom went (6). Nathaniel

Hawthorne observed, though, that Melville was no confirmed skeptic or atheist since "'he can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief'" (quoted in Braswell, 3). This is the picture of a man unwilling to throw faith over, yet unhappy in the faith he saw around him in family, friends, and country. Something had to give way in this psychological conflict; a new faith had to emerge. Braswell contends that in Melville, students of literature find a man looking "for learning and wisdom to help him out of his confusion" (15).

Though denigrated by critics and downplayed by Melville himself as a work written hastily for money, Redburn represents an answer to his personal dilemma and confusion.

Thompson in Melville's Quarrel With God supports the connection between Melville's personal intellectual questions and Redburn. Thompson examines the narrative point of view in the novel and abstracts three stages in Melville's mental and spiritual development: (1) the first shock to religious idealism, signified by Wellingborough as the naive narrator, (2) a modified idealism that still believes, signified by Redburn as experienced narrator, and (3) a forthright skepticism toward his Calvinist heritage and a "bitterness toward any authoritarianism which interfered with the natural expression of the natural rights of man," signified by Melville as narrator (75, 76). This corresponds well with Melville's newly discovered answer to his intellectual dilemmas: "that the greatest wisdom for man lies in following the dictates of the heart--the emotions that make one

benevolent toward his fellow men" (Braswell 22). Following the dictates of Calvin's God seemed to offer only a muddle of opposing propositions.

In order to forge a reinterpretation and fresh understanding of the Puritan apocalyptic vision and future glorious millennium, Melville had to deal with Puritanism's principle guidebook and sacred text--the Bible. Although he does not often directly comment on the Bible in Redburn, Melville does provide an indirect and ironic commentary on "guidebooks" of all sorts. Taken together, the various views of guidebooks leave a clear impression that they are not to be completely trusted.

The first of these guidebooks is Smith's Wealth of Nations (99). Redburn's purpose in attempting to read the book is clear--he looks for the secret that will lead to wealth. He discovers that the book is incredibly dry reading and offers none of the answers he is seeking--how to "retrieve the poverty of [his] family, and make them all well to do in the world" (99). This suggests one of the overall themes of the book and of the great truth Melville discovered--that the answer for poverty (and other social ills) is found in human benevolence, love, and equality, and not in dry guidebooks with no inner life. The next guidebook more clearly refers to the Scriptures. Blunt's Dream Book describes in a mystical fashion how to tell the future. Similar to Biblical apocalypses (Daniel and Revelation), the Dream Book is complex and difficult to understand (103). Like

Daniel and Revelation, Blunt's book predicts the Day of Judgment (104). (See Daniel 7 for the heavenly judgment scene and Revelation 14:7--"the hour of his judgment has come.") But ironically, while Blunt cries "'Benches! benches!'" (104) to be used for sitting at the judgment of the last day, he misses the truly serious event actually threatening the crew. "With a wonderful dream in his head" Blunt sleeps the night away while the ignorant "sailors at sea ... seem to know when real danger of any kind is at hand, even in their sleep" (105). At that moment another ship nearly collides with them on the open sea. Melville is highlighting the differences between what he considers real dangers and those only in the imaginations of slightly strange Bible students.

Such a contrast is demonstrated later on the Highlander, perhaps more poignantly but no less effectively. A little man, "a deputy from the Deaf and Dumb Institution in New York, going over to London to address the public in pantomime ... concerning the signs of the times," harmlessly yet wistfully languishes about the deck, gazing windward, "looking disappointed" (120). The "signs of the times" is a phrase found in Matthew 16:3 and is rich in Biblical meaning. From the "time, times and half a time" of Daniel 7:25, to the proclamation of Jesus in Mark 1:14 that "'the time has come, the kingdom of God is near,'" to the apostle Paul's statement concerning the historical context of the gospel "to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment" (Ephesians 1:10), the Scriptures are

unmistakably concerned with the "signs of the times." Considering the dashed hopes and "great disappointment" suffered by the Millerites in New England in 1844 (concerning the "signs" of the second coming), Melville probably had in mind such Biblical interpretations. Like Blunt, the little man was missing the real action--"He seemed the true microcosm, or little world to himself: standing in no need of levying contributions upon the surrounding universe" (121).

In the Liverpool travel scenes Melville completes his ironic undermining of guidebooks. Using his father's guidebook to Liverpool, Redburn tours the city. He is impressed with the "vanity of all human exaltation" as he reads the guidebook's glowing descriptions of a city now fifty years older (163, 164). The past, he learns, simply sets the stage for the future (163). Man, thinking his cities magnificent, fails to see them as only another destined layer beneath a future city (164). Melville was well-versed in current Biblical archaeology and higher criticism. He knew that the Bible described ancient cities praised for their size, magnificence, and opulence, which by the 1850s scholars knew were only acres in size and populated by a few hundred or thousand inhabitants.

In approaching Liverpool with his venerable guidebook, Redburn has much "boyish delight at the prospect of visiting a place, the infallible clew to all whose intricacies I held in my hand" (165). Since the book worked for his father, in his father's time, he had no doubt but that he would be able

to use it as well (165). But "Dear delusion!" (166). "It never occurred to [his] boyish thoughts, that though a guide-book, fifty years old, might have done good service in its day, yet it would prove but a miserable cicerone to a modern" (166). Redburn discovers that he lives in a "moving world" (171); "it never stands still" (172). "The book on which I had so much relied ... was next to useless. Yes, the thing that had guided the father, could not guide the son" (171). "Guide-books," Redburn learns, "are the least reliable books in all literature" (172). "Every age makes its own guide-books" (172). Melville here states his point directly. Americans must not be bound to British literary models but must also eschew ancient ones as well. Those models can still serve a general educative purpose but must not be held up as the only guiding statements for the present age. Redburn says, "Though my guide-book had been stripped of its reputation for infallibility, I did not treat with contumely or disdain, those sacred pages which had once been a beacon to my sire" (172).

Redburn understands the lesson Melville intends to teach his own generation. "Put it up," Redburn says, "hereafter follow your nose throughout Liverpool; it will stick to you through thick and thin" (174). America needs to look for new ways, to see the unalloyed truth, to create a current, peculiarly American faith. The answers are in the benevolent heart of man, not in the old guidebooks. The American people must reject all the old models. However, Melville needed to

address an essentially Christian audience in familiar language used in a new way in order to create the new image of the purpose of America. Redburn accomplishes this task.

Lewis O. Saum notes in The Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America, "The most basic tension in the pre-Civil War world view had to do with the juxtaposition between the spiritual and the temporal" (62). For Melville the merely spiritual had little authority. But he had to address America in understandable language. Braswell observes that "though [Melville] had recently expressed doubt about certain Christian doctrines, he ... adopts Christian terminology to his own purpose, pleading with orthodox Christians as though their beliefs were his own" (46). Melville capitalized on Christian America's dilemma in attempting to balance the spiritual and the temporal. Saum indicates that gradually during the period before the Civil War the providential view of America--God's active, spiritual intercession and leading--gave way to a progressive view (5,6). Niebuhr in The Kingdom of God in America writes, "Protestantism furnished a revolutionary philosophy to the new forces which were stirring in the political, economic and racial world" (29). The force and language, then, for nineteenth-century intellectuals like Melville, came from seventeenth-century Protestantism. But, Niebuhr continues, later revolutionaries rejected the God of those same Protestants. Without a church-state amalgam, economic man could rule himself (29). So while many in the nineteenth century could still claim godly

blessings for American actions, "Melville sketched a providence vastly removed from this godly [underwriting] of national intentions" (Saum 19).

But in Redburn Melville continued to use Biblical language even though the Biblical God was now less visible. At least three passages demonstrate this new secularized use of Scripture. Niebuhr has observed that theological questions are at base really political ones (6). Melville turns these questions into the purely human and political. In "What Redburn Saw in Launcelott's-Heys," Jesus' story of the good Samaritan reappears (see Luke 10 for this parable). In touring the dingy area of Liverpool Redburn hears a "low, hopeless, endless wail of some one forever lost" (199). The phrase "forever lost" is particularly significant in a description redolent with a Biblical view of the spiritually lost (see Matthew 13 for the parable of the weeds [the lost]). Looking into a cellar, Redburn sees a pitiful mother with children. He asks himself, aren't these poor people worth the life of any monarch? Meeting a number of local people, he inquires if something could be done for the mother and children in the cellar. As in the Biblical parable, no one will have anything to do with them (200). One man says, "'It's none of my business, Jack'" (200). For Redburn the problem is social and political, not spiritual. He says, "I felt an almost irresistible impulse to do them the last mercy, of in some way putting an end to their horrible lives" (203). But such an act of "mercy" would be condemned by the

"law" (203). The law, or society, will not do anything to help, but would work unceasingly to see that such an act of mercy-killing was punished. According to Niebuhr, Calvinism had always emphasized the kingship of God, his action in coming after man (18). In this passage in Redburn the focus is on the inaction of society in failing to work for benevolent, humanitarian treatment. The concern is that "all men are created equal," rather than on an obligation to a sovereign God. The "sin" here is the transgression against a human principle, not against God. Comparing Protestant and Catholic moral philosophy, Niebuhr points out that while Catholicism values contemplation of God, Protestantism values "the sovereignty of God ... [making] obedient activity superior to contemplation ..." (20).

At the end of "Booble-Alleys," more literal Biblical language appears. In this "sooty and begrimed" place "the very houses have a reeking, Sodom-like, and murderous look." For Melville the various perverts practicing unspeakable acts here are "a company of miscreant misanthropes, bent upon doing all the malice to mankind in their power." Once again the betrayal of human benevolence is the principle issue; for this "they ought to be burned out of their arches like vermin" "with sulphur and brimstone" (211). The tools are Biblical, but the actor is man as destroyer of vermin.

One other scene demonstrates how Melville is politicizing and socializing previously spiritual issues. Still travelling about Liverpool, Redburn witnesses a "pale,

ragged man, rushing along frantically, and striving to throw off his wife and children, who clung to his arms and legs; and, in God's name, conjured him not to desert them." This scene is comparable to John Bunyan's description of Christian leaving his family in Pilgrim's Progress. In Redburn, however, the man is "in some despair, and craziness of wretchedness." "Poverty, poverty, poverty" drives this man from his family (221). In Pilgrim's Progress Christian leaves on a spiritual quest more important than even family. Bunyan's scene is purely allegorical. Redburn's desperate man faces a social problem--he cannot keep his family together in the face of abject poverty. Society's carelessness and hardheartedness is breaking up families. The solution to this essentially social concern is political action. The elimination of poverty will allow the natural benevolence of the family to thrive. The solution is not merely metaphorical, but a literal political solution stated in familiar Biblical images (that is, to the nineteenth-century readers of Bunyan).

Niebuhr identifies such political ideals, though framed in Biblical language, as distinctly non-Puritan.

Seventeenth century Protestants could not be utopians or idealists in the popular sense of the words, for they did not share the fundamental presuppositions of utopianism--the beliefs that human ills are due to bad institutions, that a fresh start with good institutions will result in a perfect commonwealth, and that human reason is sufficiently wise, or human will sufficiently selfless, to make the execution of a perfect society possible. They were for the most part thoroughly convinced that mankind had somehow been

corrupted; they knew that the order of glory had not yet been established; they were pilgrims all who did not expect to be satisfied in the time of their pilgrimage. (49)

In Redburn Melville successfully argued the need for a new American guidebook, and politicized the old Puritan hope for the kingdom of God. He needed, however, to account for the essentially pessimistic view Calvinism took toward the nature of man. He had to accomplish this because a secular state has no power to change its citizens if people are by nature depraved. In a pessimistic world view like that of Calvinism the state must use coercion to control its citizens. Melville is asking, "Is this necessary?"

The cook on board the Highlander was "much given to metaphysics, and used to talk about original sin" (94). Redburn discovers him pouring over his Bible and observes that "reading must have been very hard work for him; for he muttered to himself quite loud as he read; and big drops of sweat would stand upon his brow, and roll off, till they hissed on the hot stove before him" (94). This scene indicates the intense psychological struggle of the cook as he attempts to reconcile various Biblical teachings. He was pondering how naturally depraved humans could be commanded to conform to all God's laws or be held accountable for their actions. Doing the impossible seems to be a particular frustration of his. Redburn notices that he curses occasionally in trying to light his cook-house fire on wet, stormy mornings (95). Melville implies that perplexities such as this are unnecessary and even harmful. The

faithful cook, toiling at his lowly job, searches his soul for the beast nature he presumes is there.

The moral condition of the sailors is an important aspect of Redburn. In trying to account for what they are and how they live, Melville further clarifies his view of original sin. He acknowledges their low social standing and general immorality (152) but accounts for this not with the doctrine of original sin but with the need to "[ameliorate] the moral organization of all civilization." They have, he says, missed out on the general progress of man (153). But what can be expected of a class of men "friendless and alone in the world," "beyond the reach of ... good influences," "exposed to a thousand enticements" (152). They form, Melville says, the wheels of the wagon of the world, and as such are always stuck in the mire (153, 154). Their "original sin" has not put them there, but a world that shuns them and treats them like beasts (154). The important point here is that society creates the beast in the sailor; the sailor was not born a beast steeped in sin. This indicates a new definition for "lostness"--not an alienation from God but an alienation between people. One of the causes then for evil in the world is not those with souls sold to the devil, but those "whose souls are deposited at their banker's" (266). It is this class structure that causes the cruel treatment for the Irish immigrants. Religious feeling is an aberration generated when people suffer from class structure. When plague breaks out among the immigrants, "spasmodic devotions" break out also (314). Melville is saying that we do

not need devotion so much as we need reform of class structure. The only assistance sailors receive are "instructive little moral precepts" printed on tobacco pouches while "the noble truck-horses" are treated like noble "Roman citizens" leading "dignified lives" (217). In contrast, the sailors are whipped and degraded into working. Duban says that "Redburn becomes the first novel to dramatize the tension between Christianity's regenerative premise and a democratic ethic of self-help cultivated in an atmosphere of laissez-faire individualism that is governed solely by laws of fitness and chance" (59).

Melville makes a connection between the various beggars, (and, by inference, degraded sailors and immigrants) and the rejected and dispossessed of ancient Israel. The cripples of Israel in Jesus' time would gather at the pool of Bethesda hoping for a miracle (see John 5). The beggars of Liverpool gathered at the docks while Redburn wished "that some angel might descend, and turn the waters of the docks into an elixir, that would heal all their woes, and make them, man and woman, healthy and whole as their ancestors, Adam and Eve, in the garden" (208). Melville wants a new set of circumstances for these people, a new paradise on earth. What sort of place would this be? How could this setting be created?

For over two hundred years Americans have assumed that America was the destined haven, the new heaven on earth. According to Bercovitch, the early Puritans took this very literally. He notes that "the subsequent impact of their concept cannot be overestimated." The spiritual biography of

the nation was wrapped in concepts such as the "American dream, manifest destiny, redeemer nation, and, fundamentally, the American self as representative of universal rebirth" (The Puritan Origins of the American Self 108). Melville, however, is saying something quite different about this view of the American self. Manifest destiny had been a mixed package. Bercovitch observes that "for Winthrop and Mather, the progress of the American theocracy, church and commonwealth together, is part of ecclesiastical history" (The Puritan Origins of the American Self 73). Puritans seemed to be saying that because it possessed the correct theology, creed, and prophetic promise, the meaning and purpose of America would always remain the same. Various jeremiads warned against rejection of the covenant relationship as codified in church and commonwealth laws. In Redburn Melville introduces Irish immigrants, assorted beggars, and rejected sailors as examples of the need for a new American paradise with a different kind of creed and law that would accommodate such disreputable citizens. Meditating on the despised beggar woman and children in the cellar in Liverpool, Redburn thinks, "Ah, what are our creeds, and how do we hope to be saved?" (204).

The poor, the foreign, the Roman Catholic "have God's right to come; though they bring all Ireland and her miseries with them" (318). The Calvinist creed would reject such individuals as unAmerican in the covenant sense. How could God "destine" followers of a Roman pope? How could an America filled with chanters and candle lighters redeem the world? No,

Melville says, that idea is gone forever, "for the whole world is the patrimony of the whole world" (318). How can a nation claiming the name of Christ treat immigrants on ships as it does, stacked in dark, rank holds? What laws demand this sort of treatment? (319). Echoing the apostle Paul in Galatians 5:23 Melville says, "There is no law concerning these things," meaning that love and benevolence demand better treatment for the Irish. "We talk of the Turks, and abhor the cannibals; but may not some of them, go to heaven, before some of us? We may have civilized bodies and yet barbarous souls" (319). Jesus said the same of the Pharisees, "'I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you'" (Matthew 21:31). For Melville then, covenanted America, like covenanted Israel, could lose out to a new chosen nation. "Not till we know, that one grief outweighs ten thousand joys, will we become what Christianity is striving to make us" (319).

In 1820 an edition of Mather's Magnalia was published and sold steadily for decades. The editor of the edition "speculated ... that the interest centered not so much in the church history as in the general fascination with the growth of America" (Bercovitch The Puritan Origins of the American Self 87). Melville understood, unlike many of his fellow Americans, that the promise of America could be lost if a worn-out creed remained rooted in the American consciousness, a creed claiming blessings when such blessings were impossible in the midst of cruelty and social oppression. Covenanted America had to take

another step beyond the old "extended parallel between historical Israel and the United States" (Tuveson 157). Tuveson agrees that Melville tried to discover for America a new "wisdom, which will eventually enlighten the world" (157). That new wisdom, the new vision, needed to reject temporary covenants and creeds. Melville uses the Melchizedek theme to explain this. Throughout the book of Hebrews the apostle Paul tries to explain to Jews the priesthood of Jesus. Jesus was not a priest in the line of covenantal Israel, the line of Aaron and the Levites, but was "in the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:6). Melchizedek was a priest in Salem (ancient Jerusalem) centuries before the establishment of the Levitical, covenantal priesthood (Genesis 14:18). Paul said Melchizedek had no genealogy, no beginning or end (see Hebrews 7). In other words, this priesthood was superior to the Levitical system, which was based on racial bloodlines, the sacrifice of animals, and was only temporary until the true high priest (Christ) arrived. Melville uses this concept to proclaim a new American calling beyond covenanted, Puritan America which would "forever extinguish the prejudices of national dislikes." "Who was our father and our mother?" "We are the heirs of all time, and with all nations we divide our inheritance. On this Western Hemisphere all tribes and people are forming into one federated whole; and there is a future which shall see the estranged children of Adam restored as to the old hearth-stone in Eden" (185).

This is the new "Earth's Paradise," "the world's jubilee morning." In America "shall the curse of Babel be revoked, a new Pentecost come" (186). At the ancient tower of Babel men's language was confused and they were scattered (see Genesis 11). At Pentecost the Spirit gave understanding to all peoples. "Each one heard [the disciples] speaking in his own language" (Acts 2:6). This is the new American millennium, a time of security, health, love, benevolence, and understanding. Redburn achieves this masterful apocalyptic vision, at once familiar (Biblical, covenantal) and revolutionary. No son of the Puritans could remain comfortable with it, no recent immigrant safe without it. This was Melville's declaration of independence, his new wine into old wineskins.

Chapter 6
Toward the Inland Zone

White-Jacket and Moby-Dick demonstrate the height of Herman Melville's ability to combine a knowledge of sailing life with the mastery of storytelling. Only Billy Budd comes close to repeating the kind of achievement found in these two books. Both narratives take place entirely at sea after relatively short opening scenes prior to weighing anchor. Significantly, both end at sea. Each book represents Melville's successful attempt at creating powerful symbolic elements (a jacket and a whale) within the context of highly detailed descriptions of life aboard an American warship and an American whaler.

Of the two books, White-Jacket is "positive" in theme in the sense that it openly points the way to the American millennium, while Moby-Dick is the "negative" story of a false and tragic pursuit much like the quest for Yillah which Taji persists in after Babbalanja ends his pursuit on the island of Serenia. White-Jacket might be viewed as a representation of Bunyan's Christian on the right path, with Moby-Dick seen as a representation of a pilgrim off the path. White-Jacket ends "homeward bound," while Moby-Dick ends in disaster.

A young sailor (his name is never revealed) aboard an American man-of-war knows his ship the Neversink will soon be

in the icy waters of Cape Horn and that he will need a warm jacket. In harbor at Callao, Peru he fashions himself an odd-looking white jacket made of odds and ends. The jacket arouses suspicion among some of the crew, and White-Jacket, as he comes to be known, must leave his mess group for another headed by a renowned and respected petty officer of the maintop, Jack Chase. As White-Jacket performs with exactness all of the rigorous duties of a common sailor, he experiences and witnesses a multitude of abuses heaped upon himself and his fellow sailors by a set of arbitrary, haughty, and cruel officers. The greatest focus of abuse centers on the practice of flogging as punishment.

He continually tries to rid himself of his hated jacket, but is never able to do so until an incident aloft. High among the rigging one day, he accidentally falls one hundred feet into the sea. He saves his life by cutting away his jacket. Another sailor sees the jacket and harpoons it, thinking he sees a shark. Brought back on board and immediately put back to work, White-Jacket continues heading for home aboard the Neversink.

The primary contrast created in White-Jacket is that between the arbitrary rule of ship discipline and Melville's advocacy of human brotherhood. But the millennial theme is subtly maintained since the way to brotherhood can be achieved only through Christian principles. Melville does not argue for mere superficial change in the naval handbook, societal attitudes toward sailors, or reform of the

relationship between superiors and subordinates, but for a more fundamental change in human nature which would supercede all other attempts at change.

From the first chapters of the novel there is an explicit belief that without the absolute order of the ship chaos would reign. "Were it not for these regulations a man-of-war's crew would be nothing but a mob." Man's flawed nature seems to allow no other effective means of achieving the specific purpose of a naval vessel. Every one of the five hundred men aboard the warship "knows his own special place" (355). Among the crew there is "endless subdivision" into precise groups for all of the various tasks demanded by a huge, three-masted sailing ship (358). Endless numbers complicate the life of a sailor--the number of his mess, his ship's number, the number of his hammock, gun number, as well as others (358, 359).

This carefully oiled system is run with the iron grip of the ship's officers. At the pinnacle is the captain.

It is no limited monarchy, [White-Jacket observes], where the sturdy Commons have a right to petition, and snarl if they please; but almost a despotism, like the Grand Turk's. The captain's word is law; he never speaks but in the imperative mood. When he stands on his Quarter-deck at sea, he absolutely commands as far as eye can reach. Only the moon and stars are beyond his jurisdiction. He is lord and master of the sun. (371)

The captain's power over the sun is humorously described such that "It is not twelve o'clock till he says so" (371). The captain's authority is demonstrated daily, since after the sailing-master completes his noon sighting, a "respectful

suggestion" is sent to the captain, who responds, "'Make it so.'" Only then may the messenger-boy strike eight bells (372).

Melville approves of the general arrangement of affairs aboard a warship because such discipline takes place on the unruly sea. It is expedient that rigid order be enforced, "For a ship is a bit of terra firma cut off from the main; it is a state in itself; and the captain is its king" (371). Even Jack Chase, the paragon of noble republican virtuousness among the men, defender of sailors' rights, is called "a little bit of a dictator" (362). But when Jack goes ashore, he changes. White-Jacket tells a strange story concerning Jack's leaving his duty on ship.

He abandoned the frigate from far higher and nobler, nay, glorious motives. Though bowing to naval discipline afloat; yet ashore, he was a stickler for the Rights of Man, and the liberties of the world. He went to draw a partisan blade in the civil commotions of Peru; and befriend, heart and soul, what he deemed the cause of the Right. (365)

Surprisingly, the captain tolerated this dereliction of duty, reinstating him as long as he returned to his duty aboard the ship (367). The plain truth is that such radical behavior (involving "heart and soul") can occur only on shore.

Aboard ship, life is a ceaseless round of sometimes inexplicably regimented behavior, such as that exhibited at meal times. Men eat according to rank, and "He who dines latest is the greatest man; and he who dines earliest is accounted the least" (377). This means that the lowly sailor

must always, and unhealthily, eat all three of his meals within the space of eight hours--precisely at eight, noon, and four (379).

Though external behavior itself is carefully regulated, Melville describes the moral condition of sailors as generally low. He writes that "sailors, as a class, entertain the most liberal notions concerning morality and the Decalogue" (387). All manner of evil flourishes, and "It is in vain that the officers, by threats of condign punishment, endeavor to instill more virtuous principles into their crew" (388). The great moral difference among the crew depends on where in the ship a sailor is stationed. Throughout White-Jacket, men below decks are generally identified with moral obtuseness of some sort, while those in the rigging are morally superior. Melville equates this difference to "the wondrous influence of habitual sights and sounds upon the human temper." He asks, "Who were more liberal-hearted, lofty-minded, gayer, more jocund, elastic, adventurous, given to fun and frolic, than the top-men of the fore, main, and mizzen masts?" "The reason of their lofty-mindedness was, that they were high lifted above the petty tumults, carping cares, and paltriness of the decks below" (397).

Melville attaches significance to this placement of men. For him it shows an approach to that which is original and eternal in the universe. White-Jacket meditates on his condition as he sits aloft and comments on the thoughts generated, "And it is a very fine feeling, and one that fuses

us into the universe of things, and makes us a part of the All." "Ay, ay! we sailors sail not in vain. We expatriate ourselves to nationalize with the universe" (427). White-Jacket lauds the life of the roving sailor, expressing disgust with the sedentary life of the towns. However, he qualifies what he means by true sea life. It is "not life in a man-of-war, which, with its martial formalities and thousand vices, stabs to the heart the soul of all free-and-easy honorable rovers." For him the true sailor is a very metaphysical being. He looks for spiritual benefits in sailing instead of the opportunities for a daily ration of grog as well as other vices that the common sailor craves. Aloft, one hundred feet above the deck, he says, "I lay entranced; now dozing, now dreaming; now thinking of things past, and anon of the life to come." The sea is for White-Jacket a means to an end. Something new awaits him. Some landed experience is out there, some original, home ground where, in the end, life will be more meaningful than in those tired towns of the past in which one hears only the "dull tramp of these plodders, plodding their dull way from their cradles to their graves" (428).

Aboard ship White-Jacket occasionally witnesses something of the unity and wholeness he seeks. The sailors get up an entertaining play with "Matchless Jack" among the players. As the play is performed, he is startled to see some of the officers enjoying this spectacle with the crew. "It is a sweet thing," he says, "to see these officers confess a

human brotherhood with us" (447). He imagines that this unusual mingling with the sailors might somehow create a more cordial atmosphere. But he is disappointed. The very next morning he sees these same officers assemble with the captain to witness a punishment. An old salt comments, "'See, White-Jacket, all round they have shipped their quarter-deck faces again. But this is the way'" (447, 448). The old way is difficult to throw over since "precedents are against it" (435).

But some higher force is always breaking through men's arbitrary ways. This force can be seen in the story of Mad Jack's assumption of command during a powerful storm off Cape Horn. The Neversink is running (foolishly) full sail about midnight when a sudden gale blows up. Mad Jack, the officer of the deck, refuses to turn over command of the ship because the captain gives a command every sailor knows is wrong. "Contrary orders! but Mad Jack's were obeyed" (459). Melville comments on this event through White-Jacket, saying that "In time of peril, like the needle to the load-stone, obedience, irrespective of rank, generally flies to him who is best fitted to command" (463). In a system infiltrated by "favoritism and nepotism," incompetent captains can be found throughout the navy. The system for choosing captains is not based on experience and ability; therefore, few common seamen are enabled to rise to a captaincy (467). The same criticism applies to the naval practice of sometimes placing "childish, ignorant, stupid, or idiotic" midshipmen in charge of mature

and experienced sailors. These grown men must obey without hesitation the most absurd or arbitrary orders of "boy-worm[s]" (575, 576). Melville is in these incidents emphasizing the natural possession of gifts as a means for organizing society rather than the determinations of society's arbitrary wishes based upon greed and selfishness. That Melville is suggesting a symbolic value for a warship can be seen when White-Jacket puzzles over "this man-of-war world" (519).

The hideous practice of flogging can be laid at the feet of arbitrariness. After a vivid section describing such punishment, Melville bemoans how flogging can be justified at all, especially since the laws broken by the sailors are "things not essentially criminal, but only made so by arbitrary laws" (492).

Melville appeals to higher laws and natural principles in the condemnation of flogging. The appeal is essentially a Puritan one since it refers, not to laws superior to a secular society, but to laws that ought to be explicitly a part of essential Americanness and the essence of the American personality. Melville appeals to an established American/Puritan moral base. In "Flogging Not Necessary," Melville uses the religious language of American specialness to argue for the rejection of tradition.

Escaped from the house of bondage, Israel of old did not follow after the ways of the Egyptians. To her was given an express dispensation; to her were given new things under the sun. And we Americans are the peculiar, chosen people--the Israel of our

time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. Seventy years ago we escaped from thrall; and, besides our first birth-right--embracing one continent of earth--God has given to us, for a future inheritance, the broad domains of the political pagans, that shall yet come and lie down under the shade of our ark, without bloody hands being lifted. God has predestinated, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls. The rest of the nations must soon be in our rear. We are the pioneers of the world; the advance-guard, sent on through the wilderness of untried things, to break a new path in the New World that is ours. In our youth is our strength; in our inexperience, our wisdom. At a period when other nations have but lisped, our deep voice is heard afar. Long enough have we been skeptics with regard to ourselves, and doubted whether, indeed, the political Messiah had come. But he has come in us, if we would but give utterance to his promptings. And let us always remember that with ourselves, almost for the first time in the history of earth, national selfishness is unbounded philanthropy; for we can not do a good to America but we give alms to the world. (506)

Americans are crossing over into something that has as yet not been discovered. America is more than the mountains, valleys, or streams of her physical landscape. America is a spiritual experience exhibited in radically philanthropic people who feel great things in their souls. They can feel it in the soul because in America faith is not something forced upon the individual, as it is on the Neversink. Aboard ship the captain has the right to require men to attend divine services, a practice directly opposed to the United States Constitution (512).

Melville argues that one cannot condemn the Russian Navy for absolutism since Russian society itself is absolutist. "But with us it is different. Our institutions claim to be based upon broad principles of political liberty and

equality" (498). As ancient Romans had special rights based upon birth (see 496), so too Americans are held to a special standard which Melville compares to "the Law of Nature" (499). Thus, flogging is wrong on the basis of "the essential dignity of man, which no legislator has a right to violate In a word, we denounce [flogging] as religiously, morally, and immutably wrong" (500). Thus, the judgment of natural law and the principles of primitive and original Americanness will be the same. As Melville observes, "Christianity has taught me that, at the last day, man-of-war's-men will not be judged by the Articles of War, nor by the United States Statutes at Large, but by immutable laws, ineffably beyond the comprehension of the honorable Board of Commodores and Navy Commissioners" (545).

Natural law must always contend against the very fabric of a warship, which Melville makes symbolic "of much that is tyrannical and repelling in human nature." In a warship the officers are often eager for the glory of war, while the average sailor fears it, thus creating a "contrast between the forecastle and the quarter-deck." The situation in a warship, where one part is cursed while another is blessed, destroys the feelings of brotherhood that should reign "uncoerced" (566). Melville looks forward to the time (a time under the control of God) when no segment of society will interpret the signs of war with joy (567).

This future time is described as explicitly Christian, which is ironic because at the present time America is

already a Christian nation. However, the future experience will be fundamentally different from America's present "man-of-war" set of social principles. Melville says,

But alas! when Virtue sits high aloft on a frigate's poop, when Virtue is crowned in the cabin a Commodore, when Virtue rules by compulsion, and domineers over Vice as a slave, then Virtue, though her mandates be outwardly observed, bears little interior sway. To be efficacious, Virtue must come down from aloft, even as our blessed Redeemer came down to redeem our whole man-of-war world; to that end, mixing with its sailors and sinners as equals. (588, 589)

Here are the same truly virtuous people seen by Babbalanja on the island of Serenia. Melville is describing the spiritual condition of the true chosen of Israel to be re-enacted in an American nation free of religious coercion and enjoying equality of virtue, not merely equality of political status.

As Melville understands and describes the American condition, society is built on the pyramid system. "Virtue" resides among the elite at the top who receive a refined training and education, while the moral condition of the lower orders is ignored. These classes are useful as subjects for a detached examination of the ills and troubles of the uncultured, a characteristic exhibited by the Neversink's surgeon Dr. Cuticle, a master of anatomy but a failed physician and healer. He carefully performs his operation on the smashed thigh of a common sailor, without emotion or passion, but expressing profound interest in the details and exigencies of a surgery performed on a man who will perish moments after its completion (622-627).

The American warship illustrates what has become of America itself, a Christian nation in need of being re-christianized (631). The nation claims Christianity, but her actions betray the distance from the eternal principles on which she was founded. This is the reason White-jacket, when threatened unjustly with the scourge, hauls himself before the heavenly tribunal ("that of Jehovah") for judgment and defense (644). Only in the future "Millennium," Melville comments, will individuals have their eyes opened to the "obsolete barbarism" of the age (647).

Melville intends us to believe that those future millennial Americans will have been indeed re-christianized. In fact, Americans seem not to have been Christianized at all. They exhibit behavior reminiscent of the old covenant of law and works. Aboard the Neversink, as White-jacket listens to the Articles of War being read, he imagines them to be "the infallible, unappealable dispensation and code" (657). There is not the slightest hope within the code for "reservations" or "contingencies." There is "not the remotest promise of pardon or reprieve; not a glimpse of commutation of the sentence; all hope and consolation is shut out--shall suffer death! that is the simple fact for you to digest." He asks, Where is the Sermon on the Mount? Where is Christian love? For White-jacket the Articles of War "[become] an index to the true condition of the present civilization of the world" (658). War itself is an abomination to the civilized world--it is "unchristian, barbarous, brutal, and savoring of

the Feejee Islands, [and] cannibalism" (682). War turns men into "blasphemers" and "fiend[s]" (687).

Melville argues that Americans are a people who should live within the eternal and not within the shadows and patterns of systems and cultures of the barbaric, long dead past. This point is indirectly supported by Melville's description of the hypocrisy of naval officers, who rigorously enforce the Articles of War without being themselves subject to them. Such behavior mimics Christ's view of the Pharisees who piled worthless requirements on to the people while violating those same requirements themselves (Matthew 23:3, 4). The present Article-of-War America Melville blames on the British. He writes, "No; [The Articles of War] are an importation from abroad, even from Britain, whose laws we Americans hurled off as tyrannical, and yet retained the most tyrannical of all." Melville idealized the period in American history before the importation of the Articles of War during the "Puritan Republic." Only later was the "monarchy restored," preparing the way for the imposition of the Articles of War (662). Thus, the Articles of War symbolize an oppressive system of forced obedience, not essentially different from "Mohammed enforcing Moslemism with the sword and the Koran" (667).

Melville uses an argument from Christology to bolster his case. He notes that Christians have been unable to translate their ideals into "bringing about a Millennium" (691). They have embraced the notion that the principles of

Christianity are impractical for the present world (as Plotinus Plinlimmon advocates in Pierre, showing that chronological or celestial time can never be mixed with horological or terrestrial time, see Pierre 247-252).

Melville, however, indicates that the nature of Christ had a "divine consistency" in that Christ was both God and man (692). In other words, Christ successfully applied heavenly principles in this world, principles Christians today seem to teach to the heathen for the purposes of evangelism ("bringing about a Millennium") without actually living them. John Samson, author of White Lies: Melville's Narratives of Lies, notes the millennialist nature of this passage, writing that, "In a word, White-Jacket is a millennialist" (141).

Grenberg, in his comments on Jack Chase as Christ-figure, misses the Christological implications by writing,

we must conclude that Melville conceives of Christ as impotent in the affairs of this world. He is an idea without substance, an ideal without force. Jack Chase thus embodies the essential dilemma of Melville's dogged inquiry into the nature of perfection and his hardening conviction that perfection is unattainable in this life. (83)

The man-of-war ship (representing America and/or the world) exemplifies the realities of human life. It is built on "Checks and balances, blood against blood." The ship's various ranks and rigid discipline keeps the balance of power through the grinding of its "cruel cogs and wheels" while disregarding "the moral well-being of the crew" (742). A warship is a seething collection of "irritabilities, jealousies, and cabals, the spiteful detractions and

animosities, that lurk far down, and cling to the very keelson of the ship." Melville writes that the "immutable ceremonies," "iron etiquette," "spiked barriers," "delegated absolutism," and lack of appeal for abuse creates "a general social condition which is the precise reverse of what any Christian could desire" (743). A ship is a breeding ground for various unmentionable sins and horrors which called forth the destruction of ancient Gomorrah (743, 744).

A ship seems to operate best when manned by men of low moral worth. Melville indicates that common sailors such as "Landless" are much admired by the officers of a ship. Landless was "a fellow without shame, without a soul, so dead to the least dignity of manhood that he could hardly be called a man." On the other hand, "a seaman who exhibits traits of moral sensitiveness, whose demeanor shows some dignity within; this is the man they, in many cases, instinctively dislike" (753).

But the realities of ship life are not to be seen as irredeemable or unchangeable. White-jacket says, "There are some vessels blessed with patriarchal, intellectual Captains, gentlemanly and brotherly officers, and docile and Christianized crews" (754). The Neversink is inhabited by some sailors and officers (White-jacket's group of main-top-men headed by Jack Chase) with the power of vision and the bond of brotherhood enabling them to see beyond the cruelties of life aboard a man-of-war. They can imagine, as they watch the stars, "the everlasting, glorious Future, forever beyond

us." The warship now glides toward some "far inland" zone which the sighted may see (766).

Hand in hand we top-mates stand, rocked in our
Pisgah top. And over the starry waves, and broad
out into the blandly blue and boundless night,
spiced with strange sweets from the long-sought
land--the whole long cruise predestinated ours,
though often in tempest-time we almost refused to
believe in that far-distant shore--straight out
into that fragrant night, ever-noble Jack Chase,
matchless and unmatchable Jack Chase stretches
forth his bannered hand, and, pointing shoreward,
cries: 'For the last time, hear Camoens, boys!'
[after which comes a song celebrating arrival at
"natal soil"] (767)

In "The End," Melville equates the ship "that sails through the sea [with] this earth that sails through the air" (768). Earth dwellers are not condemned to a continual passage through space. They are destined for a final harbor congenial to their true natures (since the voyage itself is making them sick). Melville's concept of a final haven belies Grenberg's contention that there can be no "new worlds" for White-Jacket, and that in White-Jacket "Melville closes the circles of world, time, and space, trapping the self within unbreakable bonds" (85). Melville's idea of a final haven does not refer to the American millennium. Melville is primarily concerned in this final chapter with the apocalypse, with the ultimate destiny of humanity. The millennial element is that place of individual serenity at which the visionary arrives in the present world. The world itself is undoubtedly a man-of-war place,

Yet the worst of our evils we blindly inflict upon ourselves; our officers can not remove them, even if they would. From the last ills no being can save

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another; therein each man must be his own saviour.
For the rest, whatever befall us, let us never
train our murderous guns inboard. (769)

The American millennium is that condition, not of apocalyptic otherworldliness, but of brotherly bondedness and concern acted out in a hideous environment by those fully knowledgeable regarding the essential unworkableness of things.

Dillingham argues incorrectly "that White-Jacket is [no] more a part of the crew or the great world as the novel progresses than he is initially" (65), nor is Grenberg correct when he writes that "the narrative in White-Jacket is essentially static ... and the narrator seems to end where he began--in the doldrums of indecision and isolation" (77). Jack Chase, White-Jacket, and the other main-top-men know the true condition of the world, they know its brutish nature, they understand what lies far below them on the decks of the warship. But in Christian affection they bond themselves together in the belief that ultimately a glorious destiny will arrive. They believe in belief. There is meaning behind the mask. Sailors (literal or metaphysical) can sound the bottom to determine the nearness of the far shore. Such belief can beat back the worst abuses and evils which afflict the world, though certainly never eradicates them. The American millennium is not a period without tragedy and suffering, it is a period of tragedy circumscribed.

Samson misinterprets when he writes that White-Jacket's millennialism is mere conservatism and complacency, or even "contradictory, for millennium and tribulation are mutually

exclusive. It is also abhorrent to Melville, for it denies the reality of pain and suffering" (154). Bell comes close to seeing the true millennial nature of White-Jacket. Bell demonstrates that White-Jacket is actually skeptical of romantic and revolutionary notions of reform. The novel is not a work of protest pitting artificial codes against the noumenal character of the individual (see 200 for the discussion noumenal philosophy of Jack Chase). Instead, "Beneath the surface ... lurks a growing recognition that perhaps the 'artificial' is all the 'truth' there is." Perhaps the Declaration of Independence is no truer than the Articles of War (211). Where Bell goes wrong is in discounting what Melville is suggesting is possible in this world. Bell contends that "Melville [drifts] from messianic sincerity to the somberly ironic dualism of Pierre" (211). Just as critics have missed the achievement of Babbalanja in Mardi, so also Bell needlessly argues for the fundamental pessimism in Melville. Because Melville begins to understand that depravity is not the production of social evil (see Bell 201, 202) does not suggest that Melville offers no consolations or hopes for inhabitants of a depraved world. Grenberg correctly suggests that "[White-Jacket] demands nothing less than meaningful experience in the world" but erroneously writes that "it is precisely this fusion of mind and experience, meaning and fact, that the novel as a whole denies" (88). The main-top-men of the Neversink have discovered a workable solution for the problem of pain, sin,

and unworkability in the joyous union of men of belief and vision. This is the stability which Grenberg denies them.

In Moby-Dick Melville created his most interesting wanderer. The narrator and wanderer, Ishmael, seeks a whaling voyage for therapeutic and metaphysical purposes, or, as he expresses it, as a "substitute for pistol and ball." At the Spouter Inn in New Bedford he finds a stranger in his bed, a cannibal named Queequeg with whom he later signs onto a whaling ship, the Pequod. The most compelling aspect of the whaler is her captain named Ahab, a severe-looking man with a leg made from the jawbone of a whale. Within a few days of leaving New Bedford, Captain Ahab announces to the crew the reward for the man sighting the white whale named Moby-Dick, the very whale that maimed Ahab. Along the way the ship and crew sight and kill various schools of whales, as well as encounter other whaling ships. Captain Ahab unhesitatingly asks for news of Moby-Dick. One captain of a whaler, himself a victim of the white whale, tells Ahab where he last sighted Moby-Dick. Ahab, now grown mad, begins a final relentless pursuit of the whale. Though warned by various prophetic signs of impending doom, Ahab rages on. Finally sighted by the captain himself, the white whale leads the men in a desperate three-day chase. Eventually, Moby-Dick smashes the Pequod. Ahab is killed when a harpoon rope becomes entangled around his neck and he is jerked from the boat. All on the ship die except Ishmael, who saves himself by clinging to a wooden coffin fashioned beforehand for Queequeg.

In the context of the millennial and Protestant aspects of the first five sea narratives of the Melville canon, Moby-Dick takes on a more recognizable structure. The millennial aspects of Moby-Dick are much more subtle than the direct discussions of the subject in Redburn and White-Jacket. After all, the central figure of Moby-Dick is Ahab the monomaniac. Ahab is not the classic Melvillean wanderer, he merely pursues an illusion. He is the Taji, not the Babbalanja, of Mardi. The tendency to see the work as pessimistic or agnostic gives way to an acknowledgement of its fundamentally Protestant and affirming nature. If Moby-Dick is read as an example of Solomonic wisdom literature, then the dark elements are tempered and placed in their proper perspective.

In Moby-Dick the theme of the ocean as symbol continues; however, the most pronounced theme of Moby-Dick is that the world (and the white whale) is ultimately indeterminate. Moby-Dick, in a very Protestant fashion, closes in on what is fundamental and at the core of experience.

The man who wishes to be called Ishmael (the Biblical child of Abraham's flesh, but not of God's promise) finds his soul in a poor state. He perceives but two choices for himself: the death of the soul by suicide or the taking of the soul to sea. He chooses the sea. This action seems natural to him, as well as to all men. They live "insular" lives and love nothing more than standing by the sea "fixed in ocean reveries" (795). "Nothing will content them but the extremest limit of the land" (796). All men are united in an

intense desire to stand and gaze into the sea. Their reasoning is simple--in the ocean they see themselves, representing to them "the image of the ungraspable phantom of life" (797).

The only hope for a crosser of the sea is the proper vision. Thus "a dauntless stander-of-mast-heads" peers with hope "through the thick haze of the future, and [describes] what shoals and what rocks must be shunned" (957). It is only at the mast-head where rests the fulfillment of the purpose of the voyage. As the ancient Egyptians ("a nation of mast-head standers") rose to the top of their pyramids to "sing out for new stars" (956), so too does the whaleman find whales from the top of the mast-head only--"your whales must be seen before they can be killed" (961). The vision from the top is mystical, since "There you stand, lost in the infinite series of the sea" (958). At the main-top a sailor

loses his identity; takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him; every dimly-discovered, uprising fin of some undiscernible form, seems to him the embodiment of those elusive thoughts that only people the soul by continually flitting through it. (961, 962)

The sea represents the completely other, the "everlasting terra incognita." Nothing at sea seems to bear any relationship to what is on the land (1086). Thus, humanity, by nature the very substance of landedness, fails in its attempt to comprehend the sea. Ishmael argues that man and his science (which flatters him with hopes of future

development) will only be insulted and murdered by the sea. What occurs only as a miracle on the shore, is an everyday event on the ocean, the swallowing up of ships on the ocean being commonplace (1086). The ocean is uncontrollable and "masterless" (1087). Sailors are "the most directly brought into contact with whatever is appallingly astonishing in the sea" (984). The Pacific Ocean is "mysterious," "divine," and "eternal" (1308). The ocean is comparable only to death itself, since both represent "the strange Untried," as well as "the immense Remote, the Wild, the Watery, the Unshored" (1312). Yvor Winters places the contrast between sea and land at the center of the novel, writing that "The symbolism of Moby Dick is based on the antithesis of the sea and the land: the land represents the known, the mastered, in human experience; the sea, the half-known, the obscure region of instinct, uncritical feeling, danger, and terror" (200).

But that which is ungraspable and untamable does not hinder men's heady expectations. In the expectations and hopes of Moby-Dick can be seen the theme of millennialism. Captain Bildad, an owner and investor with Captain Peleg in the Pequod, sings of a future promised land lying beyond the sea:

'Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,
Stand dressed in living green.
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.' (903)

Ishmael perceives these words to be "full of hope and fruition." He foresees that in spite of the present

circumstances of sea life, that indeed "it then seemed to me, many a pleasant haven [lay] in store" (903). With this expectation in mind, the crew "blindly plunged like fate into the lone Atlantic" (905). No one of the crew knows what actually lies ahead for himself. Ishmael understands the voyage in the guise of a school, saying that the "whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard" (912). The sweet expectation is there, but the propositions to be learned remain a mystery. Schirmeister observes that being "at sea in Moby Dick is in some sense to desire and to quest" (99). Milder sees a kind of millennialism, noting too that the novel is exploratory and "dramatizes the emergence of a new cultural order from the death-throes of the old" (434).

The ocean in Moby-Dick is used in the same way that it is in all of Melville's previous works; however, the millennial elements are not an integral part of the plot structure. That is, Moby-Dick does not "arrive" at a millennial understanding; instead, it ends in disaster. Duban writes that "Ishmael's outlook borders on ... millennialist optimism" because Ishmael survives the horrendous voyage of the Pequod just as Americans will survive the horrors of slavery to become God's forgiven but still chosen people (133). This is not the sort of millennium in Moby-Dick, and the case is a bit weak for it. But a connection can be made to the millennialism of the heart found in previous works. The millennium Melville is after can be determined by looking at Moby-Dick as a book of essentially Protestant sensibility.

McWilliams comes closest to this kind of millennium when he notes that "Ishmael assumes that the inner divinity of the common man has become the heroic essence of a new people" (The American Epic 210).

The possibility of a new people becomes apparent in Steven Ozment's Protestants: The Birth of a Revolution. Ozment has written a historical work covering the early days of the Reformation. He seeks to account for the relationship between spiritual and worldly revolutions. He argues that Protestants doggedly pursue "a religious life that works," and "unhesitatingly change churches and denominations, shedding the spiritual truths of yesterday as if they were just another bad investment" (xiii). For Protestants, filling an inner spiritual need is as important as satisfying a physical need (3). Thus, Protestants are by nature spiritual skeptics unwilling to live in the folly of the age. They live apart from their age, "secure in God's clear Word and simple truth" (217).

In sound Protestant fashion Melville in Moby-Dick and his other works vigorously admonishes his readers to aim for the core of spiritual experience. Finding the core involves looking at things the way they are and deciding what is folly and what is the clear Word and simple truth. The pursuer of such truth reduces the very breadth of his life; that which is not illusory for him narrows and narrows, and narrows still further. Illusions are cleared away for him as he looks at the world in the light of the "natural sun ... the only

true lamp--all others but liars" (1247). That light hides nothing from him concerning the awfulness of what is, including "swamps," "deserts," "griefs," and most significantly "the ocean, which is the dark side of this earth, and which is two thirds of this earth" (1247). Anyone who remains more joyful than sorrowful in this context is either "not true, or undeveloped" (1247). Thus, Melville says, the "truest of all men was the Man of Sorrows, and the truest of all books is Solomon's, and Ecclesiastes is the fine hammered steel of woe" (1248). In apparent observation of the narrowing of the spiritual focus and the rejecting of folly, Brodtkorb writes, "Ishmael goes to sea in endless repetition to create meaning out of emptiness." Such a statement makes sense to the extent that it is Protestant and millennial, but not to the extent of Brodtkorb's next sentence, which reads, "For [Ishmael], there is no Bible to reveal Truth" (148). Such an idea seems profoundly contradictory to Melville's own praise of Christ and the book of Ecclesiastes.

The introduction of the book of Ecclesiastes into Moby-Dick helps clarify the Protestant and millennial aspects of Melville's most important work. The theme of Ecclesiastes is closely related to the theme of indeterminacy in Moby-Dick. A comparison of the works can demonstrate what Melville considers folly and what he considers the core. Finding Melville's core means finding the millennial aspect of Moby-Dick.

Ecclesiastes is a book about the pursuit of meaning. The pursuit is an ironic one since individuals never see or hear enough to satisfy them (1:8). Solomon argues that because everything under the sun is meaningless, the pursuit of meaning is "a chasing after the wind" (1:14). Solomon considers various possibilities whereby meaning may be had-- pleasures, wisdom, folly, toil, advancement, riches. But none of these offer satisfactory answers to him. In fact, Solomon states plainly that "No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it" (8:17).

What is significant about Ecclesiastes is the "conclusion of the matter" (12:13). The chasing after the wind under the sun has failed to produce meaning, but Solomon suggests that there still remains a single thing at the core of life that is meaningful to do. The conclusion is to "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13). The comprehensive list of various pursuits has been reduced to the one pursuit. The "whole duty of man" has been compressed into six words (in the English Bible).

A comparison of Moby-Dick and Ecclesiastes demonstrates the similarities of their structures. Just as the wise man turns first one existential rock and then another in search of satisfactory meaning, so too does Ishmael live out the psychic experience of monomaniac Ahab, accompanying him as a helpless participant in his pursuit of the uncatchable whale.

Both Solomon and Ahab are doomed to failure except when enabled to envision that which lies over the horizon beyond their perceptions. Solomon sees into the nature of things and grasps the irreducible principle of life. Such a vision is unachievable by Ahab since his monomania permits him the privilege of pursuing only illusions.

A hope intimated by Ishmael resembles the irreducible injunction of Solomon. His great pain is that all of life seems to conspire to thwart the achievement of that hope. In the language of whaling, Ishmael observes that just when sailors have finished with another besmirching pursuit of a whale and "cleansed [themselves] from its defilements, and learned to live here in clean tabernacles of the soul," they hear once again "There she blows!--the ghost is spouted up, and away we sail to fight some other world, and go through young life's old routine again" (1252).

The tabernacle of the soul. In Moby-Dick there are a number of references to a place of inner calm and serenity. As with the serenity found by Babbalanja in Mardi, the inner peace alluded to by Melville is precious and delicate, difficult to find and easy to lose. What is insightful about Moby-Dick is the clear connection made to the relationship between the ocean and this inner calm. That which readers must heretofore read into the earlier texts through the juxtaposition of ocean and spiritual goal is made explicit.

Two passages are supportive and enlightening here. The first is in the context of Melville's discussion of the otherness and treachery of the sea. He writes,

Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle, and most docile earth; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return! (1087)

Individuals must crossover into their own peace just as Babbalanja had to cross over many a mile of open ocean in order to find the island of Serenia. In Moby-Dick there are no references to the possibility of America crossing over to a social and political millennium as was suggested in White-Jacket. In Protestant fashion the focus has narrowed to the core of the nation--the individual spiritual experience. The soul is the subject; encompassing the soul are the horrors of the "half known life." The millennial expectation has been reduced to "one insular Tahiti." So, even though Ishmael makes reference to a corporate journey on the sea in much the same way White-Jacket did (Ishmael observes that "the world's a ship on its passage out, and not a voyage complete" (836), it remains clear that Moby-Dick is primarily concerned with an inward voyage.

The second passage concerns the life of the harassed, relentlessly pursued whale. Though buffeted by the exigencies of the sea and

surrounded by circle upon circle of consternations and affrights, did these inscrutable creatures at the centre freely and fearlessly indulge in all peaceful concernments; yea, serenely revelled in dalliance and delight. But even so, amid the tornadoed Atlantic of my being, do I myself still for ever centrally disport in mute calm; and while ponderous planets of unwaning woe revolve round me, deep down and deep inland there I still bathe me in eternal mildness of joy. (1208, 1209)

These two passages are nearly identical as descriptions of the inner life possible in a world of woe. The first passage represents a bringing-in to Moby-Dick of Melville's millennial metaphor developed throughout his first five narratives, while the second passage is a restructuring and re-telling of the larger metaphor for the actual context of the whaling motif. In the second passage is the notion of the self as analogous to the ocean (the "Atlantic of my being")--both the self and the sea are unknowable and mysterious. The passage represents a shift in perspective from the idea of the millennial hope being out there beyond the horizon, to the idea of the "mute calm" being "deep down and deep inland." Individuals must retreat inward to the calm core because "All men live enveloped in whale-lines. All are born with halters round their necks" (1094). This inward shift is an important development in the progression of the millennial theme in Melville and reflects his Protestant nature.

Melville directs the quest inward in Moby-Dick for a similar reason that Solomon reduces all of life to six words. Ecclesiastes is a search for meaningful employment and activity, while Moby-Dick is a search for definition and

comprehensibility. Eventually both quests end in utter frustration. In Solomon's instance, it is only after the complete failure of the quest that a resolution is offered. Moby-Dick offers no such resolution. It merely warns ominously along the way that the quest for the white whale is doomed and suggests a possible alternative to the pursuit of the whale. In both Ecclesiastes and Moby-Dick the world ends up being enigmatic at best, and in the case of Moby-Dick, malignant at worst. But such indeterminacy should not lead literary historians to describe the novel as agnostic or relativistic. Spengemann summarizes this idea when he contends that

before Moby-Dick, most American literature assumes the existence of transcendent ideal truth and attempts either to illustrate this truth, if it is foreknown, or to discover it, if it is not. After Moby-Dick, one main line of American literature recognizes the probable nonexistence of absolutes and attempts to devise forms of belief that can do without them. (198)

Moby-Dick's most important comments on incomprehensibility come in discussions of the nature of the whale. The chapter "Cetology," which attempts a history and description of the whale genera, opens with an important caveat--"Already we are boldly launched upon the deep; but soon we shall be lost in its unshored, harborless immensities." Once in the open ocean, scientists must beware. They are dealing with the "constituents of a chaos" and it is "no easy task" to understand. Much has been written about whales since Biblical and Greek times, yet "of real knowledge

there be little" (933). And even after reviewing all that is known of whales, Ishmael warns that in his own attempt he can "promise nothing complete." To understand the whale one must reach down "among the unspeakable foundations" of the world where all is "uncertain," and "unsettled" (935). Though Ishmael proclaims his descriptions of the whale "unfinished," he generalizes that having a complete understanding of anything is somehow detrimental to human existence--he says, "God keep me from ever completing anything. This whole book is but a draught--nay, but the draught of a draught" (946).

The pursuit of this incomprehensible creature inspires thoughts of fruitlessness. Round the world we go, Ishmael says, only to end up where we left. In this round world, sailing east merely brings one back to the beginning. In such a world there is no promise of reaching "new distances." "But in pursuit of those far mysteries we dream of, or in tormented chase of that demon phantom that, some time or other, swims before all human hearts; while chasing such over this round globe, they either lead us on in barren mazes or midway leave us whelmed" (1046). Melville's "mazes" are connected here to Milton's characterization of the discussions held in hell. The lost angels discoursed "Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate, / Fixt Fate, Free will, Foreknowledge absolute, / And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost" (Paradise Lost II, 559-561).

The mysteries of the whale, as well as the world itself, are similar to the mystery of God. Barbour comments that

Melville has chosen the symbol that God uses for himself in the book of Job, chapter 41, and that "the whale, like God, exists beyond our ability to know" (31, 32). In attempting to read the face of the whale, Ishmael observes,

But in the great Sperm Whale, this high and mighty god-like dignity inherent in the brow is so immensely amplified, that gazing on it, in that full front view, you feel the Deity and the dread powers more forcibly than in beholding any other object in living nature. For you see no one point precisely; not one distinct feature is revealed; no nose, eyes, ears, or mouth; no face; he has none, proper; nothing but that one broad firmament of a forehead, pleated with riddles. (1164).

The Biblical allusion is not direct in this passage, but is certainly related. In asking to see the face of God, Moses is told that is impossible. He is hidden in the cleft of a rock and allowed to witness the back of God as he passes by. A few pages later Melville does directly allude to this Biblical passage. Into the mouth of the whale he puts these words:

"Thou shalt see my back parts, my tail, he seems to say, but my face shall not be seen" (1198). Melville is making the point that our inability to define and comprehend the whale or the world is part of our general inability to understand God. There is to be no deciphering of this hieroglyphic. We can no more comprehend the face of a simple peasant than the face of the whale (1165). How then the face of God?

Herbert, in Moby Dick and Calvinism: A World Dismantled, also sees the story as theocentric. He writes,

Melville's quest portrays the heroism of a man without a standard of final belief, who casts himself unreservedly into the search for it. The basic criterion of his quest remains insistently

theocentric: he seeks a unified vision of ultimate reality that can gather all experience into an intelligible and coherent totality. (36, 37)

It is the incomprehensibility of things, the unresponding mysteries of life, which have driven Captain Ahab mad. He has endeavored to "pierce the profundity" (1373). "'Forty years of continual whaling!'" Ahab laments, "'forty years of privation, and peril, and stormtime! forty years on the pitiless sea! for forty years has Ahab forsaken the peaceful land, for forty years to make war on the horrors of the deep'" (1373). Ahab is locked in the midst of his personal crossing of the sea. He cannot go over to the other side. For him there is no green land, there is no inland calm. Instead, "There was an infinity of firmest fortitude, a determinate, unsunderable wilfulness, in the fixed and fearless, forward dedication of that glance." In place of inland peace there is "the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe" (925). As such Ahab was only a nominal Christian, an "alien" to the faith (955). Herbert notes that Ahab is actually a Calvinistic heretic who "refuses to submit to the 'inscrutable'" (Moby Dick and Calvinism 40, 122). Herbert notes that as such Ahab is a perfect example of John Calvin's innate depravity ("Calvinist Earthquake" 128).

Ahab lost his leg to the white whale. And it is on the white whale that Ahab foists all of life's unexplainable sorrows. Behind all things, reasons Ahab, there is a malignant controlling force. To strike at that force means one must

strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. (967)

The primary element of the whale hated by Ahab is its very indeterminacy. But in the context of Ishmael's comments about the nature of things, Ahab's reaction is pure madness. Inscrutability is at the heart of all things, not just at the heart of the mystery of the white whale. Leo Bersani expresses the inscrutability of reality as "an infinitely meaningful absence of meaning" (153).

The whale is a mere exemplar of the mystery. As Ishmael observes about the captain--he "had cherished a wild vindictiveness against the whale, all the more fell for that in his frantic morbidness he at last came to identify with him, not only all his bodily woes, but all his intellectual and spiritual exasperations" (989). John T. Irwin is correct when he observes, "The qualities attributed to Moby Dick in the novel are simply the projected attributes of his pursuers.... The whale's intelligent malignity is Ahab's own, the whale's ubiquity is but the self's own sense that, look where it will, it sees only some aspect of itself" (287).

At the core of Ahab's being resides, not the sweet calm spoken of by Ishmael, but unspeakable pain. Ishmael says, "The very throbbing of his life-spot became insufferable

anguish" (1007). By making the choice he has, his spiritual nature has not made the necessary progress. He has not crossed over the abyss to the inland zone. He has, Ishmael observes, become a savage (1082) and a demon (see baptism of harpoon 1315). His inland zone has become a horror ("Far inland, nameless wails came from him, as desolate sounds from out ravines" 1383). In this condition he can no longer see the possibility of arrival at the core and center. Ahab cries out, "'There is no steady unretracing progress in this life.... Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more?'" (1318). His life is directionless, his quadrant is useless to him--"'Pilot! thou tellest me truly where I am-- but canst thou cast the least hint where I shall be?'" (1326). Starbuck warns Ahab, "'t' is an ill voyage!'" and pleads with him "'to go on a better voyage than this'" (1335). The notion of proper and improper voyages suggested by Melville has been noted by various critics. Herbert observes that Melville's "mission is prophetic, that of calling us to a deeper life" ("Calvinist Earthquake" 113).

Moby-Dick is the story of a man who refuses to compress his life into the achievable and doable. Instead, he is stuck in life "under the sun" in an endless round of frustrating and bitter pursuit, a "chasing after the wind." He has not allied himself with the wisdom Merlin Bowen sees in the novel. Bowen writes, "Wisdom comes, when it does, with the discovery that nature and God are too vast to be captured in any of our formulations" (121). Instead, Ahab clings to what

the philosopher Kierkegaard called defiant despair, a despair that recognizes that to accept comfort is the same thing as destruction (cited by Auden 114). Chase writes, "To be Ahab is to be unable to resist the hypnotic attraction of the self with its impulse to envelop and control the universe" (108).

Ahab is simply on the wrong voyage. Auden suggests as much when he makes a connection between Moby-Dick and the book of Jonah. Concerning Ishmael he writes, "The story of Jonah is the story of a voyage undertaken for the wrong reasons, of learning repentance through suffering and a final acceptance of duty" (101). Ahab's voyage is the antithesis of Jonah's in that Jonah's journey through the tormenting experience in the sea leads to repentance--Ahab's voyage is a constant shaking of the fist in the face of God. Herbert writes that "Jonah accepts the whale's attack as a divine correction; Ahab takes it as an outrageous affront" ("Calvinist Earthquake" 125). Chase contends that "[Moby-Dick] is a book about the alienation from life that results from an excessive or neurotic self-dependence" (105).

Melville wrote Moby-Dick as a book of warning concerning the pathway to salvation in as clear a manner as John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress. The great difference is the obvious one. Melville's great sea novel is written in an era in which belief itself is threatened, in which the horizon is indeed blank. Herbert sees the Protestant/Calvinistic elements clearly. He notes that the logic of Calvinistic theology was perfectly consistent--that the realities of

human life conform to it rather than to expressions of human dignity as expressed by the liberalism of Melville's day ("Calvinist Earthquake" 112). Moby-Dick is rife with the language of current doctrinal arguments ("Calvinist Earthquake" 113). Herbert writes that

Melville thus draws us into a religious struggle. The traditional perspectives at work are biblical and theological, pointing toward the ultimate boundaries of experience; and Melville places the unresolvable conflict of these perspectives at the book's own outermost horizon, embracing within that horizon a discourse concerning final questions, the meaning or unmeaning of life and death. ("Calvinist Earthquake" 114)

Herbert contends that Melville, in carrying on this debate, is tearing down and building anew ("Calvinist Earthquake" 114). Such a stance on Melville's part renders him suspect in his culture, and he must assume the role of outcast. No single religious tradition can contain "ultimate truth" or "universal validity." This line of reasoning places Ishmael on the sea as an escapee from the hardened shore. The sea is itself the place of religious truth--"a truth beyond all formulation" ("Calvinist Earthquake" 122, 123). What opens for such a traveller is an infinite series of collapsing and reconstituted selves always open to new possibilities and new avenues to truth and understanding ("Calvinist Earthquake" 138).

Herbert here misses the point of all the sea voyages of Melville, including Moby-Dick. He strays beyond monism into a world unknown to Melville. All of Melville's voyages must either end "landed" or suggest some sort of "landedness." The

arrival at the millennial shore could be a future time in America in which the chosen people live out their spiritually matured Protestant selves in Christian social action, or could be the arrival at a place of serenity and peace found deep within the private human heart in the face of a blank, meaningless world. Both sorts of arrivals are indeed possible for and even demanded of all Protestants claiming to be on the Christian way. Every true Christian must board the same vessel of experience and cross over into millennium.

Epilogue

The entire canon of works by Herman Melville might be explored in order to cull references to the sea and its connection to millennialism. I will limit myself to a few comments about three works--Israel Potter, Billy Budd, and the poem Clarel. The first two works incorporate the sea as an element of their narratives, but are not sea quests in the same sense as Melville's first six novels. Clarel is not a sea quest at all, but a "landed" metaphor which bears a close relationship in theme to the first six works. These three works will be discussed in this epilogue.

Israel Potter is the story of another of Melville's wanderers. Set in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century America, England, and France, and published in 1855, the work incorporates a number of Melville's earlier themes. The central character Israel is the inhabitant of Melville's man-of-war world, but does not possess the vision necessary to escape that world. In this sense the novel lacks the millennial qualities of Melville's first six works.

The thematic emphasis of the work concerns the fundamental savagery and lostness of America. Naval hero John Paul Jones figures prominently in the novel. Melville creates an equality between Jones, revolutionary France, and primitive savages. Jones is described as a "jaunty barbarian

in broadcloth." He is anticipatory of the civilized barbarity to be witnessed in the French Revolution, an event which will be a combination of "refinement" and "the blood-thirsty ferocity of Borneo" (496). Jones is symbolic of the country for which he fights. America is "intrepid, unprincipled, reckless, predatory, with boundless ambition, civilized in externals but a savage at heart." "America is, or may yet be, the Paul Jones of nations" (561).

The problem of external morality in Israel Potter echoes Typee, Omoo, and Mardi, and is reminiscent of those earlier questions about which was superior, missionary or savage? However, Israel Potter is most unhopeful for the future of American savages. Israel is a wanderer more befuddled than questing. Aboard the Ariel with John Paul Jones during a brief sea fight with an English ship, Israel leaps onto the enemy ship thinking she is about to be boarded by the other members of the American crew, only to discover that the ships are pulling away from each other. It is night, and Israel attempts with "perseverance of effrontery" (578) to pass himself off as an English seaman; the great difficulty, of course, is that he has no place on board the ship. Observing him in the clutches of the master-at-arms, the captain of the English ship says, "'Come here, master-at-arms. To what end do you lead that man about?'" To which he responds, "'To no end in the world, sir. I keep leading him about because he has no final destination'" (584).

Israel's apparent madness aboard the ship saves him, and he returns to England. However, because of his poverty his visit there is extended for 40 years, stopping him from "a voyage to the Promised Land" (612). As an old man he finally returns, with his son, to New England. Unfortunately, he is just as lost in the promised land as in England. His efforts to gain a pension as a veteran come to nothing, and he dies unknown and "out of being" (615).

Billy Budd, the story of an innocent young sailor caught in the grip of naval justice, is the last work of the Melville canon. The novel was found in manuscript following Melville's death and published posthumously. The character Billy is the classic handsome sailor aboard the merchantman Rights-of-Man who is forcibly removed on the high seas to the British warship Bellipotent. The master-at-arms Claggart develops a hatred for the young man and seeks to trick him into a mutinous act. Accused of mutiny in the captain's presence, Billy lashes out at Claggart, striking a blow which kills him. Captain Vere, though realizing Billy's innocence, feels compelled to make an example of Billy. He is hanged on the yardarm.

The novel illustrates the conflict between worldly moral structure and true Christian virtue that Melville outlined in his first six works. As has been noted by most critics, Billy takes on the innocent, sacrificial characteristics of Christ. The captain of the Rights-of-Man complains that "'you are going to take away my peacemaker!'" (1357). Billy's death has

obvious connections to the passion of Christ, especially in the scene in which the surgeon and the purser discuss the manner in which Billy died. The purser asks if the death were not an act of "euthanasia," a word the surgeon likens to "'will power'" (1428). The word euthanasia means "good death," indicating that Billy willingly lay down his life in sacrifice to the system Captain Vere represented. Such a self-sacrifice would explain Billy's last words, "'God bless Captain Vere!'" (1426).

There is another possibility, however. Billy's innocence is not that of the perfect God-Man, but rather the naiveté and innocence of an Adam. Melville writes that "his simple nature remained unsophisticated by those moral obliquities which are not in every case incompatible with that manufacturable thing known as respectability" (1361). "Billy in many respects was little more than a sort of upright barbarian, much such perhaps as Adam presumably might have been ere the urbane Serpent wriggled himself into his company" (1362).

What Melville emphasizes about Billy is his untested nature and his lack of self-consciousness. In this man-of-war world such a nature is doomed. Captain Vere, knowing the truth, must still do what he must to preserve the prerogatives of absolute power. However, the "virtue" of such a system is based solely on respectability and conservatism. The weakness of respectability is its derivation "from custom

or convention ... from a period prior to Cain's city and citified man" (1362).

Conventionality, that is, not possessing the power of natural virtue but only the authority of tradition, leads to the enforcement of conventions including the horrors of injustice seen in Billy's case. But such injustice is no different from that perpetuated by respectable missionaries in the South Seas. The moral system seen aboard the Bellipotent is identical to that witnessed from Typee to White-Jacket. What Melville is suggesting by default in Billy Budd is the need for nothing short of the conversion of an entire people to an internalized virtue. The prospects as well as the necessity for this change can rightly be called millennial.

The long poem Clarel, published in 1876, is the story of a young divinity student on a tour of the holy sites of Palestine. Among a sizable group of pilgrims, he makes his way through Jerusalem, the Judean wilderness, the Jordan River, Mar Saba (a traditional site of the temptation of Christ), and Bethlehem, returning to Jerusalem. Along the way the pilgrims discuss, in many different venues, circumstances, and guises, the great basic questions centered on the possibility of faith in the modern world.

The poem has attracted recent attention with the publication of a new scholarly edition. Helen Vendler reviewed this edition in the December 7, 1992 issue of The New Republic. She describes Melville as an intellectually

questing individual looking for answers to spiritual dilemmas. She notes that Melville hated the effects of theological higher criticism on the power of the Biblical narrative (40), belying the current notion that Melville was a skeptic. Vendler wisely subverts this criticism by pointing out that Melville (in Clarel) is a grown man who "sees more, and he knows more" than when he was the boy of Typee (41). Modern critics are unable to perceive the religious nature of Melville, or as Vendler writes, that "Melville, like Hawthorne and Dickinson, was a Calvinist to the marrow, one for whom a calm stoicism was in the end unnatural" (42).

Vendler also understands the connection between the desert of Clarel and the ocean of the sea narratives. She writes,

The poem records Melville's encounter with an immensity--the desert--that had for him the same fascination, in its pitilessness, as the sea. In the desert, as in the sea, human scale is lost, and the mind grapples for a larger scale by which to measure both life and thought (40).

Clarel is a literalized expression of the sea metaphor which delineates "crossing into millennium." Clarel details the historically precise intellectual struggles a Protestant Christian would have gone through in the nineteenth century in the attempt to maintain faith. Walter Bezanson has done a thorough job of identifying the various characters in the poem as advocates of philosophical positions. These characters represent, in Bezanson's view, such positions as "ANCIENT ORTHODOXY," "MAMMONISM," the "FATALIST," the

"UNQUESTIONING BELIEVER," the "MELIORIST," "THE MODERN CRITICAL SPIRIT," "IRRESPONSIBLE AND HAPPY YOUTH," "SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM," "COMMERCIALISM," "SELF-ANNIHILATION," "NARROW SECTARIAN ORTHODOXY," "HUMANISTIC AND RELIGIOUS VALUES," and "GENIUS" (529-549).

Clarel listens to these characters' arguments, doubts, and concerns, traversing through the emotional and intellectual plight they create. The narrator describes this journey in terms of the metaphor of the sea. He says, "The bird in end must needs migrate / Over the sea: shall Clarel too / Launch o'er his gulf, e'en Doubt, and woo / Remote conclusions?" (130). The poem concludes this quest in a Protestant fashion by wrapping itself in the fundamental core. Back in Jerusalem, Clarel observes, at the beginning of Whitsun-tide, the Via Crucis--the way of the cross (521). The lane is crowded with Jews, Muslims, and Christians, each "in varied forms of fate." Melville is emphasizing the fundamental nature of the cross. In the midst of doubt and despair that nearly "exclude the hope" endures "the sign o' the cross--the spirit above the dust!" (522). The light of knowledge has created greater shadows. But these shadows of the intellect are tempered by the thought that they are "strange illusions." The poem concludes with these lines:

Then keep thy heart, though yet but ill-resigned--
Clarel, thy heart, the issues there but mind;
That like the crocus budding through the snow--
That like a swimmer rising from the deep--
That like a burning secret which doth go
Even from the bosom that would hoard and keep;
Emerge thou mayst from the last whelming sea,

And prove that death but routs life into victory.
(523)

Clarel has reached his Bunyanesque river of life. It but remains for him to pass through to the other side, to that final shore of faith that defeats despair. The possibility of that crossing is Herman Melville's millennial hope.

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